The modern object sculpture understood as a work of art

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

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Abstract

Until modernity, the word ‘sculpture’ was used to denote mimetic representations of the human form. From modernity on this term was extended to include new and unusual works that often do not share obvious features with traditional sculpture or even with what we know as art. This thesis is placed in the chronological frame of modern art and examines the meaning and truth of modern sculpture and the ways it is to be understood as a work of art.

The thesis is separated into three parts. The first and introductory part explores the way modern sculpture has developed and redefined its status and meaning in the history of art from Rodin until Duchamp and the movements of found art and conceptual art. The aim of the first part is to specify the issue of perception and the function of phenomenology in the understanding of modern sculpture. The second and third parts aim to specify the validity of modern sculpture as art, considering particularly Heidegger’s thinking on the nature of art and the truth of art in the post-religious age of modernity. Specifically, the second part examines Heidegger’s position on the meaning of art after the ‘death of art’ and moreover the place of sculpture in modernity focusing on the theme of homelessness in Rodin’s and Giacometti’s sculpture. The third part examines more closely the way abstract art and specifically the work of Barnett Newman could be seen as a truth revealing, following Heidegger’s criticism of the metaphysics of symbolic and representational art.

The thesis argues that the validity of modern sculpture and generally modern art lies in its acknowledgement or, in Heidegger terms, thinking of the homelessness of the human being in modernity and the destitution of modernity, and hence in its revealing of the aspect of the truth and being that has been forgotten.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Andrew Edgar for his valuable guidance, support and advice over the past four years. I am particularly grateful to him for his assistance and advice in the preparation of the thesis and attention to detail in proof reading.

I would like to thank the members of the department of philosophy for their helpful comments and guidance during the presentations of parts of the thesis. I wish also to thank the School of English, Communication and Philosophy of Cardiff University for its funding. Lastly, I wish to thank my parents and friends for their support.

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Introduction

'The statues of Maillol insolently fling in your eyes their heavy eternity. But the eternity of stone is synonymous with inertia; it is a forever frozen now. Giacometti never speaks of eternity, never thinks of it'. As Sartre points out, one day after Giacometti destroyed some statues he said to him that even if he was satisfied with them they were not made to last more than few hours. As Sartre writes, a few hours are 'like a dawn, a distress, an ephemera'. 'Never was matter less eternal, more fragile, nearer to being human'.[1]

Alberto Giacometti was in a continuous exploration and quest for the form that would liberate sculpture from the 'heavy eternity' of traditional sculpture and at the same time bring it closer to the human being. This task to liberate sculpture from the 'eternity of stone' and to approach the truth of the world and its object and of art itself is what characterises the emergence and development of modern sculpture.

This quest emerged primarily with Auguste Rodin who seeks to liberate sculpture from the strict mimetic representation of human body and give back to it its expressivity and feeling. Constantine Brancusi, by abstracting the details from his objects, manages to isolate their essence. Furthermore, Barnett Newman through the repetition of vertical concrete stripes succeeds in isolating an instant of 'total reality' to create a language that refers to existence and being itself. [2]

Sculpture in relation to other kinds of art is considered to be the art that more closely approaches the being of the things that it presents. And this because it gives to its subject matter a concrete and three dimensional form. For Hegel sculpture succeeds in representing the perfect unity between subject matter, idea and form. But the development of sculpture in modernity appears to challenge this perfect unity between idea and form. This unity is challenged especially with the readymades of Duchamp and the movements of found art and conceptual art. Duchamp manages with his readymades to question in a provocative manner the same being of art. Later found art

[1] Jean-Paul Sartre, 'The Search for the Absolute 1948', in *Modern Sculpture Reader*, ed. Jon Wood, David Hulks and Alex Potts, (Henry Moore Institute), pp. 180-188, (p. 183).
[2] David J. Glaser, 'Transcendence in the Vision of Barnett Newman', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 40, no. 4 (Summer, 1982), pp. 415-420, (p. 418).

and conceptual art provoke the role of form and, correspondingly, concept in sculpture and generally in art. But for Hegel the unity between idea and form can never be cancelled. What modern sculpture seeks to do is to redefine and re-designate the relation between form and content in favour of its status as a work of art.

The aim of the first and introductory part of the thesis is to present and discuss the main issues that have emerged through the development of modern sculpture and that concern its status, identity and autonomy as art. Furthermore it examines the importance of phenomenology in the meaning and identity as art of modern sculpture. The examination begins with a presentation of the history of Western sculpture from antiquity until modernity and develops through a discussion of the development of modern sculpture from Rodin, via Duchamp, to the movements of found art and conceptual art. The development of modern sculpture seems to progress towards its autonomy in the sense of liberation from past cultural, public and social functions and from its architectural and public setting.

But for Heidegger this liberation constitutes a loss of the capacity of art to be a mode of truth, to present the holiness of the world, the divinity of the gods and to allow humans to truly dwell. The second and third parts of the thesis are focused on the matter of the truth of art after the 'death of art', or otherwise of its validity in modernity as art following Heidegger's philosophy of art.

The aim of the second part of the thesis is to examine the notion of art in Heidegger's philosophy of art and the way Heidegger designates art in the post-religious era of modernity. For Heidegger art in the past reveals the community in which it is placed, their gods and the human's fate. But modernity is an age without gods and art no longer reveals their history and fate to the community. What is the place of art in an era where gods are absent? Can sculpture overcome its 'unplaceability' and homelessness?[3] The second part is developed through a discussion of the relation between sculpture and place. Particularly it considers Rodin's and Giacometti's sculptures and investigates the way their work overcomes the homelessness of modern sculpture.

[3] Guenther Stern, 'Homeless Sculpture', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, A first Symposium on Russian Philosophy and Psychology (December, 1944), pp. 293-307, (p. 296).

The notion of homelessness in sculpture is examined in a more literal sense as the loss of the place and space of sculpture and its inability to function in a cultural, public and social manner on its setting. In the third part of the thesis the notion of homelessness is examined in a more metaphorical sense as the condition of the human in 'the destitute days of modernity'. The third part of the thesis focuses on Heidegger's criticism, particularly of the metaphysics of art. Heidegger's criticism of the metaphysics of art is divided into two arguments, referring to two kinds of art, Christian and post-Christian art, that is, symbolic and representational art. The argument firstly examines this criticism considering examples of symbolic and representational art that could still be considered as valid forms of art. I propose that Byzantine art and the work of Giotto could be seen as non-metaphysical forms of art despite the fact that they fall into the category of art that Heidegger rejects. Byzantine painting and the painting of Giotto manage to bring forth a world, but not through the means of symbolism or representation. Rather they establish a place in the way in which they engage the viewer into their meaning.

Abstract expressionist art succeeds in bringing forth a meaning by the way it generates a place and makes it part of it in order to engage the viewer in the process of understanding it. Particularly, the study focuses on the work of abstract expressionist artist Barnett Newman and examines the way symbolism and representation and furthermore abstraction is to be understood in his work. Considering Newman's *The Stations of the Cross* and *Here* and *Broken Obelisk* the study examines the way the symbol of the cross and the representation of being are to be understood in his work. The chapter aims to show how truth is to be understood in modern abstract art and if it can help humanity surpass its homelessness. The key matter of this discussion is Heidegger's notion of authentic anxiety in the work of Newman and the way it could bring together an authentic and inauthentic understanding of our being.

This thesis is an examination of the meaning and understanding of modern sculpture. The examination is developed in the context of Heidegger's phenomenology and existentialism, considering specifically his position on poetry and painting in modernity, his thinking on sculpture, and the relation between art, place and space, as well as his designation of the notion of Being, modernity and metaphysics. The thesis

considers also other theories from the field of aesthetics, particularly Hegel's *Aesthetics* and Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* as well as philosophical discussions on particular artists such as Sartre's discussion on the sculptures of Giacometti and Rilke's account in the work of Rodin. Furthermore the thesis considers theories from the conceptual framework of modern art and modern sculpture, particularly Fowkes's account 'A Hegelian Critique of Found Art and Conceptual Art', Seamon's account 'The Conceptual Dimension in Art and the Modern Theory of Artistic Value', Danto's institutional theory of art, and Krauss's and Tucker's writings on sculpture.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the way modern sculpture has developed and redefined its status and meaning in the history of art, and in addition to examine the way sculpture could gain its validity after the 'death of art', and whether this validity could be seen to preserve the function of the art of the past to reveal the world as a holy place. Following Heidegger's thinking of the meaning of art in modernity as well as Adorno's position on the negative truth of modern art, the thesis concludes that art in modernity is aware of its death and its inability to be the kind of art that it was in the past. But in acknowledging and thinking its own lack, the destitution of modernity, the absence of gods and the homelessness of the human, it manages to reveal the other side of truth: authenticity and the human's need for dwelling.

I. The modern object sculpture

> The modern is abstract by virtue of its relation to what is past.[4]

> Art that is simply a thing is an oxymoron. Yet the development of this oxymoron is nevertheless the inner direction of contemporary art. Art is motivated by a conflict: Its enchantment, a vestige of its magical phase, is constantly repudiated as unmediated sensual immediacy by the progressive disenchantment of the world, yet without its ever being possible finally to obliterate this magical element.[5]

Introduction

Until modernity, the term sculpture in the Western history of art was used to denote truthful mimetic representations of human form. From modernity on this term was extended to include new and unusual works that often do not share any features with traditional sculpture or even with what we know as art. The main purpose of the first part of the thesis is to present and discuss the main issues that have emerged on the meaning of modern sculpture and its identity as art. Furthermore, it examines the contradiction between formalism and conceptualism in art as well in philosophical approaches on modern art.

The first chapter follows the development of modern sculpture in relation to the other arts of its time and examines its progression towards the condition of the object. Sculpture with Rodin and his tendency to move from representation and naturalism to abstraction was to be developed in the history of modern sculpture with Brancusi and Picasso towards the 'condition' of the object and with Duchamp to the object itself.[6] The development of art towards the status of the object reflects the same ambition of modernism, and characterizes painting, poetry, music and architecture.[7] But in opposition to the 'object-status' of a painting, poem, musical score or architectural

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[4] Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor, (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 28.
[5] Ibid., p. 75.
[6] William Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), pp. 23, 114.
[7] However, in the case of modern architecture the notion of object refers to the absence or elimination of decorative elements in favour of pure form and structure. Movements such as the futurism, constructivism and expressionism are characterised by an expression of structure and carry architectural elements that refer to the function or expression of the building. Also in the case of music the shift towards the condition of the object is to be seen as a shift from the expression of the 19th century Romanticism to pure contraction with movements such as with serialism and some neo-classicism.

building which comes to sustain its meaning and its status as art, the 'object-status' of sculpture comes to challenge its meaning and in the case of Duchamp's readymades its status as a work of art. The problem with modern sculptures is that the more the work approaches the condition of objects the more the distinction between work of art and artifact as well as between art and life disappears. Modern painting, poetry, music and architecture were still confining themselves within the boundaries of art. Duchamp's readymades and later found art and conceptual art seek to 'expand' the notion of art to include objects that not only do not share any aesthetic features of what we know as art, but as such do not have any ontological differences from everyday objects.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the emergence and development of modern sculpture with Rodin, in relation with the arts of its time. Also, it aims to present the way sculpture progressed towards the condition of the object and extended to include works that make reference to everyday objects and readymade forms and works such as readymade objects. This study examines the notion of object in the work of Rodin, Brancusi, Picasso and Duchamp and arrives at the problematic notion of art that emerged with the readymades of Duchamp.

The second chapter aims to examine more closely the understanding of readymade forms in the art world. Particularly, it focuses on two art movements that come to challenge the notion of art: found art and conceptual art. Both conceptual art and found art challenge the unity between form and content in art. Both seek the superiority of the one in opposition to the other, that is, form in found art and content in conceptual art. But could art survive merely as form or concept? According to Danto, the meaning of these works and their art identity does not depend on their formal properties but comes through an interpretation or theory. The problem with Danto's approach is that it marginalises the role of the perceptual and of the experience of art. The chapter considers Seamon's thesis on the modern theory of artistic value and Fowkes's discussion of found art and conceptual art. Both suggest an understanding of these movements in terms of the internal or conceptual dimension of art, that is, the metaphorical function of art. This study aims to examine the notion of the conceptual in found art and conceptual art and the art identity of these works.

1. The emergence and development of the new sculpture

1. 1. Sculpture in history of art and philosophy

Of all the kinds of art, sculpture is the art that represents in a more complete manner a subject matter, an idea. Sculpture represents through concrete materials its subject matter. In the Western tradition of art, sculpture especially until the Renaissance has been extensively practiced.[8] But sculpture after the Renaissance did not follow the growth and innovation of painting and also did not attract the same aesthetic interest and philosophical and critical thinking as painting did.[9] Until modernity its development was bound with the style of ancient Greek statues. In France until the 19th century and the work of August Rodin painting was regarded as the superior art form.[10] In the words of the art critic Octave Mirbeau, Rodin 'rediscovered an admirable and forgotten art'.[11]

In Hegel's philosophical classification of arts sculpture is considered to be the perfection of art and this because 'Idea and its reality' are unified in a higher manner.[12] Even if Hegel considers painting to be superior to sculpture, he sees sculpture as the only kind of art that succeeds in unifying the form and its content, the idea which is for Hegel, the spirit, 'the spiritual inner life'.[13] Art for Hegel is the manifestation of absolute sprit through form, through stone and marble in architecture and sculpture, colour in painting, sound in music and language in poetry. Art represents the struggle for unity of spirit and form. However, each kind of art for Hegel represents a different stage of this unity. In each kind of art the form manifests in a different manner the content of the absolute. Sculpture for Hegel surpasses the superiority of form over spirit of architecture in order to find its total harmonization.

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[8] David F. Martin, *Sculpture and Enlivened Space*, (The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, Kentucky, 1966), p. 2.
[9] Ibid., and Vance D. Robert, 'Sculpture', in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 35, no. 3, July, 1995, pp. 217-226, (p. 217).
[10] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p.15
[11] Bernard Champigneulle, *Rodin*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), pp. 90-91.
[12] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, 2 vols. trans. T.M. Knox, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 79.
[13] Ibid., p. 85.

The move from architecture to sculpture is for Hegel a move towards the liberation of spirit from mass and volume. In sculpture the spirit is the form. Sculpture 'is the free and adequate embodiment of the Idea in the shape peculiarly appropriate to the Idea itself in its essential nature'.[14] Its form does not indicate or imply the idea of the work but it is directly consubstantial with its idea. On the other hand the spirituality of the content will give to the spirit of art a physical appearance and existence. Through sculptural shape the idea can come 'into free and coherent harmony'.[15]

For Hegel, sculpture finds its perfect form in ancient Greek sculpture, and this lies in the fact that it presents in a concrete and three dimensional form the unification of 'divine and the human nature'.[16] The primary aim of art is to present in a physical manner the spirit. According to Hegel ancient Greek sculpture succeeded in achieving the ultimate unity of form and spirit and this is because the spirit, as that stage in its development, takes the form of the human body. The human form, Hegel argues, is the only physical appearance that is appropriate to the spirit. In sculpture the human body is not to be seen as a physical, 'sensuous existence' but as the shape and existence of the spirit.[17] The spirit of life finds its home in the physical shape of sculpture.[18] As Hegel writes, into the temple 'the god enters himself as the lightning-flash of individuality striking and permeating the inert mass, and the infinite, and no longer merely symmetrical, form of spirit itself concentrates and gives shape to something corporeal.'[19] (For a further discussion on Hegel's account on art see pp. 40-42 and 59-60).

Sculpture in Greece, however, did not continue to be the representation of the god and the holy in Byzantine times. Even if Byzantine art preserves a number of characteristics from ancient Greek art it found its ideal form in the art of painting. In

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[14] Ibid., p. 77.
[15] Ibid., p. 77.
[16] Ibid., p. 80.
[17] Often, Hegel argues, the form of the human body is seen in a negative manner when it regards the spiritual. However, art passes necessarily through anthropomorphism in order not to glorify the human but to embody the spiritual, the divinity of gods. As he writes, 'personification and anthropomorphism have often been maligned as a degradation of the spiritual, but in so far as art's task is to bring the spiritual before our eyes in a sensuous manner, it must get involved in this anthropomorphism, since spirit appears sensuously in a satisfying way only in its body '. Ibid., p. 78. For his discussion on Greek art and the unity of the divine and the human see also, p. 719.
[18] Ibid., p. 85.
[19] Ibid., p. 84.

Byzantine art sculptures were considered to be idolatrous objects and were neglected as a practise. On the contrary in the western Middle Ages sculpture continues to represent the holy and the divine. Sculptures during this period continued the Roman tradition and they were used for the decorations of the temples and other sacred places. Often sculptures represented saints or imaginary creatures decorated the interior and exterior of churches. The subject matter of Renaissance sculpture was often taken from the bible or ancient Greek mythology. But what characterises the Renaissance sculpture is representation of the naked human body. In 16th century Michelangelo's oversized human sculptural representations turned sculpture from a religious object into an aesthetic one. The sculpture becomes now the representation of the beauty of the human body. Michelangelo offers, Stokes remarks, to beauty 'the ideal settlement' through his petrification of the dynamic and the beauty of the nude body in the block of marble.[20]

The beauty of the ancient Greek sculpture derived from the human body but primarily from the human face. The 'facial formation', according to Hegel, 'is the model of the genuine beauty'.[21] Faces are for Michelangelo of less importance than the bodies of his sculptures. Faces are not dominated with expressions of suffering or effort. The person is represented through the human frame rather than facial features.[22] It is the human frame and structure that liberates the energy of his work. 'Michelangelo transformed oppressive weight into the breadth and pumping power of the thorax especially, into muscles that renew themselves by partaking of bulk'.[23]

One of the major works of Michelangelo that has survived is the series of *Slaves* or *Captives* (figure 1) exhibited in the Louvre. These sculptures were planed to be placed in the Julian tomb and according to the primary plan of 1505 there were to be displayed sixteen of these sculptural prisoners. These figures, Stokes remarks, 'are figures of passivity or suffering, and also of unusual strength'.[24] Still the viewer does not feel that it is strength that evaporates. 'Though death will overcome it, the strength

[20] Adrian Stokes, *The Image in Form: Selected Writings of Adrian Stokes*, ed. Richard Wollheim, (New York, Evaston, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 211.
[21] Hegel, op.cit., p. 730.
[22] Stokes, op. cit., p. 205.
[23] Ibid., pp. 204-205.
[24] Ibid., p. 205.

still shows, or, rather, the vision remains, as if coming from profound sleep'.[25] Michelangelo's captives are beautiful, idealized and at the same time naturalistic forms. 'These beautiful forms, foreign to self pity or to sentiment, are the product of deprivation, surrender, revolt, enlisted by the idealizing yet naturalistic art'.[26] However, the representation of the captives is not completed and totally finished. The sculptures appear unfinished, works in progress and happening rather than being.

The unfinished character of Michelangelo's sculptures is what characterises Rodin's work. Rodin was influenced by the unfinished element of Michelangelo's sculptures. Although Rodin's works remain within the area of representation he brings a new and higher form of naturalism, 'an illusion of reality, of the living body'. Thus, as Tucker remarks, Rodin has rejected three hundred fifty years of western tradition of sculpture in order to choose Michelangelo's' *Dying Slave* as his model for the pose in the *Age of Bronze*. The 'flat' and 'languid' element of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* is what dominates Rodin's first work the *Age of Bronze* (fig. 2).[27]

In Hegel's aesthetics sculpture obtains a superiority in comparison to the position granted to sculpture in other philosophical discussions of art.[28] Philosophers and critics who had engaged with the understanding of the system of the arts discussed sculpture but rarely proceeded to a close examination of it or saw it 'with the eye of the lover of painting'.[29] Sculpture was examined as a kind of art that projects the novelties of painting into a three dimensional form.[30] There are some systematic examinations that study and discuss sculpture. However, these examinations are focused more on the history of sculpture and the technical skills of the sculptor rather than the way sculpture is, the way it appears and is understood and the special aspects of this art form. As Martin writes, these examinations concern merely the when and what of sculpture; they are not 'about the 'how' and the 'why' of sculpture' and because of that they fail to clarify the nature of sculpture and its autonomy.[31]

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid., p. 206.
[27] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p. 27.
[28] However, Hegel's discussion on sculpture and art in general is developed in terms of his examination of the philosophy of history. Art represents a stage of Hegel's history and is examined in terms of what Hegel designates as the historical development of spirit.
[29] Martin, op. cit., p. 1. also Vance, op. cit., p. 117.
[30] Martin, op. cit., p. 1.
[31] Ibid.

According to Vance, the avoiding of the philosophical examination of sculpture was due to the fact that sculpture through the history of art was related to a wide diversity of things in comparison with other forms of art.[32] On the one hand, sculpture as well as painting differs from music and literature in the sense that sculptures are objects, physical things in themselves.[33] On the other hand, sculpture as a thing, as 'a three-dimensional object among other objects of the world claims its place' in a manner that painting cannot, at least until the emergence of minimal and non-representational painting.[34] In painting the representation and impression of a three dimensional world does not reside in a real space but a fake and illusory space which is defined by the limits of the painting.[35]

Sculpture from primitive times and antiquity up until modernism has not been developed following a set of common characteristics in terms of its materiality, size and technique or in terms of its subject matter and function. There is a variety of materials that sculpture is made of, a variety of sizes, representational subject matters and purposes that sculpture was created for. We call sculpture not merely three dimensional human representations but also primitive, Paleolithic and Neolithic figurines or three dimensional representation of animals, non representational Islamic works of art, architectural decorations and votary statues.

The meaning of sculpture, in opposition to the meaning of painting, does not refer to the work as an object or merely to its representation. The meaning of sculpture comes forth through the work as whole, its position, cultural or religious functions. Sculpture was not a fully autonomous art. Its representation, symbolism and status are gained through its position within the temple or its location. The world that is enclosed in the two dimensionality of painting, in sculpture is revealed in relation to its place. In Hegelian terms the sculpture embodies spirit, divinity, and holiness and allows it to be

[32] Vance, op. cit., p. 217.
[33] William Tucker , 'Modernism, Freedom, Sculpture', in *Art Journal*, vol. 37, no. 2, (Winter, 1977-1978), pp. 153-156, (p. 154).
[34] This distinction between sculpture and painting regards traditional painting. With modernity painting inclines towards the form of the object, by abandoning elements of representation and furthermore by becoming a physical thing, expanding its size, volume, and thus by redefining the place that it occupies. Stern, op. cit., p. 294.
[35] For Hegel is the reduction of art into a two dimensional image that gives to painting a superiority.

presented in the temple. In opposition to painting where through color it encloses the world, its motion, volume, atmosphere, darkness and light, sculpture exists in a real three dimensional world. Sculpture with its volume, physicality and worked matter becomes itself part of the world. It obtains light and motion through its relation with the world. It does not represent or enclose the divinity and holiness of gods but obtains its divinity and holiness through its place and stands as an essential part of the godly.

As Krauss writes, sculpture is a historical category rather than a universal category or term. In the history of art sculpture developed 'its own internal logic, its own set of rules' to include a diversity of cases.[36] Thus, it is difficult to designate and define what sculpture is in such a way that it could encompass all things called sculpture from antiquity until nowadays. However, Martin argues, even if there is not an accurate definition of sculpture the question about its nature does not call for a definition or a classification of its necessary and sufficient features and properties. What is important is to characterise its autonomy and seek the reasons for its existence[37] or, in Krauss's words, its 'internal logic'.

1. 2. The term sculpture in modernity

However, it is the same term 'sculpture' through the history of art that came to distinguish modern sculptures from classical and renaissance sculptures. Since Rodin's works, we do not use the terms sculpture and statue interchangeably. The word statue has been restricted to mean usually Western, pre-modern public and figurative sculptures. It denotes the way the work is indicating a representation of a human standing figure. We have no word, Tucker argues, that describes the modern sculpture, 'its standing, its being rather than its becoming, how it is rather than how it got to be there'.[38]

[36] Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', in *The Originality of the Artifact –and Other Modern Myths*, pp. 277-290, p. 280.
[37] Martin, op. cit., p. 16. According to Martin it is important to seek the autonomy of sculpture to understand what sculpture is. However the notion of autonomy and art, especially of sculpture is a recent one as it emerges with modernism. Traditional sculpture is not completely autonomous as it functions in a social and political manner.
[38] Tucker, 'Modernism, Freedom, Sculpture', p. 156

The word sculpture does not denote the work's standing and the way it is; rather it signifies the process of the artist, the way that the artist brings about the being of the work. It reflects, for Tucker, not the technique of the artist of modernity but his freedom of creation and his attention to the artificial and physical form of the work, on sculpture as 'the making and the thing made'. [39] The word sculpture became a universal term to include modern sculpture 'even when the kind of making-carving-had no relation by the actual process implied by the word'.[40] What sculpture is as a procedure is completed by the process of experiencing the work. As Tucker writes, it 'can and must be identified in terms of human experience'.[41]

And this is what Rodin and his followers achieved, to bring the viewer closer to the work. Rodin cancels the traditional connection between the work and its place, the architecture of the temple or the public place. He abandons any attempt to relate the work to a world in order to allow the viewer to come nearer to the work and make his experience part of the meaning of the work.[42]

However, the new sculpture did not bring radical changes and did not emerge, as William Tucker writes, 'with the directness, simplicity and objectivity of the new painting'.[43] Early modern sculpture continued to express traditional characteristics, particularly romantic and dramatic elements that function in a moral and public manner; characteristics that its contemporary impressionist painters had abandoned in their works.[44] Rodin's *The Age of Bronze* was accepted by the Salon in 1877, a year by which the impressionists artists, contemporaries of Rodin were having their third exhibition. Rodin's work appears at the art scene when the impressionists had already

[39] Ibid., p. 156. The Greek world for sculpture, *glypto* (etymology: *glyfo*, carve, sculpt) signifies also a sculpt or carved work. It refers to the process of the work in opposition to the word statue, *agalma*, (etymology: *aggalome*, I am happy, exulted) which signifies a three dimensional work that could be made of a any kind of materials and could represent any kind of subject matter. Specifically, the world *agalma,* in ancient Greek was used for any precious object that brings joy and delight (*aggaliasi*, elation, exultation). The world that was signifying the sculptural human representation was *andrias* (etymology: *anir*, man).
[40] Tucker, 'Modernism, Freedom, Sculpture', p. 156.
[41] Ibid., p. 156.
[42] Stern, op.cit., pp. 295-296.
[43] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p.15.
[44] Ibid., pp. 15-40, (p. 15).

been known to the public and had already constituted the major concepts and features of their art.[45]

The reason for the 'late arrival' of modern sculpture, according to Tucker, lies on the one hand in its late growth since the Renaissance and in the specific circumstances of public taste in Europe and especially France. These circumstances were formed by the tradition of French painting which was seen as the representative art of the Revolution.[46] Most of the important artists of the 19th century such as Delacroix, Corot, Courbet, Rousseau, Boudin prepared with their work the conditions for the emergence of impressionist art. Géricault, Préault, Daumier did make sculptures. However, their work remained, until the development of artistic modernism, unknown. It is only now, Tucker remarks, that these artists are considered to be the pioneers of modern sculpture, identifying in their works modern elements and tendencies.[47]

On the other hand, the late emergence of modern sculpture lies in the same physicality of sculpture. Sculpture as such could not offer the realization, flexibility, and directness of impressionist painting.[48] Impressionist painting concerns the experience of color and visual perception. In contrast, the physicality of sculpture, its mass, volume and materiality could not treat visual perception as impressionists did with their paintings. It is the same physicality of painting that allows the artist to capture the illusion of space and atmosphere and to create the visual perception of volume and depth, light and motion.[49] In order for sculpture to thematise visual perception, to bring about the realization of space and atmosphere it should put a great 'effort of organization' into form.[50] This difficulty was precisely what used to characterise the skills of the traditional sculptor, and since Michelangelo it became the measure of artistic success.[51] But sculpture in the 19th century academies of art, as Tucker writes, 'with its appalling virtuosity, the vulgarity of its subject-matter, its total lack of real

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid
[48] Ibid., pp. 15-40.
[49] Ibid., p. 17.
[50] Ibid., p. 18.
[51] Ibid., p. 19

feeling, intelligence or sensitivity, was as much the prisoner of conditions established centuries earlier'.[52]

What was to change with Rodin's sculptures was the 'freedom of handling' of clay or stone in favor of the expression of the figure rather than the figure as a representation of the human body.[53] From this perspective Rodin seems to move his work towards the physicality and flexibility of painting and specifically the post-impressionist work of Cézanne or Van Gogh. Rodin's focus on the materiality of his figures appears to overlay the predominance of the mimetic and naturalistic of traditional sculptures. Although his work is often placed in the sphere of representation his work is not to be seen in terms of mimetic representation but rather in terms of plasticity and flexibility of form. Rodin follows the ambition of impressionist artist to create the atmosphere of a world through color. But Rodin moves a step further to offer a real, three dimensional atmosphere and space, to capture through his carving and especially modeling light to bring forth through the concrete materiality of his figures the illusion of motion, and furthermore expression and feeling. (For the relation of Rodin's work to Impressionism see also chapter 4, p. 137).

Modelling, Stokes remarks, is a process that allows more freedom than carving. The treatment of the material is free in the sense that the artist can proceed to changes and corrections. 'The modelled shape is not uncovered but created'.[54] The final form of the work is not as in carving a pre-given form but comes through the process of creation and of handling of the materials. This handling of the materials is without restrictions, it is as Stokes puts it, 'an imaginative communion with the significance of the material itself'.[55]

The simplicity and economy of the new painting came in the new sculpture with Rodin's detail of handling the material. Rodin does not leave any aspect or part of the work untouched, but at the same time the work as a whole often appears as abstract, fragmentary and unfinished.[56] The formal properties of the work and the way the

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Stokes, op. cit., p. 157.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p. 108.

figure is presented are what drive the viewer's attention rather than the figure as part of a myth or a story. Thus, even if elements of myth and religion are not absent from Rodin's work they take a whole new meaning and function in terms of the form of the figures. Rodin's fragmented or unfinished figures drive the viewer 'to 'read' with his own body the missing parts of the sculpture'.[57] The meaning of his figures does not come forth merely by terms of representation but also by the way they are presented to the viewer and the way the viewer fills in the missing parts of both the form and the meaning of the work.

1. 3. The notion of object in modern sculpture

Rodin's tendency to move from representation to abstraction was to be developed in the history of modern sculpture with Brancusi and Picasso towards the 'condition' of the object and with Duchamp towards the readymade object itself.[58] Brancusi's work brought into the history of art two important and at the same time opposite tendencies of the art before 1914. The first tendency is a new relation between art and life and the second a new conception of abstract art. Even if he himself did not consider his work to be abstract, he became one of the most important abstract artists.[59] However, the notion of abstraction in his work does not come as a deduction or reduction of the image of the objects into a carved work. Abstraction in his work is the manifestation of an image of an object.[60] And this is what his aim was: to reveal the real world through the shape of his work, through form which in Brancusi's work becomes according to Krauss the 'manifestation of surface'.[61] Brancusi produces works from images that appear 'already established'.[62] The round surface of the figures and the ovoid shape that characterises part of his work could be seen to incline towards the form of a found object, 'a form that is in a real sense given to Brancusi rather than invented by him'.[63] In the same way, Krauss remarks, 'the aesthetic act resolves

[57] Ibid., p.109.
[58] Ibid., pp. 15-40, 107-127.
[59] Edith Balas, 'Object-Sculpture, Base and Assemblage in the Art of Constantin Brancusi', in *Art Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1. (Autumn, 1978), pp. 36-46, (p. 46).
[60] Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, (Cambridge, Mass, London: MIT Press, 1981). pp.69-103, (p. 103).
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., p. 84.
[63] Ibid., p. 88.

around the placement of this discovery object which transposes it into a particular context from which it will 'read' as art'.[64]

What Rodin and Brancusi manage to do is to free sculpture from its traditional context, the architectural or public space and the monumental pedestal. Rodin's and Brancusi's sculptures are autonomous, they stand by themselves independent from their location. For both art is a happening within the work itself. The autonomy of Rodin's sculptures comes through expressivity of his figures which cancels any adjustment of his sculptures to the surrounding place. (For a further discussion on the relation between the work of Rodin and its place see chapter 4, pp. 125-139). Specifically, in Rodin's work the relation or rather separation of the work and its context is due to the materiality of the work, through the detail of carving and modeling. The work standing on the ground without a pedestal seems isolated and alienated from its setting. However, the large size of his sculptures and the expressivity of the bodies of his figures drive the viewer closer to the work and manage to surpass the isolation of his sculptures from their setting. (For a further discussion on the matter of isolation and homelessness of Rodin's sculptures see chapter 4, pp. 125-139).

The relationship and contradiction between the work and its context in Brancusi's work emerges also through the materiality of the work. In opposition to the details of Rodin's large scale work Brancusi brings the polished surfaces of his small size figures. To overcome the break between the work and its site Brancusi creates for each sculpture its own setting, its own base, its own pedestal. The meaning of his work progresses through the analogy between the pedestal and sculpture. The pedestal seems to support the work both in terms of form and concept, making it part of the work. Brancusi's pedestals are what give art status to his objects, they constitute the world and the place of the work. In fact for Brancusi his pedestals are part of the work.[65] As Balas writes, Brancusi 'was not making pedestals', what we take to be the

[64] As Krauss writes 'one finds oneself at this point in an area of almost insidious overlap between Brancusi and Duchamp. For like the readymades, the ovoid of *The Beginning of the World* … is a found object, a form that is in a real sense given to Brancusi rather than invented by him. Similarly the aesthetic act resolves around the placement of this discovery object which transposes it into a particular context from which it will 'read' as art'. Ibid.
[65] Balas, op. cit., p. 38.

base or the pedestal of the work represented Brancusi's conception of art.[66] The form of the pedestal, its size and material come to achieve an inseparable unity with the figure or object.[67]

Brancusi however, in opposition to Rodin, abandons even more the role of the narrative in the understanding of sculpture. In Brancusi's work the meaning does not depend on a dialectical process of experiencing the work. His sculptures are seen from the beginning as a whole and as a unity they drive the viewer not to observe the details of his materiality but rather gaze at the surface of the work and its contradictions with its base.

In the history of modern sculpture Brancusi and Duchamp followed the same approach on the matter of 'sculptural narrative'; 'both of them rejected the technologically based role of analysis in sculpture, creating work that questioned the very role of narrative structure by gravitating toward that which is unitary and unanalyzable'.[68] However, Brancusi's works, in opposition to the readymades of Duchamp, can still be placed, Krauss argues, 'within the arena of representation.'[69] Specifically, Brancusi's sculptures play between the condition of a figure and that of an object or readymade form but neither facet prevails such as in the case of the *Sleeping Muse* (fig. 3).[70] But even when the work appears to prevail as an object as in the case of *The Begging of the World* (fig. 40) the work's image alters through its 'theatrical presence', through its symbolical or better metaphorical status.[71] What characterize these works is that their ovoid, polished shape brings forth a 'tension

[66] According to Balas, Brancusi himself did not draw a conceptual distinction between the functional object in his studio and his sculptures. His work thus is set between the condition of an object as a utilitarian object or artifact and the condition of the object as art. Ibid.
[67] In Derrida terms the base constitutes the *parergon* of the work. It 'comes as an extra', as an addition to the work. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 57. Brancusi's carved figures are to be seen in terms of representation rather as mere objects. But their polished surfaces, in addition to their small size need an addition, something extra to complete it as figures and as works of art. This need is not to be understood as a lack in the sense of an emptiness. But it makes it stand as a work of art as 'come back, equal or similar to itself'. Ibid., p. 80-81.
[68] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 103.
[69] Ibid., p. 84.
[70] Ibid., p. 114.
[71] Ibid., p. 116. As critics often claim *The Begging of the World* is to be seen as a metaphor of the origin of the world, as the primary core of the birth of world. However, placed in Brancusi's production of art, *The Begging of the World* will not be read as a story of cosmic origins. It could be seen as a continuity of his previous ovoid shape works, as a metaphor of the beginning or birth of life, of sight, speech, hearing and smell.

between the real and the invented', [72] between their status as object and as work of art. Their understanding is developed through this interplay of reality and art, artifact and artwork.

This interplay between reality and art is developed between the figure and its pedestals but also between the work as a whole and its space. This relationship between the work and its space appears often as an additional element that comes to complete the metaphorical meaning of the work. The shiny surfaces of the figures appear as if they are absorbing the atmosphere of the world around them, not the world as it is but its light, colors and shadows. Brancusi with his work achieves not merely the representation of the external world and its objects but the isolation in each work of an idea of an object. By abstracting and removing the details from the objects and figures he isolates an essence of them. What his work represents does not come as the result of abstraction and reduction but for him through realism. As he states, 'that which they call abstract is the most realistic, because what is real is not the exterior form but the idea, the essence of things'.[73]

Brancusi's carved works as well as Picasso's constructions and paintings have achieved 'the success of 'the object'' in both sculpture and painting. But as Tucker argues, it seems that these artists 'have felt an impulse to move backwards or forwards violently'.[74] Brancusi challenges the boundary of art and reality with works in which their form appears readymade and their reflection upon their shiny surface integrates the surrounding atmosphere, a part of reality itself. Picasso on the other hand integrates reality through the use of the same readymade objects into his cubist constructions and succeeds to bring what Tucker calls an objective result.[75] Specifically, he succeeds in this by the material he uses, that is, un-worked wood, string, nails and everyday objects and having readymade objects as his subject matter (fig. 5 and 6). In opposition to the sculptures of Brancusi which come to represent figures, the human body, and faces in Picasso's constructions represent the objects themselves. The viewer does not transit from what he primarily sees to an image.

[72] Ibid., p. 116.
[73] Garmen Giménez and Matthew Gale (eds), Costantin Brancusi: *The Essence of Things*, (London: Tate, 2004), pp. 127-133, (p. 133).
[74] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p.107.
[75] Ibid., p. 108.

The image in Picasso's constructions is the object itself. Even though his theme comes from traditional still life painting, that is glasses, dishes, musical instruments, his work shows greater autonomy than this artistic tradition and complete in itself by bringing it closer to the status of the object.[76] His works are abstracted from both the pictorial space of traditional still lifes and the monumental status of traditional sculpture.

The object status that Picasso gives to his work emerges as a process throughout his artistic career from his cubist painting to his constructions. As Octavio Paz writes, what Picasso succeeded in doing with his works, Duchamp achieved by a single work 'that is nothing less than the negation of work in the modern sense of the word'.[77] Painting emerges as a criticism of previous movements but the movement, Paz argues, emerges as the criticism of painting. The pictures of Picasso, Paz writes, are images, but the works of Duchamp 'are a meditation on the image'.[78] Duchamp's readymades could be seen as a synthesis of Brancusi's polished carved works which look like readymade forms and Picasso's use of readymade and un-worked tools in his constructions. Duchamp's polished urinal calls the viewer not to see it as an image of something else, but rather to gaze it as an interesting construction. His *Fountain* (fig. 7) provokes the viewer to think the image of the urinal as a readymade object in the art world.

This tendency toward the status of the object is what characterizes the same ambition of modernism.[79] It begins during World War I with a reaction to traditional aesthetic principles and with the emergence of a new shift, 'a new convention' towards the condition of the object.[80] The notion and idea of object continued to influence the artists of modernity, to become the foremost 'aspiration of modernism from about 1870 until the Second World War'.[81] It was this 'objectiveness', Bolge remarks, that pushed artists to abandon the canons and techniques of traditional art.[82] The work

[76] Ibid., p. 65.
[77] Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp Appearance Stripped Bare,* trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner, (New York: Arcade Pub., 1990), p. 1.
[78] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[79] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p.107.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] George S. Bolge, 'The Painting/Sculpture Connection', in *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 3, no. 2. (Autumn, 1982 – Winter, 1983), pp. 54-56, p. 55.

with new objective methods and techniques, 'independent of its maker, of its audience and of the world in general' is to be considered in an objective manner, as Tucker writes, with 'its *own* demands' and 'its *own* objective existence'.[83] As Bratu and Marculescu write, it was 'a sort of radical reduction of all previous aesthetic meanings'.[84] This reduction appears as a process which reduces the objects and their objectivity not to a subjective meaning but rather to the absence of meaning. Particularly, as Bratu and Marculescu state, 'phenomenological reduction, as *époché*, is a multistaged process within which objects, objective meanings—may be reduced in a pure striving toward what could be called an empty space of meaning'.[85] Primarily in poetry and painting but also in sculpture, music and architecture the notion of object appears as 'an ideal condition of self-contained, self-generating apartness for the work of art'.[86]

Painting moved towards a three dimensional art and evolved, Bolge argues, 'into an art form that consciously rejected pictorial depth in space based on perspective' to become a physical object in itself.[87] And this in order to stress the same means of painting, its flatness, two dimensionality and the color itself rather than representation. Poetry, on the other hand, stresses language and the appearance of the poem rather than verse, meaning or messages.[88] In contrast to the 'object-status' of a painting or a poem, which seem capable of sustaining and 'supporting' their meaning, the 'object-status' of sculpture limits or even appears to cancel its meaning.[89] Painting, architecture and music

> are in some sense withdrawn or protected from the sudden and violent intrusion into consciousness offered by sculpture when the habitual meaning is suddenly

[83] The modern world as Tucker writes, 'came to denote an ideal condition of self-contained, self-generating apartness for the work of art, with its own rules, its own order, its own materials, independent of its maker, of its audience and of the world in general'. Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p.108.
[84] Horia Bratu and Ilena Marculescu, 'Aesthetics and Phenomenology', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 37, no. 3, (Winter, 1979), pp. 335-349, (p. 344).
[85] Ibid.
[86] As Tucker writes, 'Out of objective perception, objective method, developed the objective consideration of the work itself—its *own* demands issuing from its *own* objective existence-the flatness, bounded rectangularity, colour and tactility of the painting, the appearance of the printed poem on the page, with the simultaneous objective consideration of the conventions needed to support the illusion of space and volume in painting and meaning in poetry'. *The Language of Sculpture*, p.108.
[87] Bolge, op. cit., p. 55.
[88] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, pp. 107-108.
[89] Ibid.

> challenged, without the expectation created by the fact of the wall or the rectangular canvas, the fact of the building.[90]

Modern sculpture, Tucker writes, 'once it has recognised itself, has no particular container, no announcement as it were of its own arrival'.[91] The problem with modern sculptures is that the more the work approaches the form of objects, the more the distinction between artwork and artifact, art and life disappears 'to the point at which all reasons for making sculpture, and indeed art in general, seemed to disappear'.[92] The 'objectivity of method, his workmanlike physical approach' of Rodin's sculptures, furthermore the 'success of 'the object'' of Brancusi's and Picasso's works have reduced the distance between artwork and artifact. [93] But in the case of Duchamp's readymades, this distinction appears to be altogether cancelled.

The category of sculpture included through history of art a diverse range of objects, subject matters and material. But as Krauss argues, sculpture as other forms of art has its own rules, which even if they could 'be applied to a variety of situations, are not themselves open to very much change'.[94] As Krauss writes 'Duchamp's concern with sculpture as a kind of aesthetic strategy'.[95] Duchamp's readymades as three dimensional objects placed in an art space could only fall into the category of sculpture but not into the category of aesthetics.

Krauss places Duchamp in the history of art and particularly in the history of modern art to argue that Duchamp still focuses on the aesthetics of his art but in a negative way. The 'aesthetic strategy' of Duchamp's works concerns their experience not as beautiful and interesting objects but merely as objects. Duchamp's, for Krauss, 'aggressive and formally offhand' work rejects the traditional role of the analysis and aesthetic interpretation of art. Duchamp's work questions the role of narrative by creating works that are 'unitary and unanalyzable'.[96] Thus, the experience of these works and their understanding as art could not be based on an aesthetic analysis or reading of them but on a theoretical or in Danto's terms, on a philosophical approach.

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[90] Tucker, 'Modernism, Freedom, Sculpture', p. 155.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p. 107.
[93] Ibid., pp. 107-108.
[94] Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', p. 280.
[95] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 103.
[96] Ibid.

Duchamp's 'readymades are unworked and, for the most part are not representational. They are common objects slipped into the stream of aesthetic discourse, as a series of questions to which there is no certain reply'.[97] Even if we consider readymades to be unique objects or forms in the field of art they are not unique as everyday objects.[98] They are, Danto remarks, 'beyond good and bad taste', 'commonplace and dull' objects. To see them as art we have to see them, according to Danto, in an interpretive manner. Someone could respond to the readymades in an aesthetic manner but someone else might not. Duchamp, Danto remarks, succeeded in excluding 'aesthetics from the concept of art'.[99] For Danto aesthetics in the work of Duchamp is distanced from art. That is, the question of art does not call merely for approaches in taste, beauty and pleasure but for something deeper than that and more philosophical. Aesthetics, Danto remarks, 'has been a fairly marginal philosophical subject'.[100] But philosophy could respond to these works in a much more precise way. As Danto remarks,

> it was only when I encountered Warhol's *Brillo Box* that I saw, in a moment of revelation, how one could make philosophy out of art. But *Brillo Box* has only the sensuous properties possessed by Brillo boxes, when the latter are conceived of merely as decorated containers. A lot of Warhol's works are aesthetically as neutral as the personality he endeavored to project.[101]

For Danto, the Brillo box displayed as a work of art is making a kind of philosophy. It could be seen more as a statement about art, as an argument on the way objects are transformed into art. Despite its design or beautiful colors the Brillo box in the art space does not become art due to its external or aesthetic properties. Everyday objects could possess aesthetic properties but their properties do not make them works of art. For Danto it is not through aesthetics but through philosophy of art that these works could gain their art status. And Duchamp makes the turn from aesthetics to the philosophy of art a necessity for the art identity of his works.

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[97] Ibid., p. 84.
[98] Arthur Danto, 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defence', in *History and Theory*, vol. 37, no. 4, Theme Issue 37: Danto and His Critics: Art History, Historiography and After the End of Art, (December, 1998), pp. 127-143, (p. 133).
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

1. 4. Modern art and traditional art

A characteristic, according to Luban, which can be applied to a great number of modern works is that they are 'fraudulent'. As Luban writes, '*the characteristic failing of modernist work, when it fails, is not that it is that it is bad but that it is fraudulent*, by which I mean this: art is the working of a medium – objects, pigments, sounds, words – but not every working of a medium is art'.[102] But does the new in the history of art always appear as non-art, or fraudulent art? Does the new art and hence the art which does not encompass past aesthetic conditions and principles inevitably appear as fraud?

Radically modern works of art are not mere objects or meaningless creations. For Danto it is precisely their separation from aesthetic qualities of the past, such as the mimetic, that gives to these works their art meaning. Mimesis was no longer considered to be a necessary or sufficient condition of art, for its essence and for its beauty. Kandinsky's works survived, Danto claims, despite the fact that his works do not possess the mimetic condition.[103] (Further on mimesis and art see pp. 58-59).

In the history of art new art movements did not have an immediate reception as good art and even recognition as art. In order, for example, for post-impressionist art, Danto argues, to be 'accepted *as* art' it was essential not so much to focus on 'a revolution in taste' but rather on the new characteristics of the accepted works of art. The result of the new acceptance was that post-impressionist works of art were taken as art and furthermore a variety of anthropological objects, such as masks and weapons transferred from historical or anthropological museums to art museums.[104] These objects do not become art objects but gain the status of an artwork. What was once considered to be an artefact is now seen as a work of art. The fraudulent art becomes art through the history of art and changes in art genres and in the art world in general.

[102] David Luban, 'Legal Modernism', in *Michigan Law Review*, vol. 84, (August, 1986), pp. 1656-1695, (pp. 1657 -1658).
[103] Arthur Danto, 'The Artworld', in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 61, no.19, (15 October, 1964), pp. 571-584, (p. 571).
[104] Ibid., p. 573.

The development of modern art and its relation or rather opposition to the art of the past could be seen as a dialectical progress in the history of art. According to Greenberg, artistic modernism can be placed in a dialectical history of art and be understood as another historical turn following classicism and romanticism, which at the same time shares or revives characteristics from the art of the past. [105] It introduces new elements and innovations but to achieve the high quality of the art of the past, modernism assimilates elements of traditional styles, methods, techniques and themes.[106] The form in these works, even if different from traditional art, has both a language and organization, that is, a vocabulary and syntax.[107] In poetry these formal experiences come through a difficult and 'allusive' language which forces 'the reader out of the voyeuristic mode in which we customarily appreciate scholarship'.[108] In addition, in music the predominance of form comes through 'the tone-rows and folk songs and dissonance.'[109]

For Luban, Kandinsky's *Improvisations* (fig. 8), is the first abstract painting to acquire its value through a rejection of pictorial representation. It encounters the criticism of the tradition of pictorial painting 'as if it were a subject matter'.[110] Modern painting utilizes the means of painting, two dimensionality, flatness and colours to provoke us to see the painting, not as a picture, or image, but as a painting.[111] The continuity of traditional elements of art is or rather becomes the means of modernism to declare its reaction to these phenomena.[112] Thus, non-representation or abstract paintings 'make us see that representation was merely a convention, a limitation'.[113] Modernism, Greenberg writes, 'embraces the conventional polarities of literary and art history; or rather it abandons them (and in doing so exposes their limited usefulness).'[114] It distinguishes itself from previous aesthetic movements 'by its inclusiveness' and 'its openness'.[115]

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[105] Clement Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', in *New Literary History*, vol. 3, no. 1, (Autumn, 1977), pp. 171-175, (p.171).
[106] Ibid., p. 172.
[107] Luban, op. cit., p. 1671.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., p. 1660.
[110] Ibid., p. 1663.
[111] Ibid., p. 1661.
[112] Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', p.171.
[113] Luban, op. cit., p. 1663.
[114] Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', p.171.
[115] Ibid.

The lack of traditional qualities in modern art appears as a criticism of traditional art but on the other hand it is through this lack that modern art manages to create something new. What modernism rejects and criticizes is not traditional art in its whole. Rather, modernism is opposed to the means of realism or illusion that pre-modernism art uses in order to present a different and idealized world. Traditional painting performs thus as if it was not painting.[116] The viewer-beholder is turned into a 'voyeur' who is taken by a story, a narrative or a myth, can 'forget herself, her predicament'.[117] The task of modern painting is to exile the viewer from the beautiful world of illusionistic and representational traditional art and make her see the painting as painting, as beholder of the painting.[118] But the criticism and rejection of tradition is not the primary aim of artistic modernism. As Luban writes, 'the real task of modernist art is only in part to make us discontent with the past: it is also to make art'.[119]

The rejection of the element of narrative and representation make art a thing among other things in everyday life. But this appears to be the same task of a great part of avant-garde art. Modern art appears to deny following a common approach, position, and task and to refute any notion or a definition.[120] There are two main directions that modern art seems to have followed; the one is a progression within the limits of art and the second a cancelation of the same concept of art and aesthetics and a progression towards an anti-art, or non-art. In particular, De Duve argues, some modern artists challenged the traditional concept of art but they were still confining themselves 'within the specific boundaries of painting and sculpture'. Other artists influenced by Duchamp challenged with their works both the notion of art. They 'played', De Duve writes, 'a game on the definition of art in general'.[121]

[116] Luban., op. cit., p. 1665.
[117] Specifically, according to Luban, formalist approach of art proceeds into a more austere critic of pre-modern art and particularly painting churching it 'that it lies about world' and furthermore that it lies 'about what painting is'. Ibid., p. 1663-1665, (p. 1664) .
[118] Ibid., p. 1667.
[119] Ibid., p. 1694.
[120] Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', p.171.
[121] Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, (Publisher: Cambridge, MIT Press, 1999), pp. 91-92.

Duchamp's readymades and later found art and conceptual art aimed to 'expand' the notion of art to include objects that not only do not share any aesthetic features with what we know as art but as such they do not have any ontological differences from everyday objects. In modernity 'art', Danto writes, 'became an object for itself'. The turn from art into art-object follows historically the turn from pre-modern to modern art. According to Danto the historical shift into the period of modernity does not refer to or indicate merely another period but 'a new kind of period' while at the same time 'it marks a kind of crisis'.[122]

To sum up, the work of Rodin orientates a new beginning for the art of sculpture. Rodin turned sculpture away from mimetic representation. His subject matter is not enclosed in the materiality of his work but he let it happen, appear through the unfinished surface of his figures. With Rodin the harmonization of the unity of the relation between form and idea that characterises traditional sculpture is challenged. Is the unity between form and idea in modern sculpture broken? In Rodin's work the form does not link directly to a specific idea because the idea or subject matter of his work is not completed. The unfinished character of the form of his figures reflects the unfinished character of his subject matter. The apprehension of his work is left to be completed by the viewer.

In Rodin's sculpture the idea is still the form. The form of his figures is coherent with the subject matter, but in opposition to traditional sculpture form and idea are not perfectly and harmoniously coherent. The unity between form and idea and hence the beauty of his sculptures does not derive through the perfect anatomy of the body and especially of the face but through the braking up of the anatomy of the whole body in favour of the expression. The elements of abstraction of the bodies of Rodin's figures do not constitute a reduction of the expressivity of his figures. On the contrary it is due to abstraction that his figures express suffering, effort, pleasure, love or thinking.

Early modern sculpture appears to preserve the unity between form and idea. Even if the turn from mimetic representation to abstraction becomes more pronounced the form always refers to the content. In Brancusi's work, for example, the abstraction of

[122] Arthur Danto, 'Art, Evolution, and the Consciousness of History', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 44, no. 3, (Spring, 1986), pp. 223-233, (p. 231).

his figures indicates the abstraction of his subject matter in order to reach the essence of it.

However, Duchamp's readymades and art movements that were influenced by his work, especially found art and conceptual art, appear to break the unity between form and idea or concept. The urinal of Duchamp exhibited as art is not supposed to have the same content or in this case function as the actual readymade object in everyday life. The meaning of these works appears to lie on the breaking of the unity of form and content. But how could an object be seen as a work of art if the unity of form and content is totally broken? For Hegel all kinds of works of art represent different forms of the unity of form and content but this unity can never be broken.

The next chapter focuses particularly on the relationship between form and content in found art and conceptual art. By focusing on two movements of found and conceptual art and on the distinction between form and content the examination aims to justify their meaning and understanding on the ground of phenomenology.

2. Modern object sculpture: content versus form

> Art can be understood only by its law of movements, not according to any set of invariants. It is defined by its relation to what is not.[123]

> It exists only in relation to its other; it is the process that transpires with its other.[124]

2. 1. The *Fountain*

The notion of freedom was central in discussions of modern art, its creation and meaning and as de Duve indicates it was precisely the concept of freedom in art that motivated the *Society of Independent Artists* to organise an exhibition without jury. The exhibition was to be held in April 1917 at the Grand Central Palace, a huge building in New York .[125] The only rule of the Society was the motto 'No jury, no prizes'.[126] Thus, 'anyone' who paid six dollars could exhibit two paintings without having to be accepted by a jury. One day before the opening of the exhibition, Walter Arensberg and Rockwell Kent, two of the organisers of the exhibition, were arguing standing in front of a white object signed and dated: by R. Mutt, 1917. 'The pristine oval white object on a black pedestal gleamed triumphantly. It was a man's urinal upside down'.[127]

'Was Duchamp's urinal a joke or a test? Or was it both?' de Duve asks. Both jokes and tests are plentiful in the history of artistic modernism and they are to a great extent two aspects of the same work. Futurist, Dadaist, expressionist, and surrealist works of art had already put the history of art to a test. [128]

However, in the case of Duchamp's readymades

> the joke was a test in more than one sense, for the testing devise was obviously designed to be itself submitted to a test: if the hanging committee of the show at the grand Central Palace consented to exhibit the gleaming object poking fun at them,

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[123] Adorno, op. cit., p. 3.
[124] Ibid.
[125] De Duve, op. cit., p. 89.
[126] Ibid., p. 97.
[127] Ibid., pp. 90-91, (p. 91).
[128] Ibid.

> they would have to call it art. If they were to pass the test, so would it. They didn't.[129]

The reaction was to come the day after the opening of the exhibition with a press release that stated that the fountain is not by definition art but it 'may be a very useful object in its place'; its place however is not in an exhibition of works of art.[130] The fountain was not displayed at the end in the exhibition or written in the catalogue and was never seen by the visitors as it had been lost. What happened to the original object is unknown, despite of the various stories surrounding its fate that say that it was banned from the exhibition or it was stolen or destroyed.[131]

The story of the readymades did not begin with the *Fountain*. The *Fountain* was not the first to appear on the scene; 'on the contrary, it was one of the last 'unassisted' ones' which start 'their paradoxical public career' on the 1917 in the independents artist show. The previous years Duchamp had already displayed two readymades in the exhibition of modern art. They were called *Bottle Rack*, 1914 (fig. 9) and *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, 1915 (fig. 10) a snow shovel but received no attention either from the visitors or the public.[132] In these years Duchamp produced his first two readymades marking his involvement with industrial objects. And this signifies the main period of his career - the mature one, which was driven by an obsession with the nature of art, with 'what it is that 'makes' a work of art'.[133]

It was due to the *Fountain* that Duchamp's readymades today have gained the status of artwork, and this cannot be denied.[134] Thus in the end the *Fountain* passed the test and as de Duve argues, 'that's the irony of the joke'.[135] What cannot also be denied is that artists after Duchamp pushed the limits of art even further. Specifically, the artistic movements of found art and conceptual art challenged art both as an object and as a concept by presenting objects to be seen as works of art that not only did not share any aesthetic or artistic features with traditional art but often did not have any

[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., pp. 98-99.
[131] Ibid., p. 98.
[132] Ibid., pp. 91-105.
[133] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 72.
[134] De Duve, op. cit., p. 91
[135] Ibid.

ontological differences from everyday objects. Still by being presented as works of art they need to be ontologically different from their identical everyday object.[136]

In order for found art and conceptual art to achieve distinction from their commonplace counterparts it is claimed that art is to be seen not in terms of its primary function or purpose but as a vehicle for a purely formal understanding of the object, in the case of found art, or conceptual understanding of the object, in the case of conceptual art.

Conceptual art and found art share the aim of breaking the unity between form/appearance and content/idea. Both appear to maintain the superiority of the one in opposition to the other, that is, form in found art and content in conceptual art.[137] Found art seeks the separation from the content, or spirit to indicate the predominance of form. And furthermore, conceptual art aims to sustain the value of the content/spirit over the form.[138] Can found art and conceptual art be considered 'to be valid instances of art'?[139] Can something that is merely sensible or merely thinkable be a work of art?

2. 2. Artistic modernism

Until modernity the artist usually worked on commission; he made works for churches, monuments for public squares that had a social significance and message. As Stern states,

> an artist however, who means his product not to become an integral part of the existing social world, must feel either as an outcast or as a man, who, instead of contributing to the world, has to create a whole world of his own; in short, as a God.[140]

[136] Arthur Danto, 'The Transfiguration of the Commonplace', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 33, no. 2, (Winter, 1974), pp. 139-148, (p. 142).
[137] William Fowkes, 'A Hegelian Critique of Found Art and Conceptual Art', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 37, no. 2 (Winter, 1978), pp. 157-168, (p. 163).
[138] Ibid., p. 166.
[139] Ibid., p. 158.
[140] Stern, op. cit., p. 304.

According to Greenberg, it was their search for the absolute that led them to abstract or non-representational art- free from the universal and eternal values of art.[141]

> The avant-garde poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms, in the way nature itself is valid in the way of landscape—not its picture—is aesthetically valid; something given, increase, independent of meanings, similar or originals.[142]

What they reject as relative in traditional art is the representation of the world as beautiful and pleasant. They wanted to create an art that does not imitate and represent the world. Their ambition was to transcend the relativity of the representation and idealisation of the world by traditional art and make a new, original and at the same time pure and absolute kind of art. But how could a work of art be totally new, original and still valid as art? The modern artist reacting to his weakness to reach in a complete manner the absolute encounters some relative aesthetic values. 'The very values in the name of which he invokes the absolute are relative values, the values of aesthetics'. Thus, he ends up imitating not God, but the procedures and disciplines of art themselves. As Greenberg argues, 'this is the genesis of the 'abstract''.[143]

The artist of modernity abstracted from his art the content and theme in order to create an art that could stand just for the sake of art.

> [T]he avant-garde poet or artist sought to maintain the high level of this art by both narrowing and raising it to the expression of an absolute in which all relativities and contradictions would be either resolved or beside the point. 'Art for art's sake' and 'pure poetry' appear, and subject matter or content becomes something to be avoided like a plague.[144]

The modern artist turns his attention from themes of ordinary experience to the medium of his own art. Abstract or non-representational art could be seen as aesthetically valid through their originality. The new and original could 'only be

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[141]Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', in *Partisan Review*, vol. 6, no. 5, (1939), pp. 34-49, (p. 2).
[142] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[143] Ibid., p. 3. The absolute understood in terms of Hegel's philosophy of art is to be taken as the search of the modern artist to find the spiritual, the conceptual and philosophical. However, the notion of absolute in Greenberg formalist approach does not have a spiritual or metaphysical meaning but is to be understood as the totally new and original.
[144] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

found in the very processes or disciplines' that modern art has imitated by traditional art. These processes and formal properties become then the subject matter of the new art.[145]

2.3. Hegel, found art and conceptual art

The modern period begins by proclaiming a superiority of form and ends up declaring the supremacy of concept and idea in art. This development is reflected in the two main artistic movements or categories, found art and conceptual art. Both found art and conceptual art challenge the unity between form/appearance and content/idea/spirit. Found art seeks a separation from the content, or spirit, in order to indicate the predominance of form. Furthermore, conceptual art aims to sustain the value of the content/spirit over the form.[146]

Found art and conceptual art placed in Hegel's system of art could be seen as the 'recognition' of the disconnection of form and content.[147] They challenge Hegel's notion of art 'by falling', Fowkes writes, 'outside or at the very outmost fringe of the continuum and yet claiming to be valid instances of art, in some cases claiming to be the most valid contemporary instances'.[148] But is it possible for art to survive merely as form or concept?

For Hegel everything is spirit. What distinguishes everyday objects from art objects is that art '*manifests* itself as spirit'.[149] Thus, even if other objects in the world constituted by spirit, only works of art can be perceived as the manifestation of spirit.[150] 'Its physical shell, whether this be colors, lines, tones, or mental images, is not to be taken at face value; it is evidence of spiritual activity'.[151] Art in Hegel's philosophy of history belongs to the first stage of the absolute spirit. For Hegel the spirit is driven towards its absolute freedom by disconnecting itself from form and materiality, passing through three stages, art, religion and philosophy. In art the spirit

[145] Ibid., p. 3.
[146] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 166.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., p. 158.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid., p. 159.
[151] Ibid., p. 157.

progresses from the massiveness of architecture to the three dimensionality of sculpture to the two dimensionality of painting. It reaches a higher form as it moves to music and to poetry, the art of language and thought. However, the materiality of art as much as it is reduced in poetry is still what holds back the spirit from reaching its final purpose.[152]

For Hegel the process towards the absolute is a process towards the conceptual. Form and materiality are not suitable for the manifestation of the conceptual idea of the absolute. The sensuous is what eliminates art in relation to religious and then philosophy which is placed in the higher level in Hegel's philosophy of history. Thus Hegel, by placing philosophy at the end of the continuum, liberates it from form. In philosophy there is no separation between form and content but they are considered as one, for both are conceptual.[153]

Art on the other hand can not be separated from form. At the end of the continuum of the absolute spirit, works can no longer be considered as art. This includes works that 'are so bogged down in matter that they contain no trace of [the] self-conscious attempt by spirit to manifest itself, or those works with so little physical anchorage that there is no visibility or sensuous intuitedness of spirit.'[154] On the other hand, following Hegel's philosophy of art we could argue that there are objects that could be considered as works of art because though they do not break, but still they challenge the unity between form and content. Symbolic art constitutes the beginning of Hegel's absolute spirit of art, the art that claims the superiority of form over concept. At the other end of the first stage of the absolute spirit Hegel places romantic art, the art that exist almost in terms of concept and thought proclaiming thus the superiority of concept over the form.

Could modern art be understood either as what Hegel names symbolic or romantic art? Fowkes seeks to understand found art and conceptual art in terms of symbolic and romantic art. The problem of placing found art and conceptual art in Hegel's aesthetics is that these two arts do not become works of art but mere things or objects.

[152] Hegel, op. cit.
[153] Even if the content in philosophy emerges through language as in poetry it does not consider as in poetry separated from form.
[154] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 158.

For Hegel art has a religious function. The three stages of art, the symbolic, classical and romantic are representations of the spirit of God, manifestations of the divinity and holiness of God, as has been noted in chapter 1.

To understand found art and conceptual art or generally modern art in terms of Hegel's aesthetics we need to see it not as an expression of the pre-existing stages of the art but rather as their continuity, that is, to see what art is after Hegel's death of art. In opposition to Fowkes' Hegelian critique of modern art, placing it in Hegel's progression of art, Adorno sees modern art as an internalization of Hegel's death of art.

For Adorno modern art is aware of its death and its failure to be the kind of art that it was before. 'Art responds to the loss of its self-evidence not simply by concrete transformations of its procedures and comportments but by trying to pull itself free from its own concept as from a shackle: the fact that it is art'. [155]

> Society once enjoyed a blessed closure when every artwork had its place, function, and legitimation and therefore enjoyed its own closure, whereas today everything is constructed in emptiness and artworks are internally condemned to failure.[156]

New works of art are exposed to 'the danger of complete failure'.[157] But artworks could become genial when the possibility of failure is present.[158] For Adorno it is due to the possibility of failure that art is preserved.[159] Art in modernity for Adorno is aware of its inability to reach the greatness of the art of the past. This awareness comes forth through the breaking of the unity of form and concept.

Yet, there are objects, Fowkes argues, that could be considered to be works of art even if they either 'seek but fall short of the perfect unity of inner meaning and external shape…or because they transcend this unity by entering more fully into the realm of spirit.'[160] Could, as found art claims, 'everything sensible' be considered as a

[155] Adorno, op. cit., p. 22.
[156] Ibid., p. 206.
[157] Ibid., p. 207.
[158] Ibid., p. 225.
[159] Ibid., p. 206.
[160] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 158.

work of art as long as it is placed by an artist in a collection place?[161] Or could, as conceptual art claims, 'everything thinkable' be considered as a work of art and be detached from any external relations with things in the world?[162]Is conceptual art to be understood only conceptually, 'as a way of doing philosophy by other means'?[163]

2. 3. 1. Found art

For Fowkes the term 'found art' does not refer to a specific artistic phenomenon or movement but to 'instances' or artistic phenomena of the 20th century. What these works share is that they minimize the role of the 'technical skill of the artist'.[164] The aim of the artist of found art is 'to find rather than create works of art'.[165] The artist of found art aims to expand the realm of art such that it includes objects that were not previously thought of as art: found objects such as machine made objects (fig. 11 and 12) and natural objects.[166] The notion of found, Fowkes suggests, allows us to encounter abstract and surrealist work of arts, works such as Duchamp's readymades, the use of found objects into other works such as paintings, assemblance or collage, and some musical compositions. In addition, as Fowkes claims, if we are not confining ourselves in the 20th century, it allows us to include also archaeological objects such as fragments and ruins.[167]

Fowkes claims that found art as well as relics from traditional art could have an aesthetic appeal. He seems to follow the Romantic aesthetics in which the

[161] Roger Seamon, 'The Conceptual Dimension in Art and the Modern Theory of Artistic Value', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 59, no. 2, (Spring, 2001), pp. 139-15, (p. 144).
[162] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 166.
[163] Seamon, op. cit., p. 144.
[164] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 159.
[165] Ibid., p. 158.
[166] Ibid., p. 160.
[167] As Fowkes suggests, we can encounter as instances of found art works/aesthetic phenomena that forego the chronological frame of modern era, such as ruins and decaying works of art or archaeological objects. As Fowkes argues, the aesthetic interest and value of temple in ruin derives from the same presentences of the temple that is, from its physical appearance, its signs of age or damage. Even if we might acknowledge a temple's spiritual origin its beauty is formed by nature and chance. Fowkes, pp. 158,160. This idea was expressed in the work of Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments'. According to Riegl often the old monuments are valued in terms of the aesthetics or art in general of the present time and often as he writes we see 'something modern in the old'. The historical value of old monuments is turned into an aesthetic value which reflects not the time of the origin of the monument but the present. See Alois Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin', in *Oppositions: A Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, vol. 25, (Fall 1982), pp. 21-51, 47-50, (p. 49).

appreciation of the beautiful considered not only art but nature, and human constructions which have lost their original form such as architectural fragments and ruins. On the contrary, Duchamp does not ask us to see his readymades as beautiful objects or works of an aesthetic interest. With Duchamp and furthermore with found art the distinction between aesthetics and philosophy of art becomes wider.

By expanding the notion of art, the artist expands the notion of creation as well.[168] Creation no longer signifies a mere process of production but an action or gesture of taking out objects from our everyday world.[169] By placing everyday objects in an art world, the artist of found art presents them in a new light as objects of aesthetic interest[170] and contemplation without any concern for their origin and for the reasons they appear in the aesthetic place.[171] 'By singling out objects in the world, even those objects caught up in their own non-aesthetic context, the artist can transform these objects into works of art. This is the claim of the found artist'.[172]

The expansion of the notion of creation and the concern with technique is what grounded or undermined modernism. The artist of found art provokes us to see the works as mere appearance, form, and shape, to attend to their external properties disregarding their meaning or interpretation.[173]

In Hegel's terms the artist of found art seeks to 'minimize the manipulative contribution of spirit' and to present works the inner meaning of which cannot be descried.[174] Now the realm of art does not depend on the way the artist apprehends and represents the world but rather, according to Fowkes, merely on 'the mode of apprehension'.[175] But any form which does not carry a spiritual idea is not an aesthetic form and could not be considered a work of art. Thus, an everyday object or

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[168] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 160.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid., p. 162.
[171] Ibid., p. 160.
[172] By singling out objects in the world, even those object caught up on their own non-aesthetic context, the artist can transform these objects into works of art. This is the claim of the found artist'. Ibid. The readymades are mostly 'unworked' and, 'for the most part 'antirepresentational' They are everyday objects Krauss argues, 'slipped into the stream of aesthetic discourse, as a series of questions to which there is no certain reply'. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 84.
[173] Fowkes, op. cit., pp. 158-159.
[174] Ibid., p. 158.
[175] Ibid., p. 160.

artefact could not be seen as an aesthetical object or form. The aesthetic form is the one that has the spirit of art, which then becomes its content.[176]

But the concept or in Hegel's terms the spirit of art cannot be perceived merely as appearance like other objects in the world. Natural and everyday objects often appear to sustain an artistic unity of a meaning and form. This unity however has either arisen independently or exists to fulfil a specific utilitarian purpose. That is, in nature the appearance 'is never fully overcome, as appearance' is 'indeterminate and abstract' and cannot be manifested. Moreover, the unity of meaning and form of everyday artefacts is so specific and disclosed that it does not allow the spirit to be presented as such.[177] Thus, in found art the spirit is not manifested as the spirit of art, the 'spirit has not moulded and thus is not self-consciously manifest'.[178] The viewer can only gaze at the work as mere presence and appearance as if the spirit has left the object 'because spirit doesn't recognize itself behind the object's presence'.[179]

Nevertheless the object's presence is what becomes in found art its content. The content is the form, 'is to be dissolved so completely into the form' reducing the work of art to itself.[180] The absolute in Hegel's aesthetics 'cherishes' some values more than others: 'the very values in the name of which he invokes the absolute are relative values, the values of aesthetics'.[181] The artist of modernity does not work in terms of theme, content or subject matter but in terms of form to present the same principles and process of art themselves. For Greenberg, this leads to the turn from representative to non-representative art or as he calls it to 'the genesis of the 'abstract''. The artist by turning his interest away from the subject matter of ordinary experience, focuses on the subject matter of his own art.[182] The aesthetic value of abstract, non-representational art cannot concern the accidental or 'arbitrary' 'but must stem from obedience to some worthy constraint or original'.[183] The restriction of representation of everyday experience according to Greenberg could only take

[176] Ibid., p. 166-167.
[177] Ibid., p. 158.
[178] Ibid., p. 159.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', pp. 2-3.
[181] Ibid., p. 3.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.

place in the processes and conditions of the art of the past, the art that has already imitated the 'common' and 'extroverted experience'.[184]

2. 3. 2. Conceptual art

Conceptual art, like found art, questions, if not rejects, our basic beliefs of what it means to produce a 'work' of art'. It negates the act of artistic creation and replaces it with an idea and specifically 'with having an idea'.[185] What is in question is not form but 'artideas', which are for the conceptual artist 'the true works of art'.[186] The term conceptual art, also referred to as concept art, idea art or information art, refers to works that were produced since the mid '60s.[187] Even if conceptual art is not strictly defined as a movement it emerges almost at the same chronological period in North America, Europe and Latin America. It is often seen as a different category of art and played an important role in the acceptance or recognition of photographs, musical scores, architectural drawings and performance art as forms of art of equal standing to painting and sculpture.

The 'change' that conceptual art brought is that it moved the interest in art from creation, artistic skills and talent to its meaning, a shift from 'making' artifacts to making meanings.[188] The task of conceptual art seems to be the creation of the idea rather than the work of art. Art, aesthetic pleasure and interest are placed in a more radical area and are considering being merely the idea.[189] The conceptual artists seem to accept Fawkes' statement that art is and has always been conceptual. Its truth or essence is or comes through its concept. From this point of view conceptual art could be seen as superior to other artistic phenomena, because it emphasises the conceptual, it starts and ends with the conceptual.[190] This term 'conceptual' refers not merely to an idea or a concept but to thinking or, according to conceptual artists, to philosophy

[184] Ibid.
[185] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 72.
[186] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 163.
[187] Ibid., p. 162.
[188] Seamon, op.cit., p. 147.
[189] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 160.
[190] Ibid., pp. 162-163.

itself. Art, Joseph Kosuth writes, becomes almost equal with philosophy. 'Art's only claim is for art. Art is the definition of art'.[191]

Kosuth, one of the first and most important conceptual artists, marks with his first exhibition the emergence of conceptual art. In this exhibition that took place in 1966-1967 and was titled 'Art as Idea as Idea', Kosuth presented a series of objects such as a chair and a clock together with enlarged photographs of these objects and their dictionary definitions (fig. 13).[192] His art was not the found object, the depiction of the object or its definition but the concept or idea of their synthesis. What he presents is not the absolute definition or idea of the object but analogies among the three variations of the work. Each part of the work refers to the work as a whole which for Kosuth refers back to art itself. For Kosuth not only conceptual art but art in general and the essence of art is its 'self-referentiality'. Art is not for the world, it does not exist to decorate the world or to become an object of use in the world. 'Art is a self-enclosed system of 'statements'. Any external reference or use is beside the point'.[193]

But can art stand merely as idea, or as philosophy, as Kosuth suggest? How the Hegelian approach that Fowkes proposes could provide the art identity of conceptual art?

A concept or, using Hegel's terminology, a spiritual idea is not an aesthetic or artistic content if it does not come forth through form. The spirit is the content only when it takes form. [194]Art needs its external form to be understood as a work of art. Works of art do not 'state' or 'point to' a meaning, but rather 'manifest' a meaning through materiality and form; form and content in works of art, as Hegel has shown, may be linked in many levels but they must never entirely disappear.[195]

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[191] Joseph Kosuth, 'Art After Philosophy, I and II', in *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1973), pp. 70-101, (p. 92).
[192]Kosuth wrote an article that influence the development of conceptual art, entitle 'Art after Philosophy' published 1969. In this text Kosuth examines, the function of art, and the relation between artistic intention and the meaning of art. Art becomes in this account almost equal with philosophy. Ibid.
[193] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 164.
[194] Ibid., p. 166-167.
[195] Ibid., p. 165.

According to Greenberg's formalist position quality and aesthetic value begin with 'content and inspiration' and not form. [196] But it is form that allows inspiration and becomes the means to it. It is through form that the viewer generates or discovers 'content.'

> When a work of art or literature succeeds, when it moves us enough, it does so *ipso facto* by the 'content' … no more in Goya's than in Mallarme's, no more in Verdi's than in Schoenberg's' this is 'what can and what can't be legitimately put in words about works of art.[197]

The understanding of art or aesthetic satisfaction, Greenberg argues, derives from the content but content can never be separated from form.[198] For Greenberg the form is not taken as in Hegel the matter, the physical embodiment of the idea but as the shelf, the structure of the work. His conception of the notion of form is closer to Kant's designation of form as structure. Furthermore, for Greenberg the relation between form and content is taken in a more literal sense. Form is always going to be the reference point of art. The separation of form and content is not possible because form is always going to be the vehicle, the structure of the content. But in Hegel's aesthetics art is developed in favour of this separation. For Hegel even this disjunction is not possible at all because art's progression lies to its need to be liberated from matter.

Kosuth's exposition of conceptual art reflects the need of art to eliminate matter and thus enhance its conceptual status. From a Hegelian point of view Kosuth places art in the sphere of philosophy. He accepts the death of art and recognizes it as a positive event for art. For Kosuth conceptual art and modern art are liberated from traditional conventions concerning form and matter as well as from aesthetic principles and aim to bring forth the concept, an idea.

For Fowkes art cannot stand merely as an idea. The idea comes forth through form. In conceptual art this relation is still important in order for it to be art. Kosuth considers as a work of art statements about art and the nature of art (fig. 14). But not every statement about art is art. 'Physical embodiments of the self-referentiality' of art

[196] Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', pp. 174-175.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

differ from 'statements about self-referentiality'[199] Conceptual art taken as idea does not mean that this idea becomes equivalent to philosophy, as Seamon writes, 'the idea itself, is not a philosophy or as a way of doing philosophy by other means'.[200]
If merely the idea is what is considered to be art and aesthetically interesting and valued then it does not need to be presented through form, or as he states, it 'should not, be actualized in the world'. Kosuth's argument about the validity of conceptual art in terms of its self referentiality fails to distinguish art as a unique activity.[201]

Even if art progresses towards the absolute spirit it can never be separated from matter. For if it did, it could not be considered as a work of art. In Hegel what is unique in and about art is its special relation between external and internal properties, between form and idea.[202]

2. 3. 3. Concept versus form

Found and conceptual art aim to expand the notion of art but by breaking the unity between form and content they fail to 'manifest', Fowkes suggests, 'a clear sense of what is special about art'[203] and what makes their works objects of art. As Fowkes indicates, the expansion of the notion of art in a way that will include objects of art that before would not be considered as art results 'in a narrowing of the domain of art'.[204]

> The narrowness of each of the conceptions of art implicit in found art and conceptual art actually gives way to a widening of the realm of art to the point where the floodgates are opened to practically anything, for what is allowed to pass

[199] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 165. According to Fowkes Kosuth's argument is based on the relation that drives among art, mathematics and philosophy as they all have in common the characteristic of 'self-referentiality'. Fowkes, p. 164.
[200] Seamon, op. cit., p. 143. The turn towards the conceptual as Seamon argues which came with a general transition from the inclination on value to meaning, or, as he puts it 'the according of value to making meaning rather than artifacts'. And what reflects this turn is seen in the field of art in the decrease of artistic skills and in the filed of aesthetics in a move towards art as meaning, theory and interpretation. We now ask not if a work is good, great or bad, but if it is indeed art, why is art, or 'what does it means'. 'When meaning overshadows making as the source of value, the artist go 'thinky' and the interpreters become prominent—which is just what has happened'. Seamon, op. cit., p. 148.
[201] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 160
[202] Ibid., p. 164.
[203] Ibid. p. 165.
[204] Ibid.

> by is, in effect, anything that resembles traditional works of art-physically, in one case, ideationally, in the other.[205]

If everything could be considered as a work of art then nothing is.[206] According to Hegel a category that could be applied to everything is 'the same as Nothing'. Hence, the task of separating form and content in art, of taking either form or meaning as the basic feature of art, makes the category of art to collapse.[207]

However, Adorno does not see the expansion of limits of art and the separation of form and content of art as art's failure or a threat to the concept or category of art. New works of art, Adorno argues, are exposed to the risk of 'complete failure'.[208] For Adorno, it is because of the awareness of art's failure to clarify what is special about it and its failure to be the kind of art that it once was, that art manages to expose the tension between form and content. Found art and conceptual art do not aim to surpass the limits of art and hence art itself but to reveal the strain of the relationship between form and content.

2. 4. The institutional theories of art

Danto in his account 'Beyond the Brillo Box' argues that 'the population of artworks is a mutually self-enriching system of objects, any given member of which is considerably richer because of the existence of other artworks than it would have been if it alone existed'.[209] But as he argues, an object has to be an art object in order to be advantaged from the enrichment of art.[210]

Does the entry of everyday objects into the system of art signify the end of art and thus presuppose a different approach to the meaning of art?

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[205] Ibid., p. 68
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid. p. 166.
[208] Adorno, op. cit., p. 207.
[209] Arthur Danto, 'Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective', in *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections*, ed. Susan Vogel, (New York: The Center for African Art, 1989), pp. 89-112, (pp. 90-91).
[210] Ibid.

In modernity it became apparent that art could be made or consist of pretty much anything. Because of that there is not a sign or feature left to distinguish art from common, everyday objects. Specifically, as he declares, there does not exist a perceptually feature capable of differentiating art from non-art.[211] For Danto, the entrance of ordinary objects into the art world constitutes an ending. Danto, following Hegel's notion of the death of art, denominates a new era and a new conception for art, the modern era. The end of art refers to the historicity of art and indicates that its development has stopped. The end of art is, as Danto states, 'the end of the possibility of progressive development'.[212] Pre-modern art represents the world within the limits of their own art; pre-modern painting, Danto states, makes us see and understand the objects of the world within the limits of the surface of the painting.[213] What has changed with modern art is that the limits of art were themselves perceived. 'Art became its own object in a philosophical move that almost exactly recapitulates what Hegel calls Absolute Knowledge, where the gap between subject and object is overcome'.[214]

Why is one readymade object art while another (its commonplace counterpart) is not? Does the meaning of the object status of modern art take place as Danto argues 'only on the level of philosophy'?[215]

According to Danto, there are two possible ontological mistakes one could commit in understanding something as a work of art. The first mistake is when we take an object to be a work of art when in fact it is not. When we walk into a gallery or museum room of modern art we might take an object, such as a chair, to be the work whereas it is there as an actual chair for people to sit and not as a conceptual work of art of Kosuth for instance. The second mistake is when we take something as an everyday object when instead it is a work of art.[216] For example, we sit on Kosuth's chair because we did not realise that it was a work of art. If we claim that these works appear as unique objects or forms in the field of art, they are not unique as everyday objects. They do not appear as aesthetically interesting; on the contrary, their aim is to

[211] Danto, 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defence', pp. 139-140.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Danto, 'Art, Evolution, and the Consciousness of History', p. 232.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid., pp. 231-232.
[216] Danto, 'The Transfiguration of the Commonplace', p. 142.

exclude aesthetics from their understanding. This is what Duchamp and the movements of found art and conceptual art succeeded in doing, to exclude aesthetics from art as a concept and as an object.[217] This indicates the shift from aesthetics to philosophy of art. Art is no longer to be evaluated and perceived in terms of aesthetic principles but the ground of philosophy. This shift of art towards philosophy reflects the emergence of the institutional theories of art.

These works of art which are perceptually identical to ordinary objects call for a non aesthetic for their meaning, understanding and art identity. For Danto, this approach could only be a philosophical one. According to Danto's institutional theory of art, the meaning of these works does not depend on their formal properties but comes through theory itself. The interpretation of these works is what gives them their value and status as art works. Kosuth's chair in the gallery place becomes a work of art because and if a theory of art claims it to be as such.

Danto's argument on the institutional theory of art is based upon the turn from aesthetics to philosophy of art, the turn from experience and perception to conceptual interpretation of art. However, he pushes this turn even further to argue that the philosophy of art and interpretation is all that is needed for the understanding of these works of art. As their formal properties are identical with everyday objects they can become art through a theory of art. What distinguishes a chair and a work of art which is comprised by an actual chair is a theory of art.

> It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is (in a sense of *is* other than that of artistic identification). Of course, without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and in order to see it as part of the artworld, one must have mastered a good ideal of artistic theory as well as a considerable amount of the history of recent New York painting…. It is the role of artistic theories, these days as always, to make the artworld, and art, possible.[218]

Art became, Danto writes, 'its own object in a philosophical move'.[219] Art for Danto is to be understood in a Hegelian sense, that is, as the beginning of the spirit of

[217] Danto, 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defence', p. 133.
[218] Danto, 'The Artworld', p. 581.
[219] Danto, 'Art, Evolution, and the Consciousness of History', p. 232.

absolute knowledge passed with modernity to the stage of philosophy.[220] For Danto modern art is equivalent to philosophy.[221] This equality is not to be taken as an absolute one. But even if they utilise different means, art became a way of doing philosophy.[222]

An object exhibited as art is to be identified and evaluated as art through an interpretation although it might not have any ontological differences with everyday object. For Danto the differences between works of art, such as the readymades and their commonplace counterparts cannot be sustained by perception and experience, they are 'indiscernible counterparts'.[223]

Fowkes on the other side argues that the difference between readymade works of art and their everyday counterparts derives from the resemblance of the readymade that are presented as works of art with traditional art. But their resemblance is a metaphorical one. The shiny surface of the urinal could be seen in terms of preceding sculptures but still this does not make it art. The affinities that Fowkes draws between readymade works of art and the art of the past cannot distinguish these works from everyday objects. Any everyday object could be seen to share aesthetic and artistic elements with artworks but this does not make it art. Advertisement has always had an aesthetic appeal and on the other hand the design of everyday object is based on artistic skills and techniques. For Danto the resemblance that these works of art share with traditional art could not sustain their art identity.

Perception and experience can no longer sustain the art status of these works; thus for Danto we need an art theory to prove that these objects are art and their identical counterparts are not. A theory that will not refer to art as it appears but to the reasons it stands as art. Thus, the theory needs to consider the external properties of the object, that is, its institution, what Danto calls the 'artworld'. Danto argues that is the 'artworld' that transforms readymade objects into works of art. For Danto, the 'artworld' is that which makes possible a theory of art and knowledge of history of

[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid., p. 233.
[223] Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 4, 139.

art.[224] As Danto remarks, 'it is but a matter of choice: and the Brillo box of the artworld may be just the Brillo box of the real one, separated and united by the *is* of artistic identification'.[225]

Two further institutional theories are created for these works to be identified or understood as works of art. The first theory focuses on the artist and the second on the collection place. As De Duve writes 'something is art because an artist so decided; something is art because the context so determined it'.[226]

The first theory which De Duve calls 'the *appropriative* theory of art' [227] is grounded on the approach of André Breton who designates art in relation to the artist, the appropriator. Breton argues, considering particularly the status of the readymades, that they are works of art as far as the artist chose them to be. The main problem with this theory is not the right of the artist to choose what is or could be art, but rather the artist's own identity, that is, whom is to determine whether someone is an artist. Thus if we accept that an artist has the right to appreciate a readymade as an art object, we leave the possibility open for anybody to become an artist as far as he appreciates an object as art.[228]

The second theory which de Duve calls 'the *contextual* theory' is the theory of Daniel Buren who designates art in terms of its place, the art context. According to the contextual theory an object becomes a work of art because it is placed in the art place of an exhibition or collection. But not all objects in an art place are art objects. To accept that a place is artistic because it contains works of art still presupposes a different concept of art. [229]

But art either as a choice of an artist or as part of an art place are one and the same. De Duve writes, 'the joke is that both theories are true'.[230] The readymades of Duchamp could be seen as works of art in the first place because an artist has chosen

[224] Danto, 'The Artworld', p. 580.
[225] Ibid., p. 182.
[226] De Duve, op. cit., p. 92.
[227] Ibid., pp. 92-93.
[228] Ibid., p. 93.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.

it to be so and in the second place because they were placed in an art space. Although both theories have gained support, as Duchamp's readymades are considered to be works of art, at the same time they are incomplete. Neither theory manages to distinguish art and artefact and find a distinctive art quality or condition in Duchamp's readymades which will transform them into works of art.

Nevertheless, the validity of both theories is based upon a circular argument, it depends on the institutions but the validity of the main principles of the institutions depends in turn on theories and definitions. Both theories are formed into an institutional theory of art: the artist is somebody whose identity depends on an institution of art and an institution of art is the one that will show and promote the artist and his creations.[231] Both are institutional theories of art and both can maintain that Duchamp's fountain is art, 'and so did it happen that the joke pasted the test'.[232]

Institutional theories of art do not give an answer to the question of what makes an object a work of art. Otherwise stated, they do not explain what we mean by calling an object a work of art.[233] Even if we accept that the existence of some objects depends not on how they are to be perceived but on how they are to be interpreted, the paradox is that it is precisely the existence of works of art as 'unperceived aesthetic objects' that calls for something more than an interpretation but, according to Seamon, 'not a theoretical revolution'.[234] Danto's theory on the artworld succeeded in giving to the readymades their artistic identity and value but Danto achieved this by minimizing the role of the aesthetic as perceptual experience in art. 'Aesthetics', Seamon denotes, 'is now a misleading world for the theory of art'.[235]

To argue that a thing becomes art through its interpretation presupposes that any thing could become art through an interpretation. For Danto although any object could through theory be a work of art, this does not mean that every object is a work of art. In opposition to the two institutional theories of art that argue that a work becomes art either by the artist or the art space, Danto claims that this is not enough. For Danto it

[231] Ibid., pp. 93-94.
[232] Ibid., p. 94.
[233] Harold Osborne, 'What is a Work of Art?', in *The British Journal of Aesthetics,* vol. 21, no. 1, (1981), pp. 3-11, (p. 5).
[234] Seamon, op. cit., p. 139.
[235] Ibid.

is a theory, an argument on the validity of these works that give them their art status and identity. If so these objects are art objects despite the fact that we cannot experience them aesthetically as traditional works of art. They are transformed into works of art only in reference to the theory or argument that sustains their art status.

Not every object could be a work of art through an interpretation. Religious artefacts stand as such in terms of their interpretation but this does not mean that this transformation makes them into works of art. The interpretation of the cross, for example, does not transform it into art but, on the other hand, Duchamp's works are transformed.[236] The problem with the art identity of conceptual art lies in the distinction between conceptual works of art and manmade objects, such as cultural or religious artefacts, which exist in favour of their concepts. Why then, Seamon asks, is an object in some cases art and in others is not?[237] The form of these artefacts might have nothing to do with their concept but still they manage to manifest it. We still need an element to distinguish art from artefacts and, specifically in the case of conceptual art, an element which will distinguish it from other forms of symbolism and self-referentiality.[238]

According to Seamon, we need a criterion that distinguishes some forms of symbolism and object-art that makes them into art from other forms of symbolism and objects-artefacts that signify something else. 'The arbitrariness of the relationship between image and concept is, therefore, not what defines conceptual art; that may be necessary but it is not sufficient.'[239]

The question of what is a work of art presupposes a condition, or, according to Seamon, a dimension that will transform the work into art – whereas the everyday object as similar as it might be to the art object has to remain as such, a mere object, or an object of use. This dimension is different from Danto's institutional theory of art and his designation of the artworld as it aims to bring back the role of experience in art. Seamon's starting point for his designation of the conceptual dimension of modern art is the shifts of art values and art theories in the history of art.

[236] Ibid., p. 141.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Seamon, op. cit., p. 141.

The notions of the value and theory of art are historically defined. The emergence of modern art and the need of its aesthetic appreciation and valuation drove aesthetics and art criticism into the so called 'modern theory of artistic value'. According to Weitz examination on the role of theory in aesthetics within the framework of history of art and aesthetics this new form of value becomes part of the same process and notion of art. A process which, according to Seamon, is driven towards 'a consensus'.[240]It is a 'process', Seamon writes, 'of overreaction and subsequent normalization' that through the history of art appears to be 'its 'logic'.[241]

Art as a movement or style has its own limits. As Danto argues in his account of 'Narrative and Style', there is a 'natural limit to a style…a limit which cannot be gone beyond'. Artists often push the limits of art whilst remaining within a style of art or, as sometimes happens, by creating a new style. Thus, as Danto puts it, in art history we have artistic movements 'stopping but not ending, ending but not stopping, ending and stopping'. [242] But there is not an art movement that seems to be in a permanent stasis, 'neither ending nor stopping'.[243] We are inclined to see history of art as the progression of one style towards 'its logical limits'. The 'logical limits' of history and art become now visible. But this does not mean that art has ended, art Danto writes, 'has not stopped in the West'. [244]

2. 5. 'The conceptual dimension of art'

The history of the development of art is a history of changes in art genres, art forms, concepts, and of the aesthetic appreciation of art. These changes do not come to replace past concepts and values. [245] We can still find, Osborne remarks, concepts of art that survive though the course of history, 'consistent and compatible conceptions

[240] Seamon, op. cit., p. 140.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Arthur Danto, Narrative and Style, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* vol. 49, no. 3 (summer, 1991), pp. 201-209. (p. 208).
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid., p. 209.
[245] Osborne, op. cit., p. 9. According to Kristeller the same concept of art as fine art which has by most philosophers and writers on art and aesthetics since Kant is considerable new. For Kristeller the concept of art is expanded in terms of the development of art, art genres, art movements and art values. Paul Oscar Kristeller, 'The Modern System of the Arts', in *Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and the Arts*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp.163-227, (pp. 164-166).

of art' which 'we have inherited but not fully clarified'.[246] In order to comprehend and appreciate the special structure of art, we need a historical account of art as an object of aesthetics. According to Gallie, the appreciation of art presupposes an examination which will indicate the way the concept of art emerged and the relationships among aesthetic theories, that is, the reasons why they chose each time different standpoints for their examination of art. [247] If the outcome of this examination gives us a 'proper grasp of the structure of the concept of art — if we see the grounds of its essential complexity and contestedness' we are going to be able to comprehend also the 'futile history of conflicting aesthetic schools''.[248] 'The arts being the kinds of activity that they are — ever expanding, ever reviving and advancing values inherited from a long and complex tradition — the character…of art…is exactly what we should expect'. [249]

One of the concepts of art that has survived through history is the concept of aesthetic value. As Greenberg writes, the 'ultimate' concern with aesthetic value 'is not new in itself'. What differs in modernism is its 'exactness', its 'self-consciousness, and its intensity'- in other words, what is new is the way that modernism represents aesthetic value, that is its autonomy, and precision.[250]

Each artistic period characterizes aesthetic value in a different manner. There are three main shifts from Renaissance art to Romantic art and then to modern art and specifically to found and conceptual art. According to Seamon, even if each period of art, Renaissance, Romanticism, and modernism, designates a different dimension and value of art, taken as a whole they proceed towards the 'consensus'.[251]

The process towards the conceptual, according to Seamon, has its origin in the period of Renaissance and the mimetic designation of art. Art was a representation of the external world and was valued in accordance to its ability to capture the world and its objects. Specifically, Renaissance art and sculpture influenced by the classical art of antiquity, was understood as a mimesis of the world and in sculpture of the human

[246] Osborne, op. cit., p. 9.
[247] W. B. Gallie , 'Art as an Essentially Contested Concept', in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 23, (April, 1956), pp. 97-114, (p. 107).
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid., p. 114.
[250] Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', p. 172.
[251] Seamon, op. cit., p. 140.

body and was valued in terms of the mimetic theory of art. According to Seamon, in Renaissance theory the notion of mimesis prevailed because 'the artist pursued what A. E. H. Gombrich calls the 'discovery of appearances''.[252] In Renaissance art the artist transfers the world in his work, light and space, not so much through an accurate mimesis of the world but rather through a number of techniques that allow him to enclose to his art the way reality appears. Often their themes were influenced by classical tendencies of art and ideals about nature and reality. Thus, the viewer of Renaissance art is the cultivated viewer, the one who has knowledge of these tendencies and ideas.

Hegel from the beginning of his investigation of art rejects the mimetic theories that developed during the Renaissance time and were also continued by German romanticism. For Hegel mimesis is not the aim of art.[253] The pleasure and admiration of art does not derive form their 'naturalness' and their imitation of the world.[254] Imitation is deceptive, Hegel remarks. The admiration of art does not depend on a comparison between what we see in a work of art and reality.[255] Even if the artist studies nature and uses it as a source of inspiration his aim is not to imitate it. Art's aim cannot lie on 'purely mechanical imitation of what is there'.[256] The purpose of art is to manifest the spiritual through form.

For Hegel art is superior to reality, nature. A work of art Hegel states, originates from the spirit. The natural products cannot present the divine.[257] The natural sensuous phenomena, 'the sun, the sky, stars, plants, animals, stones, streams, the sea' can merely have 'an abstract relation to themselves'.[258] Furthermore, through the natural process they 'are drawn into connection with other existents' and they lose their independence. In these natural phenomena the true meaning of the absolute spirit has not yet emerged. 'Nature, it is true, emerges, but only in its self-externality; its inner being is not apprehended by itself as inner, but is poured out into the diverse

[252] Danto argues 'that works of art are *about* things, although not (necessarily) by means of representations'. In this sense as Seamon claims Danto's theory appears now to be mimetic in the sense of referential. Ibid.
[253] Hegel, op. cit., pp. 41-46.
[254] Ibid., p. 833.
[255] Ibid., pp. 833-834.
[256] Ibid., p. 45.
[257] Ibid., p. 29.
[258] Ibid., p. 428.

multiplicity of appearance and therefore is not independent'.[259] Art however as an independent external existence could manifest the true meaning of the absolute spirit, bring forth the divine and holiness of Gods.

The second shift was to come with Romantic art, a movement in which art was no longer understood as appearance but as feeling and emotion. This shift motivated the emergence of the emotivist and the expressive theories in aesthetics.[260] The claim of the expressive theory, which stands in opposition to the mimetic theory of art, is that by creating an art that represents mere appearances of things the artists ignored the expression and emotion that a work of art projects, which is the defining property of art. Weitz remarks in his account 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', 'without projection of emotion into some piece of stone or words or sounds, etc., there can be no art, and any true, real definition of it, contained in some adequate theory of art, must so state it'.[261]

The shift from mimetic to the expressive form of art indicates a shift of the relationship between art and viewer. As Gallie remarks, the attention now in the Romantic arts is no longer the 'cultivated' viewer but the public and the emotions the artist communicates to the public.[262] This change in the history of aesthetics was to come, Gallie suggests, with the work of Tolstoy. Tolstoy alters the role and the function of the object of art, the relationship among the individual artist, his tradition and the viewer.

> Art is an achieved communication; and its peculiar value is simply that a certain elementary kind of communication takes place. Art is no longer to be valued as a commodity, as an object of cupboard love, as a display of original virtuosity or traditional discipline. It is proclaimed as an essential bond of union between man and man, as a necessity of human life.[263]

But is the aesthetic equivalent to emotions? Is the emotive element in art sufficient for something to be considered as art? Weitz argues 'that in some sense the aesthetic

[259] Ibid., p. 428.
[260] Seamon, op. cit., p. 140.
[261] Morris Weitz, 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 15, no. 1, (September, 1956), pp. 27-35, (p. 28).
[262] Gallie, op. cit., p. 111.
[263] Ibid., p. 112.

experience is emotive is true, but it is not emotive in the sense of evoking emotions in us. It is not art's function to give us an 'emotional bath': life does that pretty well'.[264] Weitz adds that art is different from everyday life in the sense that contemplation and aesthetics is different from everyday activity. Art 'assimilates the emotive values of life and presents them in sensuous media for our contemplation, not for our indulgence'.[265]

Racy in his work entitled 'Aesthetic Experience' argues that most aesthetic theories start from the position of either the work of art or the artist rather than from the position of the viewer. Racy suggests that we need to start our inspection of art by looking critically at the aesthetic experience and by re-examining the role of the audience.[266] The process of appreciating art in terms of aesthetic experience emerges as part of an empirical aesthetic and specifically, according to Racy, from the latter part of 18th century and the expressivist theory of art. The claim of expression theory is that human creations are art only when they sustain aesthetic experience. Thus, a human creation cannot be considered as art if it does not maintain an aesthetic experience. 'A work of art would be an artefact expressing experience and capable of arousing and sustaining aesthetic experience'. This criterion became the main rationale in the construction of the art world. [267] But aesthetic experience does not define art and what constitutes a work of art. It concerns the descriptive properties of art and can be applied to anything that is created for appreciation and not for use. The question is not if a work is good or bad, but how it is and therefore why is art.[268]

Even if art in Romanticism remains a means of communication rather than an autonomous object it prepares the ground for the artistic freedom which was to come

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[264] Morris Weitz, 'Does Art Tell the Truth'? , in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 3, no. 3, (March, 1943), pp. 338-348, (p. 348).
[265] Ibid.
[266] R. F., Racy, 'The Aesthetic Experience', in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 9, no. 4, (1969), pp. 345-352, p. 350.
[267] Osborne, op. cit., p. 10.
[268] Racy, op. cit., p. 352. For Osborne the notion of aesthetic experience is a 'vague' and 'ambiguous' term. Does the role of aesthetic experience in art lies thus on the way we will define aesthetic experience? According to Osborne aesthetic experience can be the vehicle for our understanding of art and what distinguishes it from non art only if we understand it in terms of perception 'as direct awareness, perception in the wider sense of the word, undertaken for its own sake'. 'Perception is direct cognitive contact with the world outside and within ourselves; it underlies all apprehension and provides the material for analytical and constructive thinking'. Thus, aesthetic experience he argues presupposes an exercise of the faculty of perception. Osborne, op. cit., p. 10.

with modernism. Specifically, it brought the changes that drove the history of art and aesthetics to the formalist approach and theories of art. The third shift emerges with non-representational and abstract painting and sculpture and the designation of art in terms of form and external appearance.[269]

The exponents of formalist theory contend that the essence of painting and therefore of art is its physical appearance, its 'significant form'.[270] The essence of art emerges or is constructed through its formal properties, through the arrangements of the lines and colors, the shape and volume of painting. These arrangements define painting and other kinds of art in terms of the organization of their plastic and formal elements. Therefore, a creation will not be considered as being a work of art if it does not have these formal analogies and if it cannot be seen as a significant form. A painting is, according to the formalist theory, 'everything on the canvas except its representational elements'.[271]

For Greenberg, the value of art lies in the formal properties of the work or, as he argues, on the technique of the work. The 'technique', which is for Greenberg the concern with the 'medium' of arts, became an 'artisanal' concern' as he calls it, a ''formalist' emphasis' on the work and its value. This ''artisanal' emphasis is what is responsible for the hard-headed, sober, 'cold' side of Modernism. It is also part of what makes modernism react against Romanticism'.[272] Modernism in contrast to romanticism does not take the medium for granted, as 'transparent or routine', but the medium becomes the main consideration of modernism.[273]

Seamon's thesis on the conceptual dimension of art appears to stand in opposition to previous formalist approaches to art. The formalist approach of art could be applied to a great extent to the work of Modernism and specifically the experimentation with

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[269] Seamon, op. cit., p. 140.
[270] C. Bell, 'Art as Significant Form: The Aesthetic Hypothesis', in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology*, (eds) G. Dickie & R. J. Sclafani, (New York: St. Martin's. 1977), pp, 36-48.
[271] Weitz, 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', p. 28.
[272] As Greenberg clarifies the concern with the technique is a formal and not mechanical one. Greenberg, 'Necessity of 'Formalism'', pp. 172-173.
[273] However, it was not until the formalist approach of art came to its higher level that it appeared in the art world as a movement. As Greenberg writes, 'it was not just the soft-headedness of Romanticism popularized and in decline that provoked the hard-headed reaction of the first Modernists; it was also certain unprofessionalism'. Ibid.

new materials, methods, forms, and technique that challenge previous movements of art. Nevertheless, formalism does not characterize modern art in its whole. As a reply to formalism, artists especially in late modernity came to question and abandon the concern with the technique and form and to focus on pure meaning and concept.

But could art stand in terms of its concept? What is the conceptual dimension of modern art?

As Adorno remarks, the definition of art even if it includes the art of the past always reflects present art, its ambitions as well as restrictions, it is 'at every point indicated by what art once was, but it is legitimated only by what art became with regard to what it wants to, and perhaps can, become'.[274] The four shifts in the history of art formed, according to Seamon, three 'different kinds of aesthetic value'.[275] The leadership of mimesis as the essential aim of art 'has been challenged by expressive, formalist, and now conceptual theories'.[276] Each theory emerged to contest the 'title of the true', and prove that is the only important and possible theory of art. Each theory as plausible as it might appear ultimately fails to define the concept of art.[277] Each time 'the challenger' seeks to dominate the realm of art but ends up adding to the art that it has proceeded.[278] As Seamon remarks, these theories of art have been 'transformed' in or by the history of art not into the necessary and sufficient conditions of art, but into the same aesthetic 'dimensions' or values of art.[279]

Seamon sees the conceptual dimension of art as the key element which places modern art at the limits of art. In particular, for Seamon, the prime mover of the development of art is the conceptual. This is because, as he states, the conceptual element in art is not new. [280] As Seamon indicates, modern art and specifically conceptual art 'cultivates a dimension' that was already present in traditional art and especially in poetry and literature, through the form of allegory, metaphor and symbolism.[281] Thus,

[274] Adorno, op. cit., p. 3.
[275] Seamon, op. cit., p. 140.
[276] Ibid., p. 145.
[277] Gallie, op. cit, p. 112.
[278] Seamon, op. cit, p. 145.
[279] Ibid., p. 140.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid.

the conceptual dimension should not be understood as a challenge to the meaning and value of art but 'as a permanent possibility and an addition' for our considerations of the artistic value that has emerged on the last two hundred and fifty years.[282] Seamon proposes regarding conceptual art and the conceptual dimension of art 'that the addition of expressive and formal dimensions to the mimetic moved us towards a plausible theory of value in art. Adding the conceptual broadens and strengthens what I shall call, adapting the well-known phrase of Paul O. Kristeller, the modern theory of artistic value'.[283]

The notion of dimension and value of art appears in Seamon's thesis as a reply to the problem of the concept of art theory in the history of aesthetics. His aim is to find the value that formed and characterised art in each period and movement. This value does not define art but rather reflects partly the notion of art in a specific period. For Seamon, the continuous re-designation of art which characterizes the history of aesthetics reflects the development of art as an object but not completely the nature and definition of art. But does this mean the impossibility of defining art?

For Weitz, aesthetics cannot define art and this is because it is impossible to gather the necessary and sufficient elements that constitute all kinds of art and at the same time distinguish art from other objects and activities. This is because art is not a closed concept that can actually be defined completely but an open concept which over time will accept new elements. As Weitz states, 'aesthetic theory is a logically vain attempt to define what cannot be defined, to state the necessary and sufficient properties of that which has no necessary and sufficient properties, to conceive the concept of art as closed when its very use reveals and demands its openness'.[284]

However, even if we consider the concept of art as an open concept, as Weitz argues, this does not stop the designation of art's value and properties. Osborne moves a step further from Weitz to argue that despite the fact that the concept of art is an open concept we still need to define and designate art. Through a genre or a kind of art we cannot generalize and answer what a work of art is. There are no aesthetic or artistic

[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.
[284] For Weitz the problem is that true definitions of art cannot be proved empirically. Weitz, 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', p. 30.

rules or laws for the evaluation of art or its properties. 'The assertion itself might be held to constitute one defining characteristic inherent to all works of art'.[285] But this does not mean that there is no concept of art, that art is indefinable. Thus, the concept of art should be 'open' in order to allow alteration and development in art. However, Osborne remarks, an open concept of art does not necessarily mean that it is indefinable.[286]

A successful work of art is creative and something through which something new emerges. The new in a work of art can be a problem for defining it – but it can be part of a new notion of art. Fine art has been changed and developed, introducing to us a number of new materials and techniques and allowing new forms of art to emerge, such as photography and cinema.[287] The matter of change or development from pre-modernism to modernism is not to be understood, according to Osborne, as an absolute transition from the traditional concept of art to a new concept of art. 'The notion of change involves the existence of something which continues through change'. [288] But to predicate the change in art, and what is new in these works, presupposes that we already know what art is. But what is art or otherwise stated what kind of concept art is?

The definition of an open concept that 'is susceptible of change and development' should be possible. [289] Art as well as other social disciplines which have their origins in the ancient past have been developed through history to such a great extent that the new often challenges the same notion of its provenance. For example, Osborne claims, the notion of modern science, even if it is different from ancient or traditional science, and even if we assert that as a concept it will be developed further in the future, yet we cannot claim that because of these changes and developments it cannot or must not be defined. We can understand what science is when we speak – and the same happens with art.[290] It is important to acknowledge that the concept of art is not

[285] Osborne, op. cit., p. 6.
[286] Ibid., p. 7.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid.

the same with other conditions, but it changes like other conditions 'radically' through time. [291]

Seamon's thesis on the plausibility of the theory and value in art follows the same line of thought and could be taken as another reply to Weitz's criticism of the role of theory in aesthetics. The re-designation of art and its continuous progressive development reveal the difficulty of defining art or designating its necessary and sufficient properties. But this difficulty for Seamon does not necessarily indicate the impossibility of the definition of art. Although Seamon does not take a clear stance on the concept of art, he seems to examine art as a concept that could be defined in terms of the art of the present. Past definitions of art were not wrong because they were incomplete or insufficient. Each period cultivates a number of dimensions and elements of art but across different periods the relationship among these elements varies. The predominance of formalism and later conceptualism in modernism does not come to replace completely the element and theory of representation and expression. Past elements continue to exist and past theories could still be valid in modern art, if we were to take their meaning in terms of the predominant dimensions. As Gallie writes, these predominant dimensions are 'very *naturally* graded in different orders of importance' and this is because of the 'general condition of the arts' and of the criticism in arts in any present time.[292]

Conceptual art, as Seamon states, 'does not force us to rethink completely the nature of art' but helps us rethink the conceptual element of traditional art and furthermore of art generally.[293] Conceptual art expands 'the modern theory of artistic value', 'our sense of what art is' and of the relation between art and viewer.[294]

2. 6. Concept and allegory

According to Fowkes, the spirit of art in Hegel's aesthetics might offer a safe ground of validation for art. Hegel's dialectical system of art - absolute spirit is an internal aesthetics through which the meaning lies on both form and concept but derives

[291] Ibid.
[292] Gallie, op. cit., p. 113.
[293] Seamon, op. cit., pp. 139-140.
[294] Ibid., p. 145.

through concept. Fowkes argues, reflecting Danto's position on the 'indiscernible counterparts', that an approach which relies merely on the physical properties of the work cannot provide the validity and truth of art. [295]

Both Seamon and Fowkes seem to incline towards an internal approach of art and aesthetics. They claim that what can give the meaning to these works does not derive merely from the physical form of the work but from its concept. Fowkes on the one hand argues in favor of the spirit whereas Seamon on the other hand towards conceptual and metaphorical function of art.

For Fowkes found works of art could be seen as aesthetically valid forms of art on the ground of Hegel's symbolic art and particularly on the early stage of symbolic art. Symbolic art is the art in which the unity between form and idea or concept is incompatible to each other. The distance between form and idea of symbolic form of art could be seen as well in found art.[296] Found art can not stand merely as form, it is the concept that allows found art to be a work of art.

In the case of conceptual art it is again the relationship between the form and the idea that gives to them their validity as works of art. It is through this relationship that the idea becomes visible. Thus, conceptual art functions like Hegel's romantic art and particularly poetry. Form and matter can never abandon art 'when it departs from the body of art, and only then, we are no longer in the realm of art'.[297]

According to Seamon, to prove that found art and conceptual art are art and their commonplace counterparts are not presupposes that we identify a feature that will make them art - and at the same time distinguishes from other forms of symbolism or mere ideas.[298] Seamon however goes a step further for the validity of found art and conceptual art. For Seamon the distinction between art and object cannot lie in a relation between form, matter or image and concept, or idea. What constitutes art

[295] Fowkes, op. cit, p. 164.
[296] Ibid., p. 167.
[297] Ibid., p. 168.
[298] Seamon, op. cit, p. 141.

emerges beyond the relation of its form and concept, which as Seamon puts it, although this relation is necessary, is not sufficient.[299]

Modern art, according to Seamon, often is to be seen as a kind of 'mini-allegory' or metaphor, which is loosely bound to its appearance. [300] That is, modern art is to be understood in the field of Hegel's romantic art and particularly as poetry. Instead of language modern painting and sculpture utilise material objects and in some cases even language as a means for their meaning. Specifically, works of found and conceptual art just as traditional allegories, metaphors and symbols, call the viewer to transit from what he sees to 'something else', to make inferences from the image or symbol to an idea or meaning.[301] These two cases of modern art are often to be understood as 'a mini-allegory' or a metaphor even if the meaning or meanings are 'indeterminate'.[302]

There is a common process of perceptual deciphering of art that begins with what we see in the work and ends with how we understand it. From the position of the artist the work of art is a 'schematic entity' 'a purely intentional product'; from the position of the viewer it is a schematic entity that is to be completed by the viewer or 'consumer' through the experience of the work. [303] The work of art is to obtain its aesthetic shape when the viewer will actualize it 'in its potential elements'.[304] That is, it is through the aesthetic experience that the unity among the work, its creator, and the viewer becomes manifest. The manifestation is to take place in a material world, the place

[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid., pp. 141-143.
[301] Ibid., p. 141.
[302] Ibid., p. 143.
[303] Roman Ingarden, 'Phenomenological Aesthetics: An Attempt at Defining its Range', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 33, no. 3, (Summer, 1975), pp. 257-269, (p. 260). What is common between these two forms of art is their process of understanding. Seamon calls this process GRUR, Guided (deliberate action of creation, of choice and what we might call pleasure is the deciphering of the artist idea); Rabid (art is for pleasure); Unconscious (not as a psychological terms, but as cognition, hearing a musical score we are pleased without at the same time meaning that we are aware of all the steps in the process); Reconfiguration: indicates that is a process, which comes moment by moment. Seamon., op. cit., p. 142 The four stages that Seamon suggests seem to characterise to a great extent representational art but not necessary always. The artistic and aesthetic value of art is not stable and often alters in terms of the present state of art and present social and political conditions. See further Riegl, op. cit., pp. 28, 47-50.
[304] Ingarden, op. cit, p. 260.

that the work is exhibited which, according to Ingarden, becomes 'the background and displaced itself in the shape of the ontological foundation of the work of art'.[305]

Stated differently, to understand a work the viewer needs to close the gap that was opened by the artists. This leap is a form of communication, Seamon argues, which brings the viewer closer to the idea of the artist.[306]This gap takes different forms in the arts. In painting, photography and graphic arts the gap can be said to be between knowledge and perception, that is, between our knowledge of seeing into a two dimensional surface and our perception of a three dimensional object, figure or landscape.[307] With representation, direct symbols, or obvious plot the gap between what we see and what we perceive is narrow.[308] Seamon here examines the case of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Even if the language of the book is analogous with a children's story with animals, it has intended political implications and allegories. In this case, the reader makes the leap between what he reads and the idea of the artist due to these inferences in the text. The gap between the language and its metaphorical use is narrow, the symbols and allegories are clear and the reader can decipher the political inferences of the author.[309]

As the appearance of the representational object is abstracted from the real object, the wider is the gap. But it is precisely this perceptual leap, Seamon argues, from the surface of the depicted object or image to its meaning that pleases us.[310] 'Our success at having made the inference is marked by delight in having successfully gotten what the artist was up to, which, unlike more straightforward forms of communication, demands imaginative inference'.[311] However, if the gap is too wide, as in the case of Duchamp's readymades, and other works of found art and conceptual art, we find these works obscure and difficult.[312]

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[305] Ibid.
[306] Seamon, op. cit., p. 142.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid., p. 143.
[310] Ibid., p. 142.
[311] Ibid. As Schopenhauer indicates in the relation between sketch and painting, looking at the sketch we employ more our imagination to contract the image-whereas in the case of painting is ready given to us, loosing the magic. See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, trans. E. F. Payne, (New York: Dover, 1958), p. 408.
[312] Seamon, op. cit., p. 142.

The difference between the conceptual dimension of traditional art on the one hand and found and conceptual art on the other is that the function of traditional art is formed in terms of previous dimensions of art, that is the mimetic and the expressive dimensions. Traditional works of art carry mimetic and expressive 'implications' that we 'intuitively' understand or decipher. [313] They direct the viewer on the way he could place the image or symbol into a context, a narrative and transcendent to the meaning of the work. The viewer does not question the choice of the specific image, figure, or object but their function as a social or religious object.[314]

How art that seems to deny any relation with its social and historical present is to be understood and interpreted? Is this denial that which gives to art its autonomy?

For Adorno it is precisely the distance of modern art from social and religious purposes that gives it superiority in relation to the art of the past. But as we will see, its autonomy for Adorno does not derive merely by its self referentiality but by the differentiation of art and life which came as the result of historical and social alterations. That is, art's autonomy is both historical and social. Art reflects its social and historical reality but this does not mean that the authentic work of art belongs to its historical present and can only by appreciate by its present community. For Adorno the truth value of the authentic work of art does not come forth through its present history but when it surpasses it.

2. 7. The matter of autonomy of art

Modern art seems to distance these implications in order to stand as an object for itself. Modern works of art in opposition to the art of the past are not based on rules and properties of art in order to achieve social purposes, which are formed by their present social and cultural categories and classes. The social character of art is what abstracts from it its autonomy. For Adorno, the 'truth value' of traditional art is more

[313] Ibid.
[314] Ibid., p. 143. Found and conceptual art carry previous dimensions, these do not always drive us to its meaning but they are important for the art identity of these works as art. Formal properties or expressive implications often appear to modern art as criticism to traditional art.

'limited'. It is not absolutely autonomous because it is part of individual social status.[315]

How is autonomy in art to be understood? Which art could be considered as being autonomous art?

As Adorno writes 'the attitude of contemporary art towards tradition**,** usually revealed as a loss of tradition, is predicated on the inner transformation of tradition itself'.[316] In Harding's interpretation of Adorno the 'aesthetic' expression of the artefact 'anticipates a new-found autonomy in the contemplation it facilitates'. But as Harding remarks, even if we can argue that the concept of the autonomy of a work of art indicates the separation of art from practical schemes, this separation captures one side of the Adorno's notion of autonomy of the work of art.[317]Adorno's notion of autonomy is 'double-edged'. On the one hand autonomy could be seen in terms of isolation of art, 'a philosophy of *l'art pour l'art*'.[318] By liberating art from its previous social functions, art changes from a means for social alterations to that which declares 'the delusory presumptions of *engagement*'.[319] Modern art aims to be liberated from past social functions of art. Its objective is to function for nothing else but itself. The intention of the artist to bring forth an idea is formed by the work and refers back to the work itself. But this autonomy is 'ephemeral and terminal'; it belongs to what the work 'potentially offers to the individual in the counter-image it provides to a specific socio-historical context'.[320]

On the other hand, autonomy is to be understood as the result of historical and social alterations. Historical and social changes are that which will distinguish art and life.[321]Autonomy is thus historical and social in the sense that is part of a historical process. This autonomy emerges, according to Adorno, through the 'unresolved

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[315] Peter Uwe Hohendahl, 'Autonomy of Art: Looking Back at Adorno's Ästhetische Theorie', in *The German Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 2, (March, 1981), pp. 133-148, (p. 142).
[316] Adorno, op. cit., p. 27.
[317] James M. Harding, 'Historical Dialectics and the Autonomy of Art in Adorno's Ästhetische Theorie', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 50, no. 3, (Summer, 1992), pp.183-195, (p.183).
[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid., p.184.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid., p.183.

tensions' that a work of art 'has' with its historical and social present.[322] This autonomy is formed by the relation between art and society and from the way this relation is formed through each historical present.[323] According to Harding, Adorno takes the autonomy of art to be in accordance to its new historical context, 'to the unresolved dialectical tensions of a work that respond to sociohistorical conditions that have subsequently changed'. As Harding writes, 'autonomy denotes the aesthetic tension's lack of resolution, a resolution that only supersession at a specific historical moment could have bought'.[324]

The emphasis on and interest in the concept of autonomy of a work of art that developed during the late 18th century within the frame of literature theories, came as a result of an attempt to free the work of art from 'the social praxis'.[325] The spheres of art and society come together in Adorno's aesthetics. Art and society are viewed as parts of the same history, rather than a reflection of one into the other.[326] The historical process is what constructs the autonomy of the work of art. The autonomy of art is what guides Adorno's aesthetics to illustrate the cohesion of art and society, a cohesion which happens in a particular historical time and by the non-identity of art.[327]

Adorno's model suggests that, for example in the case of a poem, the critic will not start by analyzing the social frames of the work but from the work itself. This presupposes a model of history which will include as 'parts' elements or sections of 'a unified process the social, political philosophical and aesthetic realm'.[328] The interpretation, or rather exegesis, of the text is what will indicate the social circumstances that designate the creation of the work. What we can take to be the social meaning of a text, or a poem, is included in its language and emerges as what

[322] Ibid., p.188.
[323] However, this split should not be understood as an absolute distinction and 'irrelevance'. Ibid., p.183.
[324] But this relation can be declared only through negativity; the autonomy of a work of art in Adorno is what will maintain the 'negative value' of the work of art; 'to sustain the integrity of the unresolved negative tensions (the non-identity) a work has with a specific historic moment'. Ibid.
[325] Hohendahl, op. cit, 137.
[326] Ibid.
[327] Harding, p.184.
[328] However, Hohendahl suggests that Adorno does not present an objectified mode for the analysis and understanding of individual works of art. Hohendahl, op. cit., p. 140.

Adorno calls 'social history' in an indirect way.[329] For Adorno, Harding remarks, the poem is 'a philosophical and historical sundial'; the critic through the analysis and interpretation of the poem can construct/decipher 'the meaning of social history'.[330] And this deciphering should be understood in terms of reference to the social history of the poem and not the events, facts or 'objective structures'.[331]

The bourgeois social reality emerged not as a part of a continuum, of 'an eternal, 'natural' condition of life', but the same condition of life 'in a succession of social orders'. Greenberg sees the historical present of art as part of it. As he argues social and historical reality is reflected in works of art, 'even if unconsciously for the most part'. It was not by chance, that the emergence of the avant-garde coincided in time and place with the growth of the European scientific revolutionary thought in Europe.[332]

'Directly as artifacts, however, as products of social work, they [art works] also communicate with the empirical experience that they reject and out of which they draw their content'. [333] Art is bound up with 'social empirical reality' with a mutual coexistence, that is , art always is a reply to the 'social empirical reality' which in turn offers the essence or, according to Harding, the 'origin' 'from which art emerges'.[334] The *modus operandi* for the historical reality and the autonomy of art, 'is itself dialectical'.[335]

Adorno does not claim however that the work of art is always historically dependent. Works could die when 'the conditions of empirical life change'. 'What was once true in a work of art… was dismantled in the course of history'. Art needs the conditions that bring it to presence.[336] In contrast, a work is important when it is not bound to its historical place and time. The authentic work could be seen in relation to its present

[329] Ibid., p. 138.
[330] Ibid., p. 138.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', p. 2.
[333] Harding, op. cit, p.185.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.

history, but its truth value will emerge not from its present but by its ability to 'transcend' its historical present.[337]

> Instead of a movement of negation that resolves itself in subsequent movements (as in Hegel), historical passage is, for Adorno, the steady accumulation of unresolved tensions, repressed beneath the appearance of resolution. Adorno argues that the dialectical tensions between an art work and its origins remain intact and unresolved, buried beneath the passage of time. [338]

This absence of resolution is what will provide the foundation for the autonomy of art 'upon temporal movement without a reconciliatory absorption into a greater whole'.[339] The aim of his aesthetic is to reveal these tensions in order to 'subvert' what conduce to its 'reification'.[340]

2. 8. The meaning of Duchamp's readymades

The recognition of found art and conceptual art as works of art will come through a different understanding of art and not as in the case of traditional art through a deciphering of the formal parts of the work. [341] Looking specifically at Dadaist works of art, Fowkes argues that its concept or understanding does not lie in a recollection and reconstitution of its external signs or on the relation between its form and shape. Rather, it comes as the result of the work's relation with the other works upon the scene.[342] Chance in Dadaist movement becomes the process by which the work comes not into presence but 'upon the scene'.[343] As Krauss writes, their recognition as works of art emerges through the work as a whole, and 'is triggered by the object but is somehow not *about* the object'.[344] It goes beyond the objects and their time of existence that is, the time of the experience of the objects. Their recognition 'does not resemble the linear passage of time from the seeing of the object to the cognition of its meaning. Instead of that kind of arc, the shape of this moment has much more the

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[337] A work of art is to be taken as a 'genuine and excellent' when it cannot be decreased to the status of the document of an individual class or group. Hohendahl, op. cit., p.142.
[338] Harding, op. cit., p.185.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, pp. 77-78
[342] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 161
[343] Ibid.
[344] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, pp. 77-78.

character of a circle—the cyclical form of a quandary'.[345] The work sent us back to itself. But in contrast with other modern works of art which still carry aesthetic and artistic qualities, Duchamp's readymades sent us back to the image of a readymade object and to the question of its existence in the art space.

In the case of Duchamp's readymades, the metaphorical or allegorical passage cannot bring us into the realm of art. We return to our first perception of the object, of the urinal as a commercial object. 'For the *Fountain*, with its shiny white porcelain curves and countercurves, has a sensuous presence that elicits one's normal visual response to works of art: a response that tends to promote an analytic examination'.[346] 'The *Fountain* thwarts this analytic impulse.' A readymade object cannot be formally decoded. And what we are constantly thinking, Krauss says, is that as long as Duchamp did not invent the shape of the urinal and the formal relationships of the object, we cannot perceive the work 'as having encoded the meanings carried by formal decisions'.[347] The metaphorical meaning of Duchamp's readymades does not appear to have been formed by Duchamp but by the viewer.[348]

For Duchamp, the *Fountain* has ceased being a common object, because it has been transported. 'It have been 'flipped' or inverted to rest on a pedestal, which is to say that it had been repositioned, and this physical repositioning stood for a transformation that must then be read on a metaphysical level' as what transforms it into a work of art.[349] 'This moment of realization is the moment in which the object becomes 'transparent' to its meaning. That meaning is simply the curiosity of production—the puzzle of why and how this should happen'.[350]

The aim of Duchamp, or as Krauss puts it, his strategy, was to present a work which as such cannot be reduced to a formal analysis. A work that 'is detached from his own

[345] Ibid., p. 78.
[346] Ibid., p. 80.
[347] Ibid., p. 79.
[348] Duchamp's *Fountain*, as he himself declared in the 'Avertissement', is a notice or as de Duve put it a 'warning'. The urine as fountain is to be understood both as an allegory of the waterfall and as mere appearance which as such opens a number of possible views, 'the art institution which illuminates this fountain and gives it its aurora and its status, we shall determine the conditions from the allegorical appearance'. And this is the task that Duchamp sets to the viewer. De Duve, op. cit., p. 95.
[349] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 77.
[350] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

personal feelings, and for which there is no resolution of one's efforts to decode or understand it.' His work is not intended to hold the object up for examination, but 'to scrutinize' the same process of artistic transformation and to cancel out the traditional procedure of narration.[351] Yet for Seamon, Duchamp's Fountain implies an idea or, according to Bratu, intends to bring forth a meaning. But the gap between image and idea is so wide that makes the effort to close the gap a big challenge,[352] to come closer to the primary meaning/intention of the work, to transit from what we see to the meaning or metaphor of the work.

The relation or divergence between the image of the work and the idea of the artist brings us to the matter of intentionality. According to Bratu and Marculescu, in empirical aesthetics the intention of the work of art, painting, sculpture, or musical score or poem is primarily understood as the physical 'virtual' or audible/sound object which then becomes the object of aesthetic judgment.[353]According to Bratu and Marculescu, the intentionality, accomplished or not, is related to the interpretation of the object. [354] Intentionality, Bratu and Marculescu continue, can never be without a referent—but it can be without a meaning. In fact intentionality as such, '*outside its verbal expressions*', does not have a meaning. The meaning is raised with the expression of a mode of intending, either 'in a statement, a judgment, an utterance'.[355]

Modern works of art, such as products of the Dada and surrealist movements as well as non-representational and abstract paintings and sculptures, do not have what Bratu and Marculescu name an 'outside referent'. That is, they lack a direct reference to the external world because 'an inner referent is taking its place'. These works of art become, as Bratu and Marculescu write, 'self-referential, without for that matter ceasing to exhibit intentionality'.[356] This kind of art follows the way the mind functions. This task is founded, Bratu and Marculescu argue, 'on the belief of the superior reality of some forms of association neglected heretofore'.[357]

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[351] Ibid., pp. 80-81.
[352] Seamon, op. cit., p. 144.
[353] Bratu and Marculescu, op. cit., p. 336.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid., p. 337.
[356] Ibid.
[357] Ibid.

But if the meaning of art follows the 'functioning of the mind' then how are we to distinguish art from other forms of actions? What is the difference between artistic actions or states and other everyday forms of actions such as pain or joy?

Other forms of actions such as psychological actions or mental states, for example, pain, dread, joy, according to Bratu and Marculescu, do not constitute intentional actions, they 'are not intentional mental states' because they do not have a referent. [358] Works of art have a referent but not all works exhibited as works of art have meaning. There are objects of art such as earth art, some readymades and conceptual works of art which as such cannot have a meaning. A work of art fails to retain a meaning – if its boundaries become invisible or if its horizon of constitution is no more than 'a mere solipsistic horizon is being conceptualized'.[359] These works 'will never retain a meaning — if they have any — except from the horizon of phenomenological constitution'.[360]

Why do empirical aesthetics and the aesthetics of experience seem incapable of providing to these works with a meaning? Can aesthetic experience form an effective criterion or means for distinguishing works of art from everyday objects? How phenomenological aesthetics could 'retain a meaning' for works of art even if these lack an 'inner referent'?

To see an object aesthetically does not presuppose the isolation of the object 'in an artificial space of contemplation, or putting it under the microscope of 'objective' scrutiny'.[361] For Bullough we perceive an object aesthetically by isolating it in its real place. We proceed into a separation and a distancing of the object from its actual setting and putting it 'out of gear with the practical self'. The distanced object allows it 'to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends'.[362] There is not a common aesthetic perception of objects but one that varies in accordance with the characteristics of the object and on the other hand to the psychological situations of the viewer.

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[358] Ibid.
[359] Ibid., p. 347.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ibid., p. 341.
[362] George Dickie, 'Bullough and the Concept of Psychical Distance', in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 22, no. 2 (December, 1961), pp. 233-238, (p. 233).

According to Dickie, the notion of distance in Bullough's account of physical distance in art indicates that

> an object may be 'put out of gear with the practical self' to one degree at one time and to some other degree at another, and also that the same spectator under the same psychological circumstances may distance one object to one degree and another object to another degree, depending on the characteristics of two objects.[363]

Still physical distance does not concern the aesthetic attitude in its whole but a psychological attitude that a viewer takes toward some objects. 'Distance is a necessary and sustaining, but not a sufficient, condition of the esthetic attitude, and hence is actually only part of the esthetic attitude'. [364]

The work of art has organic boundaries. When we imagine a work of art we place it in a certain horizon, that is, the horizon of the work of art in relation with its environment. For example, in modernity 'the disappearance of the pedestal from sculpture…far from causing them to vanish' enhanced their 'natural boundaries'.[365] Phenomenology, in contrast to 'natural' or empirical aesthetics, does not seek to designate art in terms of its descriptive properties but rather to enclose 'temporarily' the horizon of the work of art and the work's properties in order to approach its meaning. As Bratu and Marculescu write, phenomenology aims to answer how art is 'arrived at, perceived, remembered, imagined, translated, admired, contemplated, reproduced, distorted.' [366] Phenomenological aesthetics through the process of the phenomenological constitution proposes an intentional analysis of the way the objects are presented physically or imaginary, and the way of understanding them or in Bratu and Marculescu's words, the way of 'intending them'.[367] According to Bratu and Marculescu, phenomenological constitution does not indicate a 'physical establishment', 'formation', 'institutionalization' of the meaning of art that is of the creation and construction of art in relation to the external world. It is rather a construction 'a bestowal of meaning upon the presentations from which all naturalistic connotations have suspended, reduced'. Phenomenological constitution is

[363] Ibid., p. 236.
[364] Ibid., p. 233.
[365] Bratu and Marculescu, op. cit., p. 346.
[366] Ibid. p. 337.
[367] Ibid.

not the reading as such, but 'an interpretive reading', a deciphering in the sense of decoding not of encoding.[368]

There are two main operations of aesthetic constitution for achieving this. The first one, which could be applied to every work of art, concerns the interpretation, reading or decoding of the meaning of the art object.[369] The second operation of constitution is based upon 'a preceding act of reduction' and it is what will prepare the interpretation and meaning.[370] Reduction here is, according to Bratu and Marculescu, the 'suspension of judgment about something, temporarily, in order to reintroduce meaning and interpretation later on, in constitution'.[371]

This creation of the meaning, Bratu and Marculescu suggest, is to be understood as a performance or in the sense of the Greek word *poiesis*. It indicates a genesis, 'an artistic producing', which from the position of the viewer signifies 'a collaborative effort up to the level of re-creation of the work of art, exactly like the player's performance of a piece of music'.[372] The understanding of the notion of performance or *poiesis* presupposes a distinction between the work of art as such and as an aesthetic object, that is, as an object of sensory experience. The notion of creation comprised by both 'the constitution of the aesthetic object and the production or the performance of the work'. The notions of constitution and performance in phenomenology are like the two faces of a coin, they are 'interdependent or even constitutive of each other'.[373]

According to Bratu and Marculescu, the distinction between art and non-art does not come merely through artistic intentionality. The boundaries between art and non-art are drawn by the horizon of the object of art which is formed by the 'coincidence between artistic intentionality and aesthetic constitution'[374] In this respect artistic

[368] Ibid., p. 338.
[369] Ibid. p. 337.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.
[372] Ibid., pp. 338-339.
[373] Ibid., p. 338. Performance 'is thus an active synthesis, it denotes a step-by-step generality'. *Poiesis* in classical aesthetics 'is a self-contained, relatively independent entity'. Phenomenology goes further to enclose in the notion of performance the process of constitution, which together *poiesis* and constitution 'are immersed in all-pervading intentionality'. Ibid., p. 339.
[374] Ibid., p. 346.

intentionality loses its 'self-authenticating'; 'that is, the art object can no longer be presented as self-referential or arbitrary instituted by degree'.[375] It is with the aesthetic constitution that artistic intentionality will determine the boundaries of the object of art and the position of the viewer in the creation of the meaning of the work of art.

What is special in modern art is that the work of art fulfils the process of the performance of the meaning of art. This process of the experience of the object is constructed 'from the subject to the object'.[376] The beholder, reader or spectator proceeds into a decoding of the work as it performs, that is, he reconstructs the performance into a secondary meaning, which is 'a *souvenir*, a sheer remembrance of his own experience'. Thus, the secondary *noema* can never be or reach the primary *noema*, which is the *noema*/idea/intention of the creator. The intention or the image of the artist as such cannot be reconstituted entirely as such. 'All we can judge, identify with, read, constitute, decode, interpret is his performance or the result therefore, the stanzas before our eyes'.[377] For Bratu and Marculescu, the aesthetics of modern art is not merely 'the deciphering of a puzzle, but a certain interpretation of this deciphering'.[378]

Understanding found art and conceptual art does not call for a deciphering of a meaning but for an identification of the boundaries of the object and the way the object performs. Found art and conceptual art provoke the viewer to identify his position within the horizon of art and the art world. Their meaning is replaced by this scheme which is constituted by the viewer, the work and its place. Through this scheme found and conceptual art loses its self-referential character and could gain its identity as art as long as this identity reflects the art that has preceded it, and as long as the art object can be placed back in a dialectical history of art.

As in the case of Duchamp's readymades their legitimation 'will have to come', De Duve writes, 'from comparison with the past.'[379] However, this comparison or

[375] Ibid.
[376] Ibid., p. 339.
[377] Ibid., p. 340.
[378] Ibid., p. 339.
[379] De Duve, op. cit., p. 142.

strategy, as De Duve calls, is not going to be an institutional one. As De Duve writes this strategy is what

> allows the reconstitution of a chain…of expectations that are aesthetic, the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of which are framed in an institutional context precisely made of what is already aesthetically legitimate in the eyes of the protagonist at any given moment.[380]

For Danto and to some extent for Seamon this strategy is the dialectical history of art. It is the knowledge of the history of art, of art theories, genres and movements that could make legitimate everyday objects as works of art. The appearance of the readymades in the art space could be seen as the result of the progress of art to be disconnected with life and reality. A disconnection that was to come in a radical manner with the same objects of everyday life. Duchamp's readymades and the movements of found art and conceptual art become art in the context of art's dialectical progress.

Conclusion

As Bratu and Marculescu argue, despite the changes and development of art, its principles remain the same. If art 'is disappearing' it is because the unity between nature and culture, life, reality and art, no longer have any 'classification value'. 'We are witnessing the death throes of the classical representational impulse as, more than likely, the birth of a totally new understanding of sign-systems and their social uses'.[381] New notions and terms need to come forth in the fields of aesthetics and art criticism to convey 'the manifold of the aesthetic status of the work of art'.[382] What is called modern or new, or appears as a total breakup in relation with the art of the past but its opposition with the art of the past is what shapes the new perception of art.[383] The death of art does not declare the disappearance of art rather than an ending of art's relationship with life and reality. Modern art is no longer an integral part of life but it belongs in Danto's terms, in the 'artworld'. For Danto modern art belongs into a

[380] Ibid.
[381] Bratu and Marculescu, op. cit., p. 344.
[382] Ibid., p. 346.
[383] Ibid., p. 344

new era of art and its meaning depends on the knowledge of art's history, on an art theory.

The urinal is not a work of art, but the history of art has allowed the possibility that the one chosen by Duchamp for the art exhibition to be considered as such. As de Duve writes, 'once on the record, the Richard Mutt case has proven impossible to erase'.[384] It has passed into the history of art, it is one of the most situated works in books on the history of art and contemporary aesthetics.[385] The *Fountain* 'has been registered in the jurisprudence of modern art'. The art identity of the *Fountain* presupposes, De Duve argues, a legal terminology. Its legitimacy as art concerns the *Fountain* particularly but also other readymades to be considered artwork.[386] After Duchamp artists continued challenging the boundaries of art, the laws of the art world and the theories of aesthetics and art criticism. As De Duve denotes, even if the *Fountain* passed the test its legitimation is still on trial. But again this is the irony of the story of the *Fountain*. Its legitimation is not valid. Philosophy can provide an argument for its validity. 'From institutional legitimation—or art status—it does not follow that aesthetic legitimacy—or art quality—is secured once and for all. The urinal is still awaiting further trial'.[387]

But what cannot be changed is that Duchamp's readymades formed a different history of art, 'a new kind of period' in Danto's words in which art pushed the limits of art in order to redefine its nature, its autonomy and its relation to life and society. The antiphasis here is that art claims its autonomy not through traditional art, creativity or talent but rather through everyday readymade objects, objects of non-art. And this is what the artist of found art and conceptual art aimed to do.

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[384] De Duve, op. cit., pp. 135

[385] The art historical and aesthetical focus on Duchamp's work and his importance in the history of art is a recent phenomenon (post-1970). The early discussion on modern sculpture and modern art in general rarely examines the work of Duchamp. For example, Herbert Read's *A Concise History of Modern Sculpture* (1964) refers briefly to Duchamp and his readymades. His history of modern sculpture focuses mainly to artist that their work could be still placed in the area of sculptural representation such as Picasso, Brancusi, Henry Moor and Matisse.

[386] As De Duve argues 'we are dealing with legitimacy in general, with the legitimation of the *Fountain* in particular, and with the possible legitimation of a group of putative artist who could not cope with the test which their own statutory law was submitted'. De Duve, op. cit., pp. 135.

[387] Ibid., p. 135.

Both found art and conceptual art singled out objects from the world in order to see them as works of art. The *Fountain* can be understood either in terms of its appearance or of concept. They both bring the same implications for the way we understand art. Even if the primary aim of found works of art is their form and shape they raised questions about the nature of art. The answer that readymades appear to suggest, according to Krauss, is that a work of art, is not its physical presence or appearance but rather a statement on art. [388] Duchamp's intention in presenting the readymades was to denote that art is not merely the external form of a work. His intention, Krauss writes, 'was to make a point and one to which the actual physical presence of any particular readymade contributed very little'.[389] Duchamp's works or rather acts were raising questions about the nature of art, on 'of what it is that 'makes' something a work of art'.[390] His readymades stand as a specific concept of art and from this point of view Duchamp could be seen more as a conceptual artist than a found art practitioner.[391]

On the other hand, the understanding of conceptual art does not derive merely from the way these works stand as concepts about art but depends partly on the external qualities of the work.[392] Even if the primary impulse of conceptual art appears to be the idea, at the same time we could examine these works under the notion of found art.[393] What is of aesthetic interest in these works is not concept or meaning, but as Fowkes states, 'we are left, as with found art, to gaze at a physical presence'.[394]

Found art and conceptual art drive us to re-think art and aesthetics, and the meaning of theory in aesthetics. The conceptual dimension of art is to be taken as another shift in terms of a dialectical history of art which again is not permanent but 'bears its marks of its time'.[395] However, the acceptance of the conceptual as the fourth dimension could justify the validity of these objects as objects of art.

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[388] Krauss, *Passages in modern Sculpture*, p. 73.
[389] Fowkes, op. cit., p. 159.
[390] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 72.
[391] As Fowkes contends, 'Duchamp is to be regarded more of a conceptual artist than something else. Specifically, 'conceptual art – only now recognized as a movement – looks back to Duchamp as its precursor and source of inspiration'. Fowkes, op. cit., p. 159.
[392] Ibid., p. 161.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Seamon, op. cit., p. 148.

Through the conceptual dimension of art the work, the artist and its audience all come together as in traditional art. But is the purpose of bringing together artist and public in this extension, to include any object as art and anybody as artist or beholder? As De Duve denotes 'the pact that binds together the artist and their public *ought to* extend to include anyone and everyone'. However this agreement or convention is not a real but rather a symbolic one.[396]

Art in modernity could be seen only through a symbolic scheme that binds together the work, the artist and an audience. The gap that is opened between the work and the viewer could only be closed through deciphering the intention or role of the artist in modernity. It is not primarily social, political or ideological but the result of an aesthetic dialogue or 'negotiation' of the form of the work of art and the feeling of the individual viewer, which are not 'expressed' in statements of the sort 'this is beautiful' but rather 'this is art'.[397]

[396] De Duve, op. cit., pp. 461.
[397] Ibid.

II. The validity of modern art after the 'death of art'

Introduction

This part of the thesis examines the matter of the validity of art in modernity. Specifically, it focuses on Heidegger's thinking about art after the 'death of art' and on the way modern art, and particularly poetry, painting and sculpture, is to be understood within Heidegger's philosophy of art. The first chapter of this examination is developed through a discussion of Heidegger's philosophy of art, his concept of art and his approach to art in modernity. The study continues with an examination of Heidegger's thinking about poetry and painting in modernity, focusing on the relation between art and space/world. The second chapter focuses on the matter of the homelessness and isolation of modern sculpture. The homelessness and isolation of sculpture are examined in a more literal sense as the loss of their space and their ability to function symbolically within their location. Looking specifically at the work of Rodin and Giacometti, I discuss how modern sculpture could overcome its homelessness and gain its validity as a work of art.

Following Heidegger's thinking on art, this study starts with a discussion of Heidegger's philosophy of art and his designation of the nature of art. Subsequently, the discussion proceeds into an examination of Heidegger's thesis on the question of the 'death of art'. Heidegger in the closing stage of his discussion in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', published in 1935, presents modernity as an age in which art has lost its truth revealing function.[398] Heidegger declares the absence of art in modernity which echoes Hegel's conclusion on art and the death of art. In modernity divine and absolute values are spread in various activities and are no longer formulated by art.[399] However, in 1960 Heidegger comes to rethink the significance of the new art of modernity. According his new view, the artist of modernity challenges the defined limits of art and proposes an art that falls outside the realm of the traditional concept of art, outside traditional aesthetic theories and the art market. In Heidegger's new

[398] Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York, London: Harper and Row, 1975), pp, 17-86, (p. 77).
[399] Ibid.

conception, poetry as well as painting in modernity could stand as genuine happenings of truth.

Taking account of Young's discussion of Heidegger, the examination is developed through Heidegger's thinking about the poetry of Hölderlin and Rilke and the paintings of Klee and Cézanne. What he was interested in finding in modern painting was the way art allows a world to come forth, to appear through colours and abstract forms. For Heidegger the painting as a 'holy ground' does not represent the world and earth but projects it, allows it to happen, makes visible what was hidden.[400]

But modern sculpture emerges declaring a loss of space. Modern sculptures sit in a specific place but they appear alienated from that place and incapable of speaking about it. Does the awareness of the loss of space of sculpture constitute a verification of its homelessness? The matter of homelessness of sculpture is examined through a selection of works of Rodin and Giacometti. The study suggests that both artists manage to overcome the homelessness of modern sculpture. They both provide sculpture with a part of world in which these could belong. In Rodin this world constitutes part of the sculpture itself whereas in Giacometti the world is the space that the work occupies to create the distance that the work is to be seen from.

[400] Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 50.

3. Heidegger and modern art

3. 1. Heidegger and art

Heidegger's texts on art are not to be understood as philosophy or as 'a universal theory' of art but rather a 'thinking about art'. [401] For Heidegger traditional philosophy of art is a philosophizing of art and philosophizing is 'bad and thus muddled'. [402] The thinker for Heidegger has to step back from philosophy, from the 'thinking that merely represents, merely explains' into 'the thinking that responds and recalls'.[403] The tool of his thinking and investigation of the truth being of things is for Heidegger language. Heidegger through his writings 'is at work shaping his language, that is, his thinking, in the intense, condensed way—*dichtend*—characteristic of the poet, *der Dichter*'. [404] Heidegger's language becomes more poetic and enigmatic in his discussion of art and generally through his later writings. But this is not accidental. [405] Firstly, through his language Heidegger intentionally distinguishes his writings from the character of traditional aesthetics and philosophy of art.[406] Secondly and most importantly through the continuous exploration of language he manages to respond to and recall his objects, to unveil their being but at the same time to show the relativity of their being. His writing 'is the most concrete thinking and speaking about Being, the differing being of different beings and the onefoldness of their identity in and with all their differences; and it is one with the being of the thinker and speaker, himself'.[407] 'It is a speaking that, like all genuine poetry, says more than it speaks, means more than it utters'.[408] As Hofstadter writes, Heidegger's thinking about art is 'like poetry and song, it grows out of being and reaches into its truth.' [409] Hence, Heidegger's language comes as a result of his task of unveiling the essence of truth and being. His poetic thinking, his search of truth in the origin of language 'goes

[401] Hofstadter, 'Introduction', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. ix-xxii. (p. ix).
[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid., p. xi.
[404] Ibid., pp. xi, xxii.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Young, op. cit., pp. 171-174.
[407] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xi.
[408] Ibid., p. xii.
[409] Ibid., p. x.

along with the growth of the author's vision of truth and being, and of man's life in the context of truth and being'.[410]

Heidegger's investigation of art is unfolded through his thinking of Van Gogh's shoes, a block of granite, the bridge, a poem, an axe, a jug. As Hofstadter remarks, Heidegger in his thinking about art takes into account works of art of the past and modernity but also things that appear simple like the axe or jug.[411] In opposition to traditional aesthetics and philosophy of art, Heidegger does not designate art under the notion of fine art and does not follow the development of art and art movements. His discussion on art is focused on the truth of art and is evolved through the consideration of individual artists, works and objects without any strict criterion for their selection.[412]

In addition Heidegger does not take art as in traditional aesthetics to be an object of pleasure and satisfaction, an object of *aesthesis*.[413] Rather, Heidegger's understanding of art is placed within the field of phenomenology. According to Bratu and Marculescu phenomenology is concerned with the way of intending to things and the way we understand them. This intending is not an interpretation of the object's meaning but a creation, a *poiesis* of its meaning in relation to the human and the boundaries of the object.

Objects of art like any other object are things, phenomenal experiences to our senses.[414] In Heidegger's approach works of art as well as things are considered as physical objects, as they appear to us, 'as they show themselves in the fullness of their appearance'.[415] For Heidegger we do not merely perceive works of art and everyday objects but also we handle them. As Heidegger say works of art are treaded like objects.

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[410] Ibid., p. xi.
[411] Ibid., p. ix.
[412] Young in the last part of his work presents his own defence for why we can still consider Heidegger's discussion of art as philosophy of art. Young, op. cit., pp. 171-174, (p. 173).
[413] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. ix.
[414] This methodology positions Heidegger's work within the field of phenomenology. Specifically it brings Heidegger in close relation to Husserl's account of the being thing as phenomenal appearances to our eyes. Ibid.
[415] Ibid., p. xiv.

> The picture hangs on the wall like a rifle or a hat. A painting, e.g., the one by Van Gogh that represents a pair of peasant shoes, travels from one exhibition to another. Works of art are shipped like coal from the Ruhr and logs from the Black Forest. During the First World War Hölderlin's hymns were packed in the soldier's knapsack together with cleaning gear. Beethoven's quartets lie in the storerooms of the publishing house like potatoes in a cellar.[416]

Every object Heidegger sets to examine always ends up in a dialogue with the question of being and truth. Heidegger, Hofstadter writes, sees all his objects 'in the light of the disclosure of the appropriation of beings to Being'.[417]

In his search for Being of art Heidegger draws a distinction between the formal appearance, for instance the abstract shapes of the work, and what the work presents to us, for instance a figure or a landscape.[418] The understanding of a work of art comes through an awareness of the object's infinite nature, the awareness that we cannot capture all the aspects of an object featured in an artwork. Objects as such have many aspects, endless, plenitude points of view. For Heidegger, however, we can only see some aspects of an object, the aspects that are intelligible to us.[419]

For Heidegger art is a revealing of being and truth. Art is the place of truth and being (for a discussion on art as the place of truth in relation to theology and philosophy see chapter 5, pp. 149-154). Art for Heidegger is not merely a product, something made or manufactured, but rather 'it always means knowledge'.[420] Art is 'the disclosing of beings as such, in the manner of a knowing guidance of bringing-forth'.[421]

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[416] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 19.
[417] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xiv
[418] Young, op. cit., p. 48.
[419] The truth of art in Heidegger's thinking is not and cannot be equivalent with the absolute or primary truth of an artwork. We only see the truth, or aspects and projections of the work's truth, which are intelligible to us. Ibid. For Heidegger we see an object in the world as '*standing* in representational production'. 'Representation presents' in the sense of calculating but not in the meaning of perceptual directly, at once. What we first see when we look at an object, that is, 'the image they offer to immediate sensible intuition' does not last as such but 'falls away'. Therefore, what is standing ought its presence to an activity of consciousness. And within the realm of consciousness stands the objectivity of objects'. That is, according to Heidegger, what remains invisible is what exists in the interior of consciousness. That is in the realm of the 'invisible and interior', that in modern metaphysics was understood as the 'realm of the presence of calculated objects' and in Descartes as 'the consciousness of the *ego cogito*'. Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 87- 139, (pp. 124-125).
[420] In Aristotle, Heidegger argues, even if art is designated as a mode of knowledge it is understood as such only among others. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, vol. 1, trans. David Farrell, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), pp. 81-82, (p. 82).
[421] Ibid.,

Heidegger designates the true nature of Being as both revealing and concealment. (Further on Heidegger's notion of Being and *Dasein* see chapter 5, pp.156, 173-176). Truth in Heidegger's thinking is not and cannot be equated with the absolute or primary truth. Heidegger goes back to the ancient Greek meaning of the world truth, to the notion of *aletheia* in order to designate truth not as an absolute revealing and bring forth but as partly revealing and partly hidden.[422] The Greek word for truth is *aletheia*, which literally means un-forgetting. The hidden, the concealed is this which has been forgotten. Art thus aims to bring forth or to reveal truths that have been fallen into oblivion, in Greek word *lithi*. The purpose of an artwork is to release or reveal these internalised truths to the people of a specific time and place.[423] Art reveals to us the nature of things that we take for granted, the life and world of the peasant through the representation of the shoes in Van Gogh's painting. The realising or happening of truth is not fully contained in the work, but it occurs outside the work of art.[424]

3. 2. 'The Origin of the Work of Art'

Heidegger manages to give to art the power to form and found history, to reveal the vocation of and preserve the historical being of human.[425] 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger's early discussion on art, presents art as a genuine happening of truth, the 'divine' and of a historical present. According to Heidegger, the origin of the work of art is 'the source of the nature in which the being of an entity is present'.[426] A work of art's origin is not the artist, the creator of the work. For Heidegger, the artist is merely the beginning of the work, its '*causal* origin' in the sense that the artist releases the work of art. In Heidegger's words, 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'; 'the work is to be released by him to its pure self-

[422] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', pp. 49-53.
[423] Young, op. cit., p. 34.
[424] Ibid., pp. 17-18, also Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, pp. 60-62.
[425] As Owens suggests Heidegger's discussion of art is probably 'the highest compliment that a philosopher can pay to art'. With the exception of Delthey, none in the history of philosophy of art gave to art such historical power. Wayne D. Owens, 'Heidegger's Philosophy of Art', in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 29, no. 2, (Spring, 1989), pp. 128-139, (p. 136).
[426] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 56.

subsistence.'[427] For Heidegger, the artist by releasing the work of art also releases himself from it.[428]

The work of art independent from its primal agent needs to be something more than a mere creation.[429] The concept of art is expanded to include the artist, the work's historical community and its era. Art is the origin of the work of art, of the artist and of the historical community in which the work of art and artist are placed, 'of a man's historical existence' which are at the same time are the 'preservers' of art.[430] The work of art, first released by the artist cannot exist independently of 'a people's historical existence'. Art's historical community will preserve art in its greatness.[431] The origin for Heidegger is, as Young put it, 'a *logical* or *conceptual* origin, that in virtue of which an entity of a certain kind counts as being of that kind'.[432] But the being of each entity comes forth through a circular process. That is, the community recognises itself in and through its art and furthermore, the community holds art into existence and this is what makes art great.

The greatness of art lies upon its need for preservation and recognition by the community; it does not depend on the qualities or style of the work.[433] The greatness of art does not derive through the work but it is external to the work of art. Art can be the foundation of a community when the community preserve and accepts it as its foundation. The Greek temple becomes the foundation of the community when the community recognises it through its actions as such, through its honour, sacrifices and festivals.

Its greatness, for Heidegger, is external to art in the sense that it comes forth though its preservers, the historical people, their gods, the festivals and gatherings of the community, the community's historical present. In ancient Greece, the human is the preserver of art, the one that as Heidegger writes 'must gather (*legein*) and save (*sōzein*), catch up and preserve, what opens itself in its openness, and he must remain

[427] Ibid., pp. 17-20, 39.
[428] Young, op. cit., p.16.
[429] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', pp. 17-18.
[430] Ibid., pp. 64-65.
[431] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 64.
[432] Young, op. cit., p. 16.
[433] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 84.

exposed (*alētheuein*) to all its sundering confusions'.[434] The greatness of art, Heidegger remarks, is revealed as far art is 'an 'absolute need''.[435] Art needs to be part of the community and furthermore the community forms part of art's absolute and holiness.

The art that Heidegger speaks about is the great art of ancient Greece and the middle ages, such as the temple, the statue of a god, the epic, the drama, and the cathedral. As Young writes, Heidegger expands the traditional notion of art to include 'charismatic', 'world-defining' events of many kinds. The work of art can therefore be accepted under the notion of the cultural paradigm as a happening of truth, or as an event of truth. The Greek temple, the sculpture of a god, but also the Olympic Games and 'the act that founds a political state', can all be viewed as great forms of art.[436]

For Heidegger art reveals the way things and humans are but also designates human existence. Art reveals the truth of the world that humans already live in, the earth, the sky, 'the light of the day' and 'the darkness of the night'. Moreover, art designates a new world for humans and their way of living.

> Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first brings to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air.[437]

For Heidegger great art fulfilled an important need or purpose, it revealed people of a specific time and place what is, what dwells there, and how they should live their lives.[438] Art presented gods, and set the dialogue between divine and human fate,

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[434] Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, (New York, London: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 131.
[435] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 84.
[436] A problem that seems to arise is that, the happening of truth does not concentrate in the work, but it occurs as Young put it, outside the work of art. Therefore art is not the only source of truth. As Young indicates attempts of interpreting Heidegger discussion on truth that happens in 'charismatic events' are seen in relation to Hitler's creation of the Nazi state'. As Young writes, 'though it is hard to doubt that a reference to Hitler is intended here, it should be thought of as to the Hitler of Heidegger's 1933 hopes and dreams rather than to the reality of Nazism as it stood before his eyes at the end of 1936'. Young, op. cit., pp. 17-18, also Ibid., pp. 60-62.
[437] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 41.
[438] Young, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

bringing it 'to radiance'.[439] The temple, Heidegger writes, 'gives to things their look and to men their outlook'.[440] The temple reveals the historical community in which are placed their gods and the fate of humans.[441] For Heidegger, art reveals the holy to the community, the way human existence is to be understood and human actions are to be evaluated, as victories or disgraces. As Heidegger writes in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', 'by means of the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is in itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct'.[442]

> It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blemishing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human beings. The all-governing expanse of this open traditional context is the world of this historical people.[443]

Heidegger does not use the notion of world in the sense of nature, history and population.[444] As he states, world is not the collection of 'things that are just there', either the idea or in Heideigger words, 'an imagined framework' of the collection of things. On the other hand world is not to be taken as an object, as what we see in front of us. 'World is the even-nonobjective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being'.[445]

In the 'Origin of the Work of Art' world fulfils itself with earth and both create the foundation for art. The relation of world and earth is linked to Heidegger's position on the notion of truth as both revealing and concealment. World does not merely reveal the earth but neither does it merely enclose it. Both world and earth encloses and uncover each other. Thus, art brings forth world and earth and truth in the sense that it does not reveal them as absolute and unbounded truths. Truth is never an absolute given. Art makes us aware of that truth, it makes us aware that world and earth are never merely natural or given

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[439] Martin Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, pp. 3-35, (p. 134).
[440] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 42
[441] Ibid., pp. 56, 75.
[442] Ibid., p. 40.
[443] Ibid., p. 41.
[444] Heidegger, 'The Thing', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 161-184, (pp. 175-177) also 'Language', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 185-208, (p. 199).
[445] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 43.

The interplay between world and earth becomes in later Heidegger the fourfold of earth, sky, divinities and mortals, a 'mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals'.[446] Each one is a mirror that captures the others. 'Earth and sky, divinities and mortals—being at one with one another of their own accord—belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold'.[447]

It is due to *ereignen*, the event or happening of truth, that the fourfold joins and brings into light the truth of beings and enables each of them to exist in its own authentic way, to be 'in appropriation of and each other' to belong 'together in the round dance of their being'.[448] Earth and sky, divinities and mortals, inhere together in one, 'by a *primal* oneness'.[449]

> to be a human being is to be on the earth as a mortal, to dwell, doing the 'building' that belongs to dwelling: cultivating growing things, constructing things that are built, and doing all this in the context of mortals who, living on earth and cherishing it, look to the sky and to the gods to find the measure of their dwelling.[450]

The fourfold finds its place in art. Art unifies the fourfold, it preserves it in its '*primal* oneness' and allows humans to dwell. Humans have the ability to build, that is, to cultivate and construct; the ability to produce in the sense of poesy, to manifest the

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[446] Heidegger, 'The Thing', pp. 175-177, (p. 177).
[447] Ibid., p. 177 and Young, op. cit., p. 24. In ancient Greece the world was divided into earth, inhabited by mortals, and sky, inhabited by gods. In the Medieval period, the conception of the world changed, and therefore the truth that great artworks revealed during Middle Ages changed as well. The division in the medieval world was between earth inhabited by mortals, the heavens, inhabited by gods, and hell, inhabited by the 'souls of the damned'. Being and the beings that inhabited the ancient Greek '*kosmos'* and the Middle Age '*kosmos'* were different, and by consequence great art developed in these times was different as it needed to reveal these different realities. Heidegger, 'Language', p. 199.
[448] The word *ereignen* appears in Heidegger's early text such as in Origin, with the dictionary interpretation that of happening, or to happen, occur, take place, and event. However, through his thinking of Being and his search of the proper expression of the truth of Being he unveils in the word, according to Hofstadter, 'what is not present in other ontological words like *sein* and *wesen*'. Hofstadter, op. cit., pp. xix- xx. But, as Hofstadter indicates, the description of the *ereignis* through the notion of 'worlding is decisive'. If Heidegger comes to think the Being of beings 'taking them all together, in their world' therefore this description 'of the world's being as such' is the only and true aspect 'which is 'nearing''. Ibid., pp. xviii-xix. Heidegger 'wants to speak of an activity or process by which nothing 'selfish' occurs, but rather by which the different members of the world are brought into belonging'. This belonging came in Christianity in 'God as Love, the love that binds spirits into true community and that is the source of all harmony of being'. Ibid., xix.
[449] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 141- 184, (p. 147).
[450] Hofstadter, op. cit., pp. xiii- xiv.

unknown and to 'take the measure of the world' and thus of their own nature.[451] When humans take the measure of the world and their nature then they are able to truly dwell.

To dwell here implies that humans create and build a world; they construct their place and give meaning to a brute environment.[452]The human, Heidegger writes, '*is* insofar as he *dwells*'.[453] Specifically, the notion of dwelling tells us, according to Heidegger, about the way that 'we humans *are* on the earth'.[454] Dwelling means 'to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine'.[455] For Heidegger, humans 'consist in dwelling' that is to 'the stay of mortals on the earth'.[456] To be a human 'means to be on the earth as a mortal'.[457] Humans are mortals and 'they are called mortals because they can die'. And only mortals from the fourfold are capable of the death as death. They not merely die but they know that they will die. For Heidegger humans (*Dasein*) acknowledge their mortality, the finitude and contingency of their existence.

'Only man dies, and indeed continually, as long as he remains on earth, under the sky, before the divinities'.[458] Mortals belong to the fourfold by dwelling, that is, in order to preserve. Human beings dwell when they preserve the fourfold 'in its essential being'.[459] Mortals dwell, Heidegger writes, in the saving the earth, that is, they are

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[451] Ibid.
[452] Heidegger's notion of dwelling and building imply that Heidegger's phenomenology concerns humans.
[453] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 146
[454] Ibid., p. 145. The position of dwelling, the abode comes in the verbs, *buri*, *büren*, *beuren*, *beuron*. The word *buan* indicates that the word for to build, *bauen*, means to dwell but it tell us as well the measure of dwelling. The word *bauen* does not indicate a passive or inactivate dwelling but it tells us about the way that 'we humans *are* on the earth'. *Bauen* came later to mean building, the activity of constructing and cultivation and its real meaning which is dwelling was forgotten. Ibid., p. 146.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Ibid., p. 147.
[457] Ibid., p. 145.
[458] Ibid., p. 148.
[459] Ibid. To preserve here means to care, to keep the fourfold safe. Ibid., p. 149. 'In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in initiating mortals, dwelling occurs as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold'. But where Heidegger asks the dwelling keeps safe the fourfold as such? In order for mortals to be able to dwell truly they must preserve it. But mortals could not preserve dwelling if it was a mere fourfold, that is 'a staying on earth under the sky, before the divinities, among mortals'. Ibid., p. 145. Dwellings need to be preserved as such. Mortals can dwell only if dwelling resides with things and dwelling Heidegger writes 'is always a staying with things'. 'Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things'. The fourfold is secured in things but in the things that let as such 'are let be in their presencing'. That is, by nursing and nurturing nature, 'the things that grow', but mainly by constructing 'things that do not grow'. For Heidegger both

setting the earth free 'into its own presencing'.[460] Saving the earth, Heidegger writes, does not mere mean a protecting from danger, or to exploit the earth, master it or 'subjugate' it. To save means, Heidegger writes, 'to set something free into its own presencing' .They dwell because 'they receive the sky as sky', 'they await the divinities as divinities', 'they initiate their own nature—their being capable of death as death—into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death'. [461]

For Heidegger it is though art that the human can be part of the fourfold, and take the measure of its existence. This revealing is the preserving of art but stays open as long as gods have not fled, as long as the sculpture of the god is the god himself. According to Heidegger, great art and its truth revealing function exists for people of a certain time and place. Great art serves its purpose by being historically and culturally bound.[462] 'The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as a native ground'.[463]

People of a different time and place inhabit different worlds. According to Heidegger works of art of the past that are taken out of their world, 'torn out of their own native sphere', and are displayed in museum and gallery collections, lose their truth revealing function.[464] They are preserved and conserved to hold as much as possible of their original appearance and still attract our admiration and theoretical interest. But 'however high their quality and power of impression, however good their state of preservation, however certain their interpretation, placing them in a collection has withdrawn them from their own world'.[465] This 'withdrawal' is permanent. As Heidegger writes, we can not 'cancel or avoid such displacement of works' by visiting them in their original place, the world of the temple or a cathedral 'that stands there

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'cultivating' and 'construction' are building. Therefore dwelling is a building as long as dwelling preserves, that is, 'keeps and secures' the fourfold in respect to things. Ibid., p. 149.

[460] Saving the earth Heidegger writes does not mere mean a protecting from danger, either to exploit the earth, master it or 'subjugate' it. To save means Heidegger writes, 'to set something free into its own presencing'. Ibid., p. 148.

[461] Ibid.

[462] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 41.

[463] Ibid.

[464] Ibid., p. 39.

[465] Ibid.

has perished.'[466] They are mere objects and even if we were to consider them as a result of a historical world or of a dialectical process, this world does no longer exist. They are objects of science, aesthetics, theory and pleasure but 'no longer the same as, their former self-subsistence'. For Heidegger, what we see, admire, or study and interpret does no longer concern their true being but rather it concerns things as they merely appear, to their 'object-being'.[467]

3. 3. Modernity and art

In the closing stages of his discussion on 'The Origin of the Work of Art' Heidegger presents modernity as an age in which great art no longer exists.[468] For Heidegger art in modernity is no longer a truth-revealing. Heidegger's declaration of the absence of art in modernity echoes Hegel's conclusion on art and the death of art. Art, Heidegger states, is 'a thing of the past' and it has been since the end of the middle ages.[469] Modernity, he states, is 'the age without an artwork', 'the age that has forgotten the festival' the gathering together of the community within that wonders that happens in the work (the communal condition).[470]

If great art is art that is 'an 'absolute need'' then the decline of great art consists of art no longer being an absolute need. Art that does not have a necessary or absolute access to the truth can no longer be considered great.[471]Art, Heidegger writes, 'forfeits its essence, loses its immediate relation to the basic task of representing the absolute'.[472] Great art died because things called art in modernity had lost their truth revealing function as well as the purpose of telling people the right way to live. Art in modernity does not encounter ethical ways of living, it is no longer ''truth'-disclosing', it is not able or willing 'to disclose to its audience, at least the outline, the

[466] Ibid., pp. 39-40
[467] Ibid., p. 40. Moving artworks away from their place (both the actual ground upon which they were once placed, but also the time and place where they originated), makes them lose their function. A Greek temple to a contemporary Greek does little more than revealing an object of beauty. A part of a Greek temple exhibited in a Museum does even less. An artwork looses its meaning, that is, its truth revealing function, either when an artwork is moved from its world (e.g., taken to a museum) or when the world is moved from the artwork (e.g., the 'world' has changed). Ibid., pp, 39-43.
[468] Ibid., pp. 77-79, (p. 77).
[469] Ibid., p. 77, and Young, op. cit., p. 8.
[470] Young, op. cit., p. 89, Heidegger, 'What are Poets for?', pp. 89- 90.
[471] Young, op. cit., p. 14.
[472] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 84

shape of the proper way to live'.[473] The work of art is now an object 'of mere subjective experience'.[474]

One of the central characteristics of modernity is the fact that art passed into the area of aesthetics. In modernity divine and absolute values are spread in various activities and no longer formulated by art. Aesthetics aims to reform eternal values and their meaning, through theories, and thinking and philosophising on art. But these are, Heidegger writes, 'merely the half-baked clichés of an age when great art, together with its nature, has departed from among men'.[475]

But does the end of art take place in the modern age? What is the origin of this ending?

In ancient Greece art rose to its highest level.[476] Ancient Greeks 'had such an originally mature and luminous state of knowing they had no need of 'aesthetics''.[477] For Heidegger aesthetics and generally philosophy constitutes the beginning of art's ending. But Heidegger does not place the ending of art in modern European philosophy, but rather he places it back to the beginning of philosophical thinking, ancient Greek philosophy. Heidegger argues that even though aesthetics had its origins in ancient Greece, it began when Greek art came to an end. The ending of great art came together with the beginning of philosophy with Plato and Aristotle which formed the lines of future thinking of art, being and truth. [478]

Following the philosophy of Plato art was to be understood in terms of the distinction between matter and idea, appearance and concept. But this distinction or connection, Heidegger argues, has directed the thinking of art in specific interpretations that are removed from art's wider and original meaning. Platonic approaches to art considered art merely as a product of creation, as the result of an artistic action, which has removed from art its primary meaning as knowledge, the disclosing and bringing-

[473] Ibid., pp. 8-9.
[474] Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', p. 116.
[475] Heideggger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 77.
[476] Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', p. 134.
[477] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 80.
[478] Ibid.

forth of the truth of beings.[479] Platonic approaches to art such as mimetic theories interpret art in terms of the duality of form and concept, matter and idea and the truth of art in terms of mimesis of the external world. The truth of art in the field of Plato's philosophy is understood as a representation, as a partially revealing of nature and world or in Heidegger words as oblivion. The truth, *aletheia* of art is never a mere representation of the world but a concealment and bringing forth of world. (for a further discussion on Heidegger's criticism on platonic philosophy and metaphysics see chapter 5, pp. 149-159).

Even if the end of art began with the emergence of ancient Greek philosophy, modernity is the era which designated the loss of its greatness. [480] Modernity alters the way art is conceived both in theory and practice. Thus, Heidegger declares the end of art in the age of technology, the age when science has entered truth. Science is seen as the only valid means to approach or discover truth. 'The ultimate ground of the triumph of the aesthetic view of art is the imperialism of reason, the triumph of the view that science…has access to truth'. Art does not have a necessary or absolute access to the truth; art can no longer be great.[481] The theory that coexists with art in modernity is 'bad theory'. 'Though theory cannot make art, it can kill it'.[482] Good art in modernity is art that pleases and is enjoyed by its audience.

As Heidegger writes, 'as soon as the thrust into the extraordinary is parried and captured by the sphere of familiarity and connoisseurship, the art business has begun'.[483] The new notion of art was what gave rise to the whole 'art industry'. This industry focuses on creating objects for the pleasure of the select few who have the knowledge, culture, taste and money to appreciate them. In contrast with great art which was for all people of a particular time and place, the new art is for the select few, the elite. The 'art industry' produces 'pleasurable objects' for the 'consumers' of art in the same way that the fashion industry produces designer items and clothes for the consumers of fashion; art in modernity is a 'sector of cultural activity' but 'merely *one* sector' of that which puts a little icing on the cake of life given that many other

[479] Ibid., p. 82.
[480] Ibid., p. 85.
[481] Young, op. cit., p.14.
[482] Ibid., p.15.
[483] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 66.

sectors are equally available.[484] What was once considered to be aesthetically pleasant or to have 'aesthetic appeal' does not represent necessarily art and does not need art. Modern art as aesthetic art cannot be great; it is among others ''a triviality''.[485]

But on the other hand the development and success of aesthetics needs an object to be completed. Aesthetics, Heidegger indicates, rose when great art came to an end. It is precisely the recognition and discussion of the end of great art on which aesthetics bases its success.[486] Hegel's aesthetics, Heidegger remarks, is considered among the greatest works of aesthetics. But his system of fine art in philosophy presupposes the end of art.[487] The whole structure of Hegel's philosophy of history in which art is placed needs an art that has been ended; not necessarily in the sense of final end, but an art that is completed and fulfilled.

As Heidegger writes in his essay 'What are Poets for?' 'not only have the gods and the god fled, but the divine radiance has become extinguished in the world's history'.[488] Modernity is the place in which gods cannot return, the place where there is not even an 'abode' prepared for the god's return.[489] Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's elegy 'Bread and Wine' remarks that modernity is 'the era to which we ourselves still belong'; the era without gods and consequently the era where 'night is falling'.[490] Since what he calls the 'united three', that is, Herakles, Dionysos, and Christ left the world, 'the evening of the world's age has been declining towards night. The world's night is spreading its darkness'.[491] As Heidegger writes, for Hölderlin the sacrifice of Christ indicates 'the beginning of the end of the day of the gods'. This is not to be taken according to Heidegger as a denial of the Christian faith in modernity and the relationship between the Christian and god. The nearer the world's night is driven towards midnight the more the destitute predominates. But in this time not only the holy as the path that leads to the godhead is lost, but also the

[484] Young, op. cit., p. 11.
[485] Ibid., p. 12.
[486] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 84.
[487] Ibid.
[488] Heidegger, 'What are Poets for?', p. 90. and Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', pp.116-117.
[489] Heidegger, 'What are Poets for?', p. 90.
[490] Ibid., p. 89.
[491] Ibid.

traces that lead to the 'lost path' are almost erased.[492] 'The more obscure the traces become the less can a single mortal, reaching into the abyss, attend there to intimations and signs'.[493]

This time is characterised not merely by the absence of the gods but also by their 'failure to arrive' and furthermore by what Hölderlin names as 'the 'default of God''.[494] 'The default of God means that no god any longer gathers men and things unto himself, visibly and unequivocally, and by such gathering disposes the world's history and man's sojourn in it'.[495] However, the default of god presages something even worse; as Heidegger writes, 'the gods and the god fled, but the divine radiance has become extinguished in the world's history'.[496] But the destitution of modernity does not lie to the absence of gods but to the fact that we cannot 'discern' this absence as a loss. 'The time of the world's night is the destitute time, because it becomes ever more destitute. It has already grown so destitute, it can no longer discern the default of God as a default'.[497]

Humanity's present existence is technology centred, it is a life where 'everything, including man himself, becomes material for process of self-assertive production, self-assertive imposition of human will on things regardless of their own essential natures'.[498] The time of technology 'is a destitute time, the time of the world's night, in which man has even forgotten that he has forgotten the true nature of being'.[499] In the time of technology humanity lost, according to Heidegger, its prime position as mortal. In the past the human was the object of the world and his gods. But as the result of the technological life, the human became the subject and world became the object.[500] Humans do not seek merely to understand the world and their existence but to conquer them. In modernity mortality becomes a technological problem rather than a hermeneutic one.

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[492] Ibid., p. 92.
[493] Ibid.
[494] Ibid., p. 89.
[495] Ibid.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid., p. 90.
[498] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xv.
[499] Ibid.
[500] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', pp. 106-107.

Modernity, as Heidegger writes in 'The Age of the World Picture', liberated humans and brought subjectivism and individualism. What changed in relation to previous ages is that the human becomes a subject, which is to be understood in the Greek meaning of the word *hypokeimenon*, (hypo +keimai). This word indicates 'that-which-lies-before' that which collects everything into itself. It is a metaphysical conception of the subject, Heidegger writes, that does not refer to the true nature of the human and not at all to the human as I.[501] In modernity the world is understood as representing and aims 'to bring what is present at hand [das Vor-handene] before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it to oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm'.[502] To represent means 'to set out before oneself and to set forth in relation to oneself'. Then the world is seen as a picture and the human as a subject.[503] Our relation to something else, 'willing, taking point of view, being sensible of' it is a representing thinking.[504] As Heidegger writes, 'the *subiectum*, the fundamental certainty, is the being-represented-together-with—made secure at any time—of representing man together with the entity represented … i.e., together with the objective'.[505]

But in relation to medieval and ancient times now the human has a position. In modernity art was in a position to stand to offer to the viewer the chance to decide which 'position' to take. According to Heidegger, the modern age offers humans the right to experience the object in his own terms, the opportunity to recede from the 'scene', 'of that which is generally and publicly represented'.[506] The human is then the representative of that which has the status of an object, as Heidegger writes, and 'makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the objective'.[507]

The human as a subject asks:

[501] Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', p. 128.
[502] Ibid., p. 131.
[503] Ibid., p. 132.
[504] Ibid., p. 150.
[505] Ibid.
[506] Ibid., pp. 131-132.
[507] Ibid., p. 132.

> is it as an 'I' confined to its own preferences and freed into its own arbitrary choosing or as the 'we' of society? is it as an individual or as a community? Is it as a personality within the community or as a mere group member in the corporate body? is it as a state and nation and as a people or as the common humanity of modern man, that man will and ought to be the subject that in this modern essence he *already is*?[508]

But the modern world is no longer the place of gods. The human is no longer part of the world but aims to conquer the world. But to this extent he remains without a shelter, a home. What characterises modernity is homelessness. The human is 'in need of protection', the human's own 'self-willing' and 'self-assertion' makes him 'endangered' but at the same time 'unshielded'.[509] The human in the age of technology is set outside 'all care or protection'. The mastery of the objectifying world is what demolishes the chance of protection.[510] The human constructs the technological world as an object *and at the same time deliberately* breaks his bond with the world.[511] 'Self-assertive man, whether or not he knows and wills it as an individual, is the functionary of technology'. The human now faces the world 'from outside it' and in addition 'he even turns his back upon the 'pure draft' by objectifying the world'. The 'parting', as Heidegger calls it, is the opposition of the human towards the world, it 'is not a parting *from*, it is a parting *against*'.[512] What is dangerous and deadly is not technology, technologically advanced machines used in wars such as the atomic bomb. What is deadly for the human and human nature is, Heidegger argues, the 'purposeful self-assertion in everything', 'the unconditional character of mere willing'; the belief that man by technological production can order the world. But it is this ordering that cancels any chances of recognition, it 'destroys the realm from which any rank and recognition could possibly arise'.[513] For Heidegger, willing in the sense of 'self-assertion within a world' is dangerous.[514]

As Heidegger remarks, 'the essence of technology comes to the light of day only slowly. This day is the world's night, rearranged into merely technological day. This

[508] Ibid., pp. 132-133.
[509] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', p. 111.
[510] Ibid.
[511] Ibid.
[512] Ibid.
[513] Ibid., p. 114.
[514] Ibid.

day is the shortest day. It threatens a single endless winter'.[515] The world now becomes unholy. The holy stays 'concealed' and a track towards the holy no longer appears. Some mortals could still be able to see the danger of the unholy and they have to recognize the threat that 'assaults' human being. 'To see this danger and point it out, there must be mortals who reach sooner into the abyss'.[516]

3. 4. Heidegger's position on Hegel's thesis on the death of art

According to Heidegger, Hegel's designation of the end of art does not indicate that since the end of the middle ages there are no original works of art worthy to be admired. As Heidegger argues, we cannot refute Hegel's thesis on the end of art and overcome 'all the history and happenings that stand behind them by objecting against Hegel that since 1830 we have had many considerable works of art which we might point to'.[517] But these works exist only for some particular group of people and only for pleasure. And this, Heidegger remarks, does not cancel Hegel's thesis on the end of art but rather verifies it. Hegel's position on the death of art does not reject the possibility that in the future individual works could be original and valued. But as these works would belong to particular cultural sectors and particular population segments 'it is proof that art has lost its power to be the absolute, has lost its absolute power '. In terms of this loss the position of art and its relation with knowledge are designated in the ground of its present.[518]

Even though Heidegger closes his discussion in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' with the Hegelian thesis on the 'death of art', he only partly supports it. Heidegger, according to Young, develops his own position on the 'death of art' by responding to Hegel's four propositions on the 'death of art'.[519]

1. Hegel's first proposition regards the decline of art in the modern age. Like Hegel, Heidegger agrees that art today is not 'of its highest vocation'.[520] Art counts as 'the highest manner', as great art when it is a manifestation of the truth of beings. Art to be

[515] Ibid., p. 115.
[516] Ibid.
[517] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 85.
[518] Ibid.
[519] Young, op. cit., pp. 8-12.
[520] Ibid., p. 6, and Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 78.

great must possess, like the Greek temple or the statue of god, 'world-historical significance'.[521] Great art needs to be truth revealing.

2. Hegel's second proposition refers to the loss of the greatness of art. For Heidegger too great art is 'a thing of the past', and it has been since the end of the middle ages.[522] Following Hegel, Heidegger argues that modernity cannot be as great as the art of the past, and is 'even at its best, something less (actually a lot less) than great'.[523] Art that can no longer reveal a truth cannot be great.

3. Heidegger disagrees with Hegel's third proposition, which states that art is 'something past' and will remain dead. [524] For Hegel history and thus art which is part of his conception of history never repeat themselves. The art of the past is dead and will never repeat its greatness.[525] Heidegger rejects this view. For Heidegger history is not driven by laws; for him laws are mere 'illusions'.[526] There is nothing stopping the rebirth of great art, great art can regain the status and function it once had.

4. Heidegger also rejects Hegel's fourth proposition according to which the death of art is viewed as a necessary and essential change or turn, and because of that there is no reason 'for serious regret'.[527] Art became or becomes 'an occasion…for nostalgia and expressions of gratitude'.[528] In the closing of his investigation on 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger questions whether art in modernity is 'an essential and necessary way' of the happening of truth. He views Hegel's position on the 'death of art' in modernity as a matter that 'has not yet been decided'; for Heidegger the world, historical people, are still in need of great art.[529]

[521] Young, op. cit., p. 71.
[522] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 78.
[523] Young, op. cit., p. 8.
[524] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 78.
[525] Young, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
[526] Ibid., pp. 14, 48.
[527] Young, op. cit., p. 7.
[528] Ibid.
[529] Ibid., p. 15 and Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 78.

Is art in modernity merely an object of aesthetics? Does art in modernity need its own public space? How is the validity of art to be understood in an age that does not offer the social and cultural preconditions for such art? What is art in an age without gods?

3. 5. Art and Aesthetics

In modernity art is no longer the place of truth, 'art is no longer unavoidably formative for our experience of ourselves or the world; it no longer constitutively presents or even represents what is absolute for us'.[530] The truth that is missing from art is not an empirical truth, a truth that is to be seen or experienced through art, but as Bernstein remarks it is categorical in the sense of transcendental truth.[531] Art according to Bernstein has been alienated from truth, it has lost its ability to present, not merely a truth, but to reveal what is absolute, divine and holy. According to Bernstein 'art's alienation from truth'[532] refers not to the truth as such but to the truth that is beyond what is intelligible to us and known. The alienation of art's truth is never an absolute absence. Even though Heidegger states that modernity is 'the age without an artwork', he does not declare an absolute end or death of art. Alienation thus is to be understood as the disclosure of truth, the impoverishment of the ability of an artwork to reveal a truth. The truth thus becomes a symbol, a supernatural truth, a representation or presentation of an empirical and aesthetic truth.

Art becomes the space of his exploration of the truth and being but to do so Heidegger reconsiders the art of his time and retrieves its cognitive value. Precisely, Bernstein writes, Heidegger aims to 'restore' the status of art 'as forms of cognition'.[533] This task is undertaken by both Heidegger and Gadamer in opposition to the belief that was formed since the Enlightenment and designated the status of art in terms of subjective judgements.

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[530]J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 73.
[531]Ibid., p. 68.
[532]Ibid.
[533] Ibid., p. 79.

However, Gadamer, Bernstein argues, proceeds in a more radical manner to the examination of the turn towards the subjectification of art. For Gadamer with enlightenment art lost its cognitive mode in favour of the understanding of art in terms of independent and autonomous judgments and subjective tastes. Heidegger on the other hand sees this turn in relation to the metaphysical turn in the history of philosophy and being. Individual states of feeling, will and thought come to replace the true being of art. Aesthetics for Heidegger becomes equivalent to considerations of art that are formed by emotions and refer to the beauty of art. For Heidegger, in the aesthetic apprehension of art the work of art becomes an object for the subject and the relationship between object and subject depends on feelings.[534]

The notion of aesthetics, Heidegger writes, is formed in the same way as the notion of logic and ethics. What completes these notions is the world knowledge in the sense of episteme.[535] Aesthetics is thus 'the knowledge of human behaviour with regard to sense, sensation, and feeling, and knowledge of how these are determined'. What designates the human's feeling and therefore aesthetics is, Heidegger remarks, the beautiful. The object of aesthetics is the beautiful and its relation to the human being's feelings. But what is beautiful in Heidegger's philosophy of art? As Heidegger argues, the beautiful is 'what in its self-showing brings forth' human's state of feeling. But as such it is not related merely to art but pertains to nature and art, in the sense of handicraft.[536]

> Since in the aesthetic consideration of art the artwork is defined as the beautiful which as been brought forth in art, the work is represented as the bearer and provoker of the beautiful with relation to our state of feeling. The artwork is posited as the 'object' for a 'subject'; definitive for aesthetic consideration is the subject-object relation, indeed as a relation of feeling. The work becomes as object in terms of that surface which is accessible to 'lived experience'.[537]

Heidegger's thinking of the meaning of art in modernity passes necessarily, Bernstein argues, through a thinking of the relation of modernity and art. A thinking that examines the way non-great art could be more than something aesthetically designated. 'If such an excess beyond aesthetics is implicit in *modern art*, what is

[534] Ibid.
[535] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 77.
[536] Ibid., p. 78.
[537] Ibid.

required of philosophy is to underwrite it, to give back to art the transformation of cognition that it first makes possible'.[538]

Thus, even if Heidegger in the 'Origin of the Work of Art' rejects art in modernity as great he does not consider the Hegelian 'death of art' as an absolute ending. Key for the discussion of the validity of art in modernity is the disconnection of art from aesthetics and metaphysics. One of the important points of his early account of art for a discussion of modern art is that it offers the premises for the overcoming of the relation of the function of aesthetic theory in art. The overcoming of aesthetics is, Young argues, what allows the re-emergence of a valid art in modernity, 'creating the possibility of the rebirth of art'.[539] And this through his designation of art as poetry which manages to open the ground for the validity of art after the death of art and to think art in modernity as a non-aesthetic art.

More specifically, Heidegger's early discussion on the death of art and his generalisation to modern works of art comes, according to Young, into contradiction with his post-war discussions on modern works of art. In 1960 Heidegger comes to rethink the significance of the new art in modernity. According his new view, the artist of modernity comes to challenge the defined limits of art and to propose an art that falls outside the realm of the traditional concept of art, outside traditional aesthetic theories and the 'art industry'.[540] Buildings and bridges as well as the poetry of Hölderlin and Rilke and the paintings of Klee and Cézanne represent examples of the kind of art that Heidegger had in mind, an art that is not a mere aesthetic object; an art which is not an object of museology or 'connoisseurship'. In his new conception, art in the public space or the representation of space in art seems to stand as genuine happening of truth.[541] This is a re-designation of art which appears to accord with the tasks and views of his contemporary art movements. As Young put it, Heidegger's view on art 'looks to be quite prescient, an anticipation of aspects of the current *avant-garde* '.[542]

[538] Ibid., p. 115.
[539] Young, op. cit, p.15.
[540] Ibid., pp.18-19.
[541] Ibid., p. 19.
[542] Ibid.

Heidegger wants to find an art which firstly overcomes aesthetics, metaphysical meaning and interpretations and secondly could be seen as a holy ground, a place that could allow the spectator to dwell in it. Heidegger is searching to find an art in modernity that 'discloses' the world as a 'holy place', a secure place 'in which the things in the midst of which we find ourselves are disclosed as holy things, things to be adored and cared for'.[543]

3. 6. The poetic paradigm: the modern paradigm

What is central in Heidegger's writings is the relation or 'identity' between art and poetry.[544] This connection becomes the key for the validity of art in modernity. This connection drives Heidegger to rethink in his writings on art in modernity and furthermore to overcome his thesis on 'the death of art'. His rethinking of art signifies, according to Young, a turn in Heidegger's thinking on art in the modern age. Explicitly it begins with his early thinking about the nature of poetry and develops through his discussion of the role of the poet and his reading of the works by Hölderlin and Rilke.[545]

Young argues that even though poetry falls short of fulfilling 'the highest essence of art' of the Greek paradigm, it appears to be Heidegger's 'second paradigm of great, or at least 'valid' art.'[546] 'The modern paradigm', as Young calls it, is what brings to modernity not the sublime, the eternal spirit of gods, but prepares a holy ground for gods. For Heidegger, the poet is the one that can make us see the world 'as a holy place', who can make us see 'the bright possibility of a true world'.[547]

For poetry to be a true poetry in Heidegger's sense needs two meanings, a wider and a narrow one. For Heidegger all forms of art are poetry in the wider sense of the word poetry; 'if all art is in essence poetry, then the arts of architecture, painting, sculpture, and music must be traced back to poesy'.[548] Here poetry is used as equivalent to the Greek notion of the word poesy, which means creation, a bringing forth of truth.

[543] Ibid., p.133.
[544] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xii.
[545] Young, op. cit., pp. 84-94, also Heidegger, 'What are Poets for?', pp. 89-95.
[546] Ibid.
[547] Young, op.cit, pp. 1-4, 21-122, (p. 2), also Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xv.
[548] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', pp. 70-71.

Poetry in its wider meaning is an opening of truth, poesy. Poetry is the 'composition', as Heidegger put it, 'the lighting projection of truth.'[549] 'All art, as the letting happen of the advent of truth of what is, is, as such, essentially poetry'.[550]

Poetry in its narrow meaning indicates the linguistic work and is the art that holds a privileged place among the arts. For Heidegger, a poem is a creation, an 'invention' or as he writes in 'Language', a 'fictive act'. A poem is 'imaginative' despite the fact that it might unfold images and descriptions.[551] The kind of poetry Heidegger refers to is non-metaphysical poetry, the poetry which is free 'from bondage to the time's idols'.[552] Poetry that refers to the present and not to an imaginary world, 'the realm of the unreal'.[553] Nevertheless the poet still employs imagination and the poem engages the reader's imagination. But here imagination is part of the process by which poetry helps reveal truth, of creating images through language and words. As imaginative as a poet can be, he is concerned with the present, with conveying 'something that could be present in its present' in order to allow the reader to take these images into his own mode of imaging.[554]

Poetry in the wide sense, according to Young, seems to satisfy Heidegger's search for an art that can overcome metaphysics. This is because art as poetry functions as 'illuminating projection'; it discloses the worlds and its objects in order to let this world happen.[555]

> Poetry unfolds of unconcealedness and projects ahead into the design of the figure, is the Open, which poetry lets happen, and indeed in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the Open brings to shine and ring out.[556]

This projective thinking is poetry. 'Poetry is the saying of the unconcealedness of what is'.[557] It is the saying and thus projection of the world and earth, and of its

[549] Ibid., p. 71.
[550] Young, op. cit., p. 17.
[551] Heidegger, 'Language', p. 195.
[552] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xv.
[553] The language and notions that poetry uses are never without an aim and refer to the real and present world. Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 70.
[554] Heidegger, 'Language', p. 195.
[555] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 70.
[556] Ibid.
[557] Ibid., p. 71.

synthesis as both conflict and union, and furthermore of the gods' presence or absence, 'nearness' or 'remoteness'.[558] Therefore all art that discloses and projects the truth is poetry, poetry is the 'setting-into-work of truth'. 'The nature of art is poetry. The nature of poetry, in turn, is the founding of truth'.[559] Art is the founding of truth, an opening or an event of truth. This founding is to be understood not as a creation of a world from the beginning but as poesy, in Heidegger words, a 'bringing forth' of the world, earth, divinities and mortals. The work encloses the fourfold, it opens it up and makes it visible.[560]

The poetic paradigm that Young proposes as the new paradigm of art in Heidegger encompasses both the wider and narrower meaning of the word poetry. It refers particularly to the way poetry opens the way for its fulfilment as a genuine art in modernity. But in its broad meaning the poetic paradigm allows all kinds of art to be seen as projections of truth. For Heidegger, what unifies the two meanings of poetry is language. Poetry as any kind of art is for Heidegger a speaking. Poetry as well as any art could bring back the authentic speaking of language.

The speaking of language is not to be understood as a mere communication of messages, emotions or an ordinary human act. Specifically, Heidegger opposes his conception of language to four ancient beliefs that designate language as 'audible utterance of inner emotions, as human activity, as a representation by image and by concept' and as the expression of feelings.[561] However, he does not come to reject these ideas as incorrect or wrong but rather as 'useless'. Even if they are rooted in ancient times they overlook, Heidegger remarks, 'the oldest natural cast of language' that is they fail to identify 'language as language'.[562]

'Language speaks'. And what is spoken keeps safe speaking. 'In what is spoken, speaking gathers the ways in which it persist as well as that which persist by it—its

[558] Ibid.
[559] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 72.
[560] Young, op. cit., pp. 17,31, 34, 72.
[561] Heidegger, 'Language', pp. 191-192.
[562] Ibid., p. 191.

persistence, its presencing'.[563] For Heidegger the pure and original speaking is the speaking of the poem.[564]

Language is speaking about the nature of things only when the nature of language is respected or as long as language foregoes the speaking of humans. Language could unveil what things are and how they are. When we respect the nature of language it then tells us the nature of things.[565] But humans speak as if they are those who shape and dominate language. For Heidegger it is language which is the master of the human, language comes first.[566] The speech of mortals is not, Heidegger remarks, 'self-subsistent'.[567] Humans need to learn 'to live in the speaking of language'.[568] As Heidegger writes:

> mortal speech is a calling that names, a bidding which, out of the simple onefold of the difference, bids thing and world to come. What is purely bidden in mortal speech is what is spoken in the poem. Poetry proper is never merely a higher mode (*melos*) of everyday language. It is rather the reverse: everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call any longer. [569]

Poetry therefore is taken to be a language whose use has been forgotten, the 'authentic language which has not lost its magic potency by being used up and abused'.[570] In the poem we do not search language as expression of feelings or ideas but 'the speaking of language'.[571] Poetry measures the dimension of world and our existence, 'the standard by which all other measures—of this or that or something else—are themselves measured'.[572]

Humans use language as a tool, equipment, and like the tool it becomes used up, it loses its primary form and hence meaning and also it is taken as granted and becomes

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[563]Ibid. pp. 191-192.
[564] As Heidegger writes, 'what is spoken purely is that in which the completion of the speaking that is proper to what is spoken is, in its turn, an original. What is spoken purely is the poem'. Ibid., p. 192.
[565] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 144
[566] Ibid.
[567] Heidegger, 'Language', p. 207.
[568] Ibid., p. 205.
[569] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. x. and 'Language', p. 205.
[570] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xii.
[571] Heidegger, 'Language', p. 194.
[572] As Hofstadter remarks, 'at the basis of man's ability to build in the sense of cultivating and constructing there must be, as primal source, his poetic ability, the ability to take the measured of the world'. Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xiv.

natural. For Heidegger the equipment through its use 'is worn out and used up' but also its use itself 'falls into disuse, wears way, and becomes usual'.[573] But 'the equipmental quality of equipment consists in its usefulness'.[574] Furthermore, the usefulness of the equipment lies in its reliability, that is, 'the abundance of an essential being of the equipment'.[575] 'The repose of equipment resting within itself consists in its reliability'.[576] The equipment 'is half thing' because it exists for something else, for a specific purpose external to it. Its use abstracts from it 'the self-sufficiency of the work of art'.[577] According to Heidegger what distinguishes art from the equipment is precisely its self sufficient and self referential character. The event of the creation of the work of art

> does not simply reverberate through the work; rather, the work, casts before itself the eventful fact that the work is as this work, and it has constantly this fact about itself. The more essentially the work opens itself, the more luminous becomes the uniqueness of the fact that it is rather than is not.[578]

The truth of the equipment when it is used falls 'into oblivion' 'as is the wont of everything commonplace', it functions for something else external to it and thus is forgotten. [579]The more useful the equipment is 'the more inconspicuous' its being remains within its equipmentality.[580] It is when the equipment breaks down and can no longer be used that we come closer to its being.

In this sense the true nature and meaning of language when is used, is forgotten, it looses its authenticity. Still poetry manages to break down its everyday use. Poetry encloses the self-sufficiency of language and allows it to emerge in its true being. Poetry is letting us know what things are in true. Poetry allows brings back the authenticity of language, 'its magic potency'.

Thus in order for a human to dwell in a true manner and in order to understand the world and his life, his existence, the human must poetically dwell, he must seek the

[573] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 34.
[574] Ibid., p. 32.
[575] Ibid., p. 33.
[576] Ibid., p. 34.
[577] Ibid., p. 28.
[578] Ibid., p., 63.
[579] Ibid.
[580] Ibid.

authenticity of things and reveal the truth of things that has been forgotten. Through the poetic bringing forth of art humans could 'become aware' of the way language 'bids to come the entire fourfold world of earth and sky, mortals and divinities, by bidding the things to come—window, snow, house, table' 'it bids to come the intimacy of world things—their difference, which appropriates them to one another'.[581] For Heidegger 'language is the original way in which 'beings are brought into the open clearing of truth, in which world and earth, mortals and gods are bidden to come to their appointed places of meeting'.[582]

'The work of art lets us know' the truth of things. Van Gogh's painting discovers the 'equipmental quality' of shoes.[583] Poetry, speaking, earth, life, world

> From the dark opening of the worn insides the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the fild-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, and trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the earth and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman. [584]

'This painting spoke', Heidegger remarks. Van Gogh's painting discloses the truth of the pair of shoes and furthermore the pair of shoes emerges into the truth, the *aletheia* of its being. 'In the work of art the truth of an entity has set itself to work'.[585] This setting is poetic projection of the truth of things. Art as poetry reveals the truth of things, it brings them to stand in the light of their being.[586] His painting projects 'what shoes are in truth', the world and earth of the peasant woman, the fourfold that allows her to dwell.

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[581] 'What unites opposites is the rift, the *Riss*…that has become the difference'. Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xiii.
[582] Ibid., p. xii, and Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 72.
[583] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 35.
[584] Ibid., p. 33.
[585] Ibid., p. 35.
[586] Ibid.

3. 6. 1. The poet in modernity: Hölderlin and Rilke

Heidegger argues that today's technological way of living and work and subjective pleasure and judgment harasses 'our dwelling'. However, he argues that in the destitute days of modernity there is still space for the poetic dwelling, a genuine dwelling that overcomes aestheticizing.[587] In this destitute time the 'turning' will not occur/happen either by a new god or the return of a 'renewed' old god.[588] And this is because there is not a place for a god to return; people have not prepared an abode for the god to come. But how is it possible to prepare an abode for a god, if the holy no longer exists, or in Heidegger words, 'if a divine radiance did not first begin to shine in everything that is'?[589] 'What are poets for' in modernity? When is the 'right time' for the gods to return? Could the poetry of Hölderlin or Rilke that Heidegger discusses be seen as kinds of art that surpass aesthetics?

The traces of the gods are no longer recognizable: the question that emerges is whether the holy is experienced 'as the track leading to the godhead of the divine' or we only have 'a trace of the holy'.[590] But what could such a track that leads to the trace be? Can this track appear to us?

The song is what remains to name, as Heidegger writes, 'the land over which it sings'.[591] The poet in the 'destitute time' of modernity is the one who looks up to the sky and sees the god, not as absolute spirit but 'in its manifestness the self-concealment of the unknown god'. God comes to the poet 'to help him dwell'.[592] Poets show to mortals the traces of gods, the traces into the night, 'as the singers of soundness, the more venturesome ones are 'poets in a destitute time''.[593]

Being a poet in destitute times is 'to attend, singing, to the trace' of the gods that have left.[594] Poets are the ones that can trace the gods, in Heidegger's words, they 'are the

[587] Heidegger, '…Poetically Man Dwells…', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 211-227, (p. 211).
[588] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', p. 90
[589] Ibid.
[590] Ibid., p. 94.
[591] Ibid., p. 95.
[592] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xiv.
[593] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', pp. 137-138, (p. 138).
[594] Ibid., p. 92.

mortals who, singing earnestly of the wine-god, sense the trace of the fugitive gods, stay on the gods' tracks, and so trace for their kindred mortals the way towards the turning'.[595] The trace of the gods is the holy, that is, for Heidegger the 'element of the ether for the coming of the fugitive gods'; 'that within which even the godhead itself is still present',[596] and those are traces of the fugitive gods that the poet can only speak about, listen and sing for. Therefore in 'the time of the world's night' the poet is the person who can speak about the holy; in/ through poetry or rather in the language of the poet 'the world's night is the holy night'.[597] The poet does not turn night into day, he does not bring past into present but make us see night as a 'holy night'. Hölderlin's poetry and language, Heidegger remarks, allows the 'world's night' to be as such a 'holy night'.[598]

The time that Hölderlin finds to be the right time for the gods to return is 'when there has been a turn among men in the right place, in the right way'.[599] It is wrong to think, Heidegger argues, that Hölderlin's time will be the time that everyone will understand his work. 'It will never arrive in such a misshapen way; for it is its own destitution that endows the era with forces by which, unaware of what it is doing, it keeps Hölderlin's poetry from becoming timely'.[600] However, what is believed to be eternal only hides 'a suspended transiency, suspended in the void of a durationless now'.[601] In Hölderlin there is the necessity to think his poetry and 'to come to learn what is unspoken'. And the unspoken is the same history of being. We can come closer to the path of the history of Being when thinking opens up a dialogue with poetry.[602] As Heidegger argues, his metaphysical conception of being is part of the destiny of the true Being. 'The locality to which Hölderlin came is a manifestness of being, a manifestness which itself belongs to the destiny of Being and which, out of that

[595] Ibid.
[596] Ibid.
[597] Ibid.
[598] Ibid., p. 92.
[599] Ibid., p. 90. Hölderlin is for Heidegger the 'pre-cursor of poets' in modernity and no other poet of the era can surpass him. Hölderlin does not withdraw to a future but 'he arrives out of that future'. As more pure this arrival is the more can occur at present. Ibid., p. 139.
[600] Ibid., p. 139.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid. p. 93

destiny, is intended for the poet'.[603] Hölderlin's poetry is a poetic thinking of being. But his conception of the being is still designated in terms of Western metaphysics. [604] The manifestness of being that is located within metaphysics appears on the one hand complete and concrete and on the other hand a *lethe*, as 'the extreme oblivion of Being'.[605]

Rilke is also involved in the toils of the metaphysical view of reality.[606] Rilke in his work designates the Being of beings metaphysically as 'worldly presence', that is, the presence that 'remains referred to representation in consciousness'. The realm of presences, as Heidegger writes, 'is presence in saying'.[607] 'If Rilke is a 'Poet in a Destitute Time' then only his poetry can answer the question to what extent he is a poet, whither his song is bound, where the poet belongs in the destiny of the world's night. That destiny decides what remains fateful within this poetry'.[608] 'Rilke's saying attains to the poetic vocation of the kind of poet who answers to the coming of world era'. But this era is not a 'decay' or a 'downfall' but a destiny that 'lies in Being and lays claim to man'.[609]

Poetry in modernity neither presents nor aims to present the gods or their divine spirit but merely 'to build 'the house into which the gods are to come as guests''.[610] Hölderlin and Rilke are for Heidegger poets of modernity. They seek to present the holy by experiencing the unholy, the destitution of modernity. They experience the metaphysics of their time and they acknowledge the absence of the divinity and holiness of gods and of gods themselves. Through this experience they create a calling for the gods to come closer, to return. The poets, Heidegger argues, can find the holy because they can experience the unholy. And the unholy is that which 'traces the

[603] Ibid., p. 93. The aim of the poet in the modern age is to bring to their poetry the same nature of poetry. Ibid., p. 92. Their poetry does not surpass metaphysical thinking but they both think the question of the poet, and reach the nature of poetry. Ibid., p. 139.
[604] Ibid., p. 93.
[605] Ibid.
[606] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xv.
[607] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', p. 130
[608] Ibid.
[609] Ibid.', p. 139.
[610] Young, op. cit., p. 89.

sound for us'; the holy is attracted from the sound, it 'binds the divine' and furthermore the divine brings nearer the gods. [611]

Poetry in modernity could allow dwelling. For Heidegger poetry and dwelling need one another, each belongs to the other and calls for the other.[612] Poetic language and thinking are for Heidegger identical with poetry 'as essentially poetry' and this is what comes to be 'an indispensable function for human life: it is the creative source of the humanness of the dwelling life of man'. It is poetry or rather the poetic aspect of our existence, it is poets 'and their great poetry' that could save us from being 'brutes' 'or what is worse and what we are most like today: vicious automata of self-will'.[613]

3. 7. Modern painting

The poet's aim to present the 'holy' in modernity drew Heidegger's attention to the study of modern painting and particularly to discuss individual modern artists who are considered to be genuine establishers of the holy, such as Cézanne and Klee.[614] As Heidegger argues, initially we see the work of Klee as non-figurative; but then objects, figures, and nature slowly appear. Abstract forms begin to take shape, and to transform into meaningful objects. What on a first inspection appears meaningless subsequently takes meaning, the invisible becomes visible, dwelling happens out of a 'holy chaos'. And this it is precisely what Heidegger was looking for in modern art, an art in which objects do not disappear 'but step back, as objects, into a worlding'.[615] Worlding indicates that their truth or is never an absolute one and is never fully revealed but derives in relation to us and the way we experience these objects we become familiar with them and their world. Objects continuously obtain truth and meaning. Their truth is an ongoing happening; it revolves and develops in relation to their world and earth, to divinity, and mortals.

Although Cézanne's as well as Klee's work appears initially as abstract or conceptual, it is not to be understood as fully abstract or conceptual art. According to Young, in

[611] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', p. 138.
[612] Ibid., p. 139 and 'The Origin of the Work of Art', pp. 22-55.
[613] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xv.
[614] Young, op. cit., pp. 1-4, 94, 121-122,140.
[615] Ibid., p. 168.

fully-abstract art the world, the representational objects and figures are entirely lost or 'disappear'. In contrast, the object in a semi-abstract work, even if it fails to prevail into or onto the scene, it does not entirely disappear.[616] The painting as a 'holy ground' does not represent the world and earth but projects it, allows it to happen, makes visible what was hidden.[617] For Heidegger the work of Klee and Cézanne are examples of what he calls non-figurative or semi-abstract art.[618]Such works of art do not merely represent and imitate the world and its objects but rather they create a world and then let it happen, appear.[619]

Merleau-Ponty's approach of Cézanne's work is based on this turn from the invisible to the visible, from stasis to motion. Merleau-Ponty sees this turn towards the visible as a result of the materiality of the work, of colours, shapes and lines. According to Merleau-Ponty succeeds to bring forth world in his work, and to create the illusion of motion and time not through lines and distance but through colour. The colours in his work concern the same 'dimension of colour, that dimension which creates—from itself to itself—identities, differences, a texture, a materiality, a something….'[620]

In his work the viewer is engaged at the same time with the space and objects; one looks for space and what the space contains.[621] The world and its objects in his work derive through the spatiality of colours, which helps them obtain motion. Things appear to move 'they began to modulate in the instability'.[622] But motion in his work does not derives through a depiction of events but through a transition of a mere moment of the world's motion. As Stokes contends, Cézanne work is a thinking of the complication of appearance, 'the extreme complication of actual, even momentary, appearance'.[623] For Stokes through the organisation of lines and colours Cézanne manages to turn the two dimensionality of his paintings into a space from where the world is not merely shown but affirmed. As Stokes writes, in Cézanne's work:

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[616] Ibid., p. 163.
[617] Ibid., p. 50.
[618] Ibid., pp. 161, 166-167.
[619] Ibid., p. 163.
[620] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson; Michael B. Smith, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 141.
[621] Ibid.
[622] Ibid., p. 140.
[623] Stokes, op. cit., p. 236.

> the observational truth of light, space, colour, tone and mass in their subtlest, no less that in their generalized, modes, are the sole materials of his structure. The otherness of the outside world is affirmed, not mitigated, by the intrusion of this artist's organizing mind. His art needed a constant exercise in observation, for each new canvas a forcible detachment from the preconceived; endless thought, endless vigilance for every inch of the picture space.[624]

Light, space and colours become a world, for Heidegger, a presentation of the holiness of the world. But this happening does not come forth through the technical aspect of the work or from what it represents but rather through the way it allows the viewer to transit from what he sees to something else, through the way it brings the objects and the world to the present.[625]

But for Heidegger the attending to the material aspect of the work is only the first step in understanding the work. According to Heidegger, the materiality of the work, the colours of the painting will then drive us to attend from what is presented to us, to 'something else' that goes beyond the painting as mere colours.[626] For Heidegger a work of art does not merely represent a world but encloses the world, an entity, a thing in order to allow it to be seen in its true being.[627]

> The temple-work in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time and to come into the Open of the work's world. The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to speak. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the lighting and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word.[628]

As Heidegger remarks, if art manages to open up a world in the sense of releasing a sacred place then it opens up the possibility of human dwelling, the possibility to

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[624] Ibid., pp. 236-237.
[625] From this point of view, as Young argues, 'attention to the elegance of the spatial organization of the frames is usually a sign that the drama has failed to capture our attention – that the film has failed as an artwork – and that one is seeking diversion in order to evade boredom'. Young, p. 48.
[626] What we see or want to see is the work not as a mere object but its artistic nature which as such presented independently from the artist. Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 20.
[627] As Heidegger writes 'in the work of art the truth of an entity has set itself to work. 'To set' means here: to bring to a stand. Some particular entity, a pair of peasant shoes, comes in the work to stand in the light of its being. The being of the being comes into the steadiness of its shining'. Ibid., p. 35.
[628] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

preserve a home or to break from homelessness.[629] Art as a material thing is a place. Art articulates and makes available a place.[630] Art could release, Heidegger writes, the places of gods which have left but still the holy resides.

But how does art make available a place for gods? How does Heidegger designate the notion of place and what is the relation between place and space?

In opposition to the ancient Greek and later Christian conception of place Heidegger distinguishes the notion of place and space. Place in ancient Greek philosophy was understood as the concrete aspect of the infinite world and thus it obtains a metaphysical meaning. In Plato place was taken as what exists within space, *choros* and in Aristotle as the sensible environment which is formulated by the world, *cosmos*.[631] Place was taken as the finite and sensory but it was always understood in relation to the infinity, to what lies beyond the sensual world.[632] In Christian tradition until the early modern physics the notion of place was still understood in a metaphysical manner. Place was liberated into and out of the universe and became an infinite space, a teleological universalism.[633]

According to Casey, since Kant the notion of place is designated by the human body. The human body is that which occupies and penetrates 'a given place', and furthermore experiences it, names it and learns it.[634] The importance of the human bodily orientation is seen as 'exceptional' in the phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. The kinesthetic experience of the human becomes now the mode of his knowledge.[635] However, Heidegger places this action not in the area of place but of a world. In Heidegger place becomes not a direction but an 'indirection'.[636]

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[629] Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space', in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach, (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), pp.121-124, (p.122).
[630] Véronique M. Fóti, 'Heidegger and 'The Way of Art': The Empty origin and Contemporary Abstraction', in *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 31, (1998), pp. 337-351, (p. 346).
[631] Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1997), pp. x-xi, 17, 23, 48, 50-51
[632] Ibid., and Heidegger, 'Art and Space', p. 121.
[633] Casey, op. cit., pp. xii, 77.
[634] Ibid., pp. 204-205, (p. 204)
[635] Ibid., pp. 221, 225, 240 , 332.
[636] Ibid., p. 243.

Heidegger takes account 'the role of the body in implacement' but finds other means to access to place 'as a subject of renewed philosophical importance'.[637] Place as 'indirection' is not cancelled but enclosed in and by the relation of the world and earth in his early thinking and later by the unity and contradiction of world and earth, divinities and mortals. Place obtains meaning when it is realized through dwelling, when the human stays 'within the fourfold among things';[638] as Heidegger remarks quoting Hölderlin when human 'spans the dimension by measuring himself against the heavenly'.[639]And only within the dimension of earth, sky and divinities human can measure the dimension of his own existence. As Heidegger writes:

> Only in the realm of sheer toil does man toil for 'merits.' There he obtains them for himself in abundance. But at the same time, in this realm, man is allowed to look up, out of it, through it, toward the divinities. The upward glance passes aloft toward the sky, and yet it remains below on the earth. The upward glance spans the between of sky and earth. This between is measured out for the dwelling of man. We now call the span thus meted out the dimension. This dimension does not arise from the fact that sky and earth are turned toward one another. Rather, their facing each other itself depends on the dimension. Nor is the dimension a stretch of space as ordinarily understood; for everything spatial, as something for which space is made, is already in need of the dimension, that is, that into which it is admitted.[640]

Space has extension. Is not emptiness, it is what extends to things and then things becomes measurable. Space for Heidegger is the destitute abstraction of technology and science.

> As against that, however, in the spaces provided for by locations there is always space as interval, and in this interval in turn there is space as pure extension. *Spatium* and *extensio* afford at any time the possibility of measuring things and what they make room for, according to distances, spans, and directions, and of computing these magnitudes. But the fact that they are universally applicable to everything that has extension can in no case make numerical magnitudes the ground of the nature of space and locations that are measurable with the aid of mathematics.[641]

Space is 'something that has been made room for' and from there starts to be presented. Space acquires its being from locations and hence from buildings, from

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[637] Ibid.
[638] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', pp. 152-153.
[639] Heidegger, '…Poetically Man Dwells…', pp. 220-221.
[640] Ibid.
[641] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', pp. 153-154. Space for Heidegger is the destitute abstraction of technology and science.

constructions.[642] In sculpture space becomes through 'the sculptured structure' 'closed, breached and empty volume'.[643] But this emptiness is either a deficiency or 'a failure to fill up a cavity or gap'. The emptiness comes together with place, and is not a failure rather 'a bringing-forth'.[644]

Painting captures things, figures and world and isolates it from us by enclose it into its surface. The place of painting exists within the limits of painting. But the place of sculpture is not completed in the work but through its space, its location and the way sculpture alters this location. If in painting the illusion of motion, light and space comes through colours, in sculpture it is derived through the way the figures orientate the viewer within its space. In sculpture the form and position of figures orientate the space and world around it. According to Hopkins, sculpture engages space and 'presents us with things as *in the same place* as parts of ourselves'. We see a plurality of forms, of aspects. It makes us 'aware of ourselves, not merely as located, but as *embodied'*.[645]

But the emergence of modern sculpture is based upon the loss of place. Sculpture in modernity sits in a specific location though it appears alienated and homeless from that place and incapable of speaking about it. How is this alienation and homelessness to be understood? How can modern sculpture help restore the loss of its place?

[642] Ibid., pp. 152-153, (p. 152).
[643] Heidegger, 'Art and Space', p. 121.
[644] As Heidegger argues, space does not contain places or locations. Space faces human. But this facing does not make place 'an external object' or 'an inner experience'. Ibid., p. 123.
[645] Robert Hopkins, 'Painting, Sculpture, Sight, and Touch', in *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 44, no. 2, (2004), pp. 149-166, (p. 155).

4. Modern sculpture: the loss of space

4. 1. The monument in modernity: Rodin

Sculpture in antiquity was bound with the function and 'logic' of the monument. As Krauss remarks, 'the logic of sculpture, it would seem, is inseparable from the logic of the monument. By virtue of this logic a sculpture is a commemorative representation.'[646] It would stand on a specific location as a symbol and honour of that place and it would speak, Krauss writes, 'in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use of that place'.[647]

The monument is erected for the particular purpose of holding human actions or events alive for the future nation to remember.[648] The monument is erected to hold a history, victories of the past or a single human sacrifice, events that a nation needs to preserve. Old monuments hold a past, a history for the present. But the historical and artistic values of old monuments do not remain the same, they alter in terms of the present, they acquire 'a present day value…for modern life and work'.[649] The monument, a sculpture, a tower, a tomb, a column, a building, a temple or fragments of a temple, is bound up with the notion of architecture in the sense that it stands in a particular place and is in need of that place. It is through its place that a monument can function in a symbolic way but also the place and geographical alterations designate its value and historical importance. The monuments of antiquity do not have eternal values, they cannot function in the same way as they did in their historical present.

For Heidegger these values are no longer revealed. The truth of the temple is enclosed in its historical past and community. The temple is not and cannot be the place of gods, of holiness and divinity even if is going to be part of another community. The temple stands as an aesthetic object, a monument of an era that has gone. Its truth is turned into aesthetic and historical values which are designated by the present community and culture. They have, Reigl argues, a relative and 'historically

[646] Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', p. 280.
[647] Ibid.
[648] Reigl, op. cit., p. 21.
[649] Ibid., p. 26.

contingent value'.[650] Even if they do not have a direct symbolical function to a place and furthermore culture they are still part of the historical development of that culture. But the 'convention' of the monument was mutable and with the modern age came a time when this logic started to 'fail'.[651] Monumental works in early modernism reflect this failing. They sit in a specific place but appear alienated from that place and incapable of speaking about it. For Heidegger the inability of art to reveal its place, its world and earth is what characterises the destitution of modernity. In modernity the monument is alienated from its world and earth and furthermore from its present community.

Rodin's *The Gates of Hell* (fig. 15) and *Monument to Balzac* (fig. 16) were originally planned as monuments. *The Gates of Hell* was a project for the doors of a new museum of decorative arts in Paris. The work was commissioned in 1880 and was planned to be completed and delivered to the museum in 1885. However, the new museum was never built and Rodin never completed the work. However, Rodin worked on it for thirty seven years, until his death in 1917. The theme of this project was Rodin's choice. Rodin had already begun to develop sketches of figures taken from Dante's *Inferno* before the committee had ordered the work.[652]

The *Monument to Balzac* was made in memory and honour of the persona of the French novelist Balzac. The Society of Letters of Paris before giving the project to Rodin had considered four other artists. Henri Chapu, who died before finishing the work, Marquet de Vasselot and then Millet and Coutan both of whom had applied for the project. Rodin was not the first choice but after the death of Chapu, Émile Zola, the new president of the committee, insisted on entrusting the project to Rodin. However, the society rejected the sculpture made by Rodin who then transferred it to his home in Meudon. In 1939, twenty-two years after Rodin's death, the work was cast in bronze and was displayed at the crossings of two boulevards in Paris.

The failure of *The Gates of Hell* and *Monument to Balzac* to stand as monuments is followed, Krauss suggests, by the fact that a number of versions of both works are

[650] Ibid., p. 28.
[651] Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', p. 280.
[652] Ibid.

displayed in a number of museums in several countries whereas there is none standing on the designated locations, as both commissions that have ordered the projects had collapsed.[653] This failure, according to Krauss, also came as the result of the form and specifically of the surface of these two works. In the case of *The Gates of Hell* the doors were so 'gouged away and anti-structurally encrusted' that they admit their inactive state 'on their face'. On the other hand, the *Monument to Balzac* was carried out with such a level of subjectivity that even Rodin thought that his work would be rejected by the society. [654]

With these two works of Rodin, sculpture passed the limits of the 'logic of the monument' and entered into what Krauss calls 'a negative condition'. Sculpture passed to 'a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place'.[655] The failure of Rodin's work to stand as monument signified at the same time the beginning of modern sculpture. It was 'the modernist period of sculptural production', Krauss argues, 'that operates in relation to this loss of site, producing the monument as abstraction, the monument as pure market or base, functionally placeless and largely self-referential'.[656] Is the loss of place of a sculpture necessarily a negative state for sculpture, or does modern sculpture comes to restore the place of sculpture?

Rodin by placing a work such as *The Gates of Hell* on the ground transformed sculpture; sculpture was no longer an art isolated in its pedestal. Rodin managed to bring the viewer closer to the work.[657] Rodin's sculptures are not 'erected' like traditional sculptures. The absence of the pedestal cancels the traditional connection between the work and world, the relationship between the work's and world's place. As Stern argues, there is 'no bridge, no attempt to connect the body architecturally with the world, with a place, where it should belong'. There is no place to which his sculptures could belong.[658]

If sculpture in modernity is without a place then does it cease to dwell? For Heidegger art, buildings, and constructions create places. As Heidegger remarks

[653] Ibid.
[654] Ibid.
[655] Ibid.
[656] Ibid.
[657] Bolge, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
[658] Stern, op. cit., pp. 295-296.

sculpture is ‘an embodying bringing-into-the-work of places, and with them a disclosing of regions of possible dwellings for man, regions of the possible tarrying of things surrounding and concerning man’.[659] Sculpture is ‘the embodiment of the truth of Being in its work of instituting places’.[660] Together with the temple they hold the ground, they reveal a world and at the same time they set ‘this world back again to earth’.[661] They enclose ‘the figure of the god, and this concealment lets it stand out into the only precinct through the open portico’.[662] They reveal the mystery and divine of their places. They make available places, for human to dwell, for gods to reside.

In the destitute days of modernity Heidegger sees the bridge as an example of building that creates the place in which is constructed and furthermore gathers together earth and sky, divinities and mortals. As Heidegger remarks, the bridge does not merely connect banks over the stream but swings over it ‘with ease and power’. The banks are seen as banks because the bridge crosses a stream. ‘The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other’. The bridge brings with the banks the two sides of the landscape that lie behind the stream. Thus, it manages to gather in each other the stream, banks and land. The bridge brings the landscape around the stream and therefore it directs and bears the stream all the way through the meadows.[663]

> Resting upright in the stream's bed, the bridge-piers bear the swing of the arches that leave the stream's waters to run their course. The waters may wander on quiet and gay, the sky’s floods from storm or thaw may shoot past the piers in torrential waves-the bridge is ready for the sky’s weather and its fickle nature. Even where the bridge covers the stream, it holds its flow up to the sky by taking it for a moment under the vaulted gateway and then setting it free once more.[664]

The bridge follows the everyday activities of humans, it attends to the motion of humans and in that way ‘they may get to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side’. The bridge also brings together ‘as a passage that crosses’, the divinities

[659] Heidegger, ‘Art and Space’, p. 123.
[660] Ibid.
[661] Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, p. 41.
[662] Ibid., p. 40.
[663] Heidegger, ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’, p. 150.
[664] Ibid.

when humans openly think of them or when they silently praise them. 'The bridge gathers to itself in its own way earth and sky, divinities and mortals'.[665]

But sculpture in modernity does no longer gather the fourfold in the way traditional sculpture and the temple in ancient Greece or even the bridge in modernity. Does sculpture in modernity allows dwelling in a different manner?

'But where are Rodin's things to go?' Rilke asks. Is there a place for Rodin's work and what kind of place it is?[666] Which kind of social place is the place of Rodin's sculptures? 'A church? A government building? A bourgeois home? A public square? All equally impossible. A garden? Hardly. Nature? Perhaps'.[667] As Rilke writes:

> one might almost be persuaded that there is nowhere any place for these things. Who will venture to receive them? And are they not themselves the confession of their own tragedy, these radiant things which, in their loneliness, have drawn the heavens about them? And which now stand there beyond the power of any building to control? They stand in space. What have they to do with us?[668]

> In the houses of the eighteenth century and in its well-ordered parks he saw sorrowfully the last outward appearance of the inner life of an age. And patiently he discovered in it the marks of that union with nature which has since been lost.[669]

> His works could not wait; they had to be made. He long foresaw their homelessness. The only choice he had was to destroy them while yet within him, or to win for them the sky which is about the mountains. And that was his work. He raised the immense arc of his world above us and made it a part of Nature.[670]

Rodin places his works in the world, in his garden or in his own museum.[671] Rodin believed, that there is no right social place or building for his work.[672] The art of the past had to fulfil a religious and social role for the historical community. But Rodin's figures exist on their own, without belonging to a community, a location or place. For Rilke this 'unplaceability' is what makes Rodin's sculpture to be without a home. But this homelessness is never a social or artistic weakness but rather for Rilke a divine

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[665] Ibid., pp. 150-151.
[666] Rainer Maria Rilke , 'Rodin – Book Two 1907', in *Modern Sculpture Reader*, ed. Jon Wood, David Hulks and Alex Potts, (Henry Moore Institute), pp. 13-22, (p. 22).
[667] Stern, op. cit., p. 296.
[668] Rilke, op. cit., p. 22.
[669] Ibid.
[670] Ibid.
[671] Stern, op. cit., p. 296.
[672] Ibid.

element.[673] Sculpture is no longer called to represent history, human actions and events. It stands for itself independent from previous social and artistic purposes. The divine element of Rodin's sculptures does not refer to representation of the gods but to the acknowledgment of the loss of the gods and to the homelessness of art in modernity which in Rodin's sculptures is turned into autonomy.

The first novelty of Rodin's work is the removal of the pedestal from his sculptures. Rodin does not create a pedestal for his work, a social or religious base, or architectural background but gives himself a substitute. He provides most of his sculptures with 'a piece of world to which they belong from which they seem to originate—a piece of petrified chaos as it were'.[674] And when it seems that he provides a shelter for his work, this shelter is not external to the work but is part of the work and its meaning.[675] Rodin was aiming to create works despite of their location, that could stand independent of their place.[676]

In contrast to traditional sculpture his figures are not standing, showing themselves off. His figures do not perform or act. In the contrary, they do not do anything.[677] 'Rodin's figures do not 'make' any gestures; they are their gestures'.[678] What they are or, according to Stern what they say, comes through the intensity and expressivity of their bodies. As his work *The Shade* (fig. 17)*,* Stern writes, speaks with his body but 'this 'speaking' is filled with that melancholia and intensity of the animal or the mute, which is the effect of frustration and despair, the effect of not being able to speak.' *The Shade* is not doing something, it is merely 'expressing himself'. This expression does not have a receiver. He does not express himself to someone, 'he is communicating, but with no partner/ he is praying, but to no God'.[679]

Rodin has to find a way to overcome what Rilke described as the 'essential homelessness of sculpture in an environment of impermanence and instability that

[673] Ibid.
[674] Ibid.
[675] Ibid., pp. 296-297.
[676] Rilke, op. cit., p. 13.
[677] Stern, op. cit., pp. 298-299.
[678] Ibid., pp. 296-297.
[679] Ibid. p. 299.

made the monumental redundant'.[680] Rodin succeeds in overcoming the isolation and homelessness of his figures through the subject-matter of his work. His subject-matter is the intense conditions of feelings, which are developed either as composite, provocative or erotic. The new emotional subject-matter of his work could be seen as the second novelty of his work. Through his subject-matter Rodin achieves a transformation of homelessness into a positive state. 'He transforms the isolation into something positive, into desire—desire to break the isolation'. As Sterns continues, 'Rodin plays God' and gives to his sculpture a partner, because as Rodin states 'it is not good, that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate'. Rodin creates works in pairs as in the case of his erotic works such as *The Kiss*, (fig. 18) *Fugit Amor*, *The Eternal Idol*, and *I am Beautiful* or a group of figures as in the case of *The Burghers of Calais* a monument in honour of those who have been sacrificed in the fourteenth century to save the city from destruction or by multiplying the homeless figure by three or four as in the case of *The Three Shades* (fig. 19) in order to give to his figure 'at least the consolation of its own company'.[681]

Rodin's compositions lack the expressive act that the single figure carries. In Rodin's work 'composition, architecture, structure, could only 'carry' within the limits of the single figure'.[682] As Tucker argues, 'multiplication of figures cancels out the distinct expressive potential of each by defining the dramatic too literally, i.e. tying it to a dramatic 'situation, and by sheer visual overstatement'.[683]

His figures play with gravity and this characterises a great part of his work. The expressivity of his subject-matter allows Rodin new methods for structuring his figures. In *The Gates of Hell*, for example, and in works that function both as

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[680] Rilke, op. cit., p. 13.
[681] Stern, op. cit., p. 300.
[682] His composition are characterised either by a 'sentimental conception' or by an absence of an architectural structure of the figure's bodies. The poses of his compositions derive form classical or Renaissance works. Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, pp. 31-32.
[683] Ibid. There are four main stages in Rodin's artistic career. The first is *The Age of Bronze*, his period where he produced realist work influenced by the classical ideal of the human body. The second stage is the monument, a more symbolic phase where often he chose subject matters of mythology. The third stage is the portrait where he develops work having as his subject the head. The fourth stage is the fragment, the partial body which still is to be read as a figure. Ibid., pp.24-40, 108-121. His work *The Three Shades* is considered to belong to the first period of his work in *The Age of Bronze*. The classical human bodies and their unnatural postures characterises to a great extend this period. However, the large size of the work and its slight pyramidal composition could make the work be seen as a monument.

sculptures and as reliefs, the form and structure of the human body is designated by the posture of the figures.[684] Towards the end of his artistic career Rodin developed the idea of re-structuring the figure in favour of its posture. This re-structuring was to be developed through a series of partial and fragmented figures. In his works *Torso of Seated Woman Clasping her Left Leg*, 1890, *Iris*, *The Messenger of the Gods,* 1890-91 and *Flying Figure*, 1890-91 Rodin does not have a specific orientation of the figures.[685] These works are not to be seen, according to Tucker, as arbitrary or overly expressive works. 'Each sculpture is taut and tightly structured, with the arm or arms bonding to the leg to achieve a constructive unity that can still, by reference to our own body experience, be felt as anatomically 'real''.[686] These works could be seen as having the character of an object.[687] But even if this object character appears to derive from abstraction, this abstraction is not to be taken as an elimination of the form of the human body or of the figure. For Tucker, this abstraction is a result of his longing 'to express a sense of the figure with increased force'. Rodin's figures function as the means to abstraction.[688]

A third innovation that Rodin brings to sculpture is his approach to the human body. The force that Rodin gives to his figures creates an impression of a continuous movement. As Rodin states, 'different parts of a sculpture represented at successive moments in time give an illusion of actual motion'.[689]As Champigneulle remarks, 'Rodin was so anxious to capture life 'on the wing''. Rodin used to work like a modern photographer who captures the natural expressions of his subject not by making him pose but through a selection of numerous snapshots. Rodin starts his work by sketching his model from many angles and positions and through his

[684] Ibid., pp. 31-33.
[685] Ibid., p. 35.
[686] Ibid.
[687] Ibid. The final stage of Rodin's development emerges through his small figures of dancers and is inclined even more towards the condition of an object. As Tucker writes 'the small size of the figures suggests they were made wholly in the sculptor's hand, and they enjoy the freedom of orientation, the identification of the handling of the soft material with structure, that this process allows. It is no longer anatomy but the action of the hand in clay that determines the form of the figure. The idea of 'making' could not be more directly fulfilled'. Ibid. pp. 37- 40, (p. 40).
[688] Ibid., p.37. For Tucker, Rodin's work from the last period of his life are no more abstract than ones from his first period (*The Age of Bronze*) both in terms of intention and feeling. 'They represent', Tucker argues, 'a later stage in Rodin's exploration of the congruent limits of the figure with the sculpture'.
[689] Champigneulle, op. cit., p. 110.

sketches seeks to capture their fleeting motion.[690] But Rodin, as Champigneulle indicates, was never satisfied in his study of the human form. He would always come back to his study 'with a joyous and unfailing sense of discovery'. Despite the details of the materiality of his work, it could be seen at the same time as a simplified version of movements which appear like a combination of the thousands of movements which comprise the human body.[691]

Greek sculpture immortalizes God, the human image, the being. It is not the human body that Rodin wants to immortalize but 'the becoming as such, the time character of life as such', Stern argues. He aims to rethink the structure of the human body and how it comes into being, as Stern writes, to 'retranslate the stability of the body into terms of becoming'. The head does not represent a substance but a process. The body has not found its final form.[692] Rodin's sculptures are a continuous quest of the expressivity of the human body.[693]

4. 2. Rodin's *The Kiss*

Rodin's work still shares a number of affinities with the academic neo-classical style. The element of the nude, the use of the marble, and his use of the pyramidal composition, in works such as *The Kiss*, *Balzac* and *The Thinker*, which were popular at the time for academic monuments. The fourth novelty in Rodin is that he chose a subject-matter that has never been represented before in sculpture and that he removed academic forms of symbolism that provoke the viewer to read the work as a narrative, as part of a story. The narrative in Rodin's work is not entirely absent but derives from decoding the parts of the work, the work as a whole and the way it engages the viewer to observe it. The process of experiencing the work replaces the

[690] Ibid., p. 106
[691] Ibid., p. 128.
[692] Stern, op. cit., p. 305
[693] As Getsy remarks, in the twentieth century art world the representation of the human body was a theme whose status has been regularly questioned. 'Some saw the *Age of Bronze* as merely one more academic nude, and his subsequent exploration of the expressivity of the human form has been dismissed as little more than pandering to melodrama and sentiment. The numerous and dubious marble works issuing from his studio year after year made it easy, from this perspective, to dismiss Rodin as a maker of kitsch and 'dulcified replicas''. David J. Getsy, 'Refiguring Rodin', in *Oxford Art Journal,* vol. 28, no. 1, 2005, (pp. 131-135), p. 132.

unfolding of the narrative. His aim was to give to the work its own autonomy and to provoke the viewer to see it and examine it in its own terms.

Lovers, as Champigneulle indicates, had not until Rodin been a subject matter for Western sculpture. Man and woman was often a common theme but usually represented in scenes of rape and abduction, or scenes of death, placed usually side by side on the top of a common tomb. On the other hand in the history of art, love was represented in the image of Venus or cupid. Even if Rodin's representation of love and the loving couple was one of his favourite themes, he never represented a Venus or a cupid but aimed to explore human embraces.[694] With *The Kiss*, one of Rodin's most popular works, 'he portrayed love in living, visual terms, in terms of man and woman, of the kiss, of the embrace of bodies daringly entwined in their craving to become one'.[695]

The Kiss is a marble sculpture completed in 1889 that belongs to the group of works conceived for Rodin's *The Gates of Hell* to represent the story of love of Paolo and Francesca in Dante's *Inferno. The Kiss* was commissioned by the French government for the 1889 Exhibition Universelle. However, it was publicly exhibited for the first time in the salon of the National Society of Fine Arts in 1898. In 1991, the original *Kiss* was moved to the Museum of Rodin in Paris. It was so popular that the company Barbedienne made in 1899 a contract with Rodin to produce a number of smaller versions of the work in bronze. There are many versions of *The Kiss*, some cast by Alexis Rudier, one of Rodin's assistants. The first title of this work was 'Francesca da Rimini' from the name of the Italian character from Dante's *Infermo* who falls in love with Paolo the younger brother of her husband Giovanni Malatesta. According to the story, Francesca and Paolo fell in love reading the book of story of Lancelot and Guinevere, which Rodin places in Paolo's hand at the back of the work. Even if the book is what will give the identity of Paolo and Francesca Rodin hides it in the back of Paolo so as not to interrupt the narrative perception of the work. The book becomes part of the process of experiencing the work.

[694] Champigneulle, op. cit., p. 154.
[695] Ibid., p. 155.

Sculpture as such is to be seen from all round. In contrast to painting it requires more than one point of view in order to capture the aspects of the representation. In Rodin's work, however, each aspect restrains the viewer from gaining an overall image of the work. Each part does not reveal what we expect to see. The viewer cannot obtain an overall view of the work from any one site of the work. The kiss of the couple is so difficult to be see that the viewer is provoked to see the work from many angles.[696] And as Krauss put it, it is like seeing the work from a wrong angle, but 'Rodin's work has no angle of view that would be ''correct'' – no vantage point that would give coherence to the figures'.[697] Rodin's aim is not to find an ideal view point, that is, a point which will allow the viewer to receive as much information as possible to apprehend the object. But rather his aim is, as Krauss writes, to provide 'multiple vantage points'.[698]

All viewpoints, all sides are important in the same manner. Sculpture thus loses its main view; there are no longer frontal and rear positions.[699] The perception of the work does not derive as in the classical and traditional sculpture in general from what is there, from what we see but from what is not there, from what is missing.[700] The structure is not as in a classical work a composition in which one part leads logically to another part and then to the whole. Rodin replaces this narrative reading of the work with one that sends us back to the work's materiality and creative process.[701] In *The Kiss* the faces of the figures are hidden which makes their embrace and their kiss a private action. However, even if in the original sculpture their lips do not really touch, the posture of their bodies gives the impression of an actual kiss. The meaning of *The Kiss* is developed through the process of experiencing the work, the embrace of the figures and the illusion of the motion of their bodies.

However, according to Gsell, Rodin himself was not completely satisfied with *The Kiss*. He finds the embrace attractive but says,

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[696] Ibid., p. 90.
[697] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 25.
[698] Ibid., p. 18.
[699] Stern, op. cit., p. 306.
[700] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p. 109, and Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, pp. 18-20.
[701] See further Krauss's discussion on the relation of work of Canova *The Three Graces* and Rodin *The Three Shades*. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, pp. 17-23.

> I have found nothing in this group. It is a theme frequently treated in the academic tradition, a subject complete in it and artificially isolated from the worlds surrounding it; it is a big ornament sculpted according to the usual formula and which focuses attention on the two personages instead of opening up wide horizons of daydreams.[702]

His aim is to engage the viewer with the work, to make him think about the work rather than gaze at the work. As his says, he wanted to offer to the viewer 'the impulse… to wander according to its fancy. This, I believe, is the role of art'.[703]

4. 3. Rodin's *The Earth and the Moon*

Like many of Rodin works, *The Earth and the Moon* derives from his work *The Gates of Hell* and is made in white marble in 1898-99. The title implies the contradiction of the earthly with the ethereal, the temporal and the eternal. Even if the title of the work is believed to refer to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the lack of symbols prohibits the viewer from reading the work in terms of a myth or a story about the creation of the world. The narrative symbolism is replaced by a symbolic relation between the fragmented marble block and the polished figures. The fragmented part of the material appears as if it is allowing the marble figure and its 'rocklike' background to conjoin in a 'seamless' oneness. As in Rodin's work *The Kiss*, 'the same piece of marble could look like flesh and like rock, as required by the representational content of the piece'; 'the illusionist *non finito* aspect of the material, that allowed the marble figure and its rocklike base to blend into each other in a seamless unity'.[704]

In opposition to the monumental status of *The Kiss*, *The Earth and the Moon* (fig. 20) does not drive the viewer to examine the work from many angles. Its small size, rocky character and the small size of the figures in relation to the block suggest than the work is to be seen from the front and from a close distance in order to observe the details and the way the figures emerge throughout the block. The difference and

[702] Paul Gsell, 'Propos de Rodin Sur l'Art et Les Artistes' in *La Revue*, no. 21, (1er Novembre1907), p. 95-107, (p. 105).
[703] Paul Gsell, *Art Conservation with Paul Gsell*, trans. Jacques de Case and Patricia B. Sanders, (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 1984), p. 74.
[704] Alexandra Parigoris, 'The Road to Damascus', in *Constantin Brancusi, The Essence of Things*, ed. Carmen Gimenez and Matthew Gale, (London: Tate, 2004), pp. 51-59, (p. 52).

contradiction between the figures and the block drive the viewer to see the work as a relief.

The two figures in *The Earth and the Moon* are not autonomous as in the case of *The Kiss*. Rodin in this work brings a different kind of anatomy. There is not a logical structure of the bodies of the figures. The figures are 're-structured in terms of the posture' and in terms of their background.[705] The relief functions as the picture surface and as Krauss put it, 'as an open space in which the backward extension of a face or a body occurs'.[706] Usually in classical reliefs the released forms emerge in such way that their shadows draw the viewer's attention to the 'buried and unseen'. The unseen becomes part of the representation and the viewer has to fill in the information about the aspects that are hidden. [707] In this work the relation between the background and the figures does not function in favour of the representation. 'The foul-round figures' appear as if they are partially 'released' from their background. They emerge giving the impression that there is still a part of them unseen, hidden. [708] The shadow appears, according to Krauss, to give emphasis to 'the isolation and detachment of the foul-round figures from the relief ground'. This has as a result the enforcement of our impression of the background of the work as a concrete object 'in its own right'. [709] The background becomes an object which holds up and interrupts the viewer from the illusion of seeing through it to a place beyond it. It blocks, according to Krauss, a perceptual expansion of the form of the figures. The shadow in Rodin's work stresses the fact that the figures are on purpose unfinished or fragmented and necessarily partial.[710]

The work reflects once more Rodin's continuous exploration of the human form and expression. The expression of the figures does not derive from their face but from their bodies which gives also the impression of a circular motion. The central theme of the work is not the figures as such, but their motion, the way they emerge from the fragmented block, the way the block illuminates the figures, and the way the whole work comes to life. The expression of his works derives through modelling. What is

[705] Tucker, *The Language of Sculpture*, p. 33.
[706] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 21.
[707] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[708] Ibi., pp. 21, 23.
[709] Ibid., p. 23.
[710] Ibid.

characteristic of most of his works is that no part of the work is left untouched but as a whole the work often appears as abstract, fragmentary and unfinished. In both carving and modelling he handles every part of the figure in favour of the materiality and surface of the work rather than its representation. The surface is never entirely polished—it appears polished through the contrast of the figures with their background.[711] This contrast is what unifies the figures with the background and their base.

What is modern in Rodin's works is 'the concern with material, structure and gravity as ends in themselves'.[712] Even though Rodin is not considered to belong to the Impressionist movement he did follow their search for capturing light. The impressionist painters wanted 'to reconstitute natural light by breaking it down into components colours' in order present the illusion of an actual movement. Rodin seeks to achieve this result and capture 'vibrations of light' 'by breaking up surfaces', to give the impression of motion and action to his sculpture.[713]

The meaning of Rodin's sculptures does not forego experience but happens through the process of experiencing the work, it 'occurs in the process of experience itself'. [714] There is no position, no 'vantage' point, from which we can get the answer for the meaning of the work, but only what Krauss calls a condition, a kind of 'belief in the manifest *intelligibility* of surfaces, and that entails relinquishing certain notions of cause as it relates to meaning, or accepting the possibility of meaning without the proof of verification of cause'.[715] For Krauss this condition is to be understood in a phenomenological manner. Krauss following Husserl argues that the meaning is synchronous with experience and it does not exist necessarily *a priori* to it. Krauss is concerned with Husserl's notion of the self, which is 'essentially private and inaccessible'.

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[711] Ibid., pp. 21-30
[712] Ibid., p.16
[713] For Champigneulle, Rodin could be considered as impressionist. Rodin through his modelling and the details on the surface of his works 'reconstitutes' natural light and motion. Champigneulle, op. cit., p. 101 and further, pp, 110-113.
[714]Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 30.
[715] Ibid., p. 26.

> In order for the 'I' to be the same entity both for myself and for the person to whom I am speaking, I must become myself as I manifest to others; my self must be formed at the juncture between that self of which surfaces in all the acts, gestures, and movements of my body.[716]

Precisely, Rodin's works manifest a phenomenological notion of the self. Their meaning does not presuppose 'foreknowledge' or 'premeditation'. The understanding, appreciation and pleasure of the works depend on the gesture and motion of the bodies of the figures 'as they externalize themselves'. The surface of the body of the figures, is Krauss argues, the boundary between what we take to be internal and external, private and public is the place of the meaning of Rodin's work. The surface of his work expresses 'equally the results of internal and external forces'. That is, between forces of anatomy and muscularity and forces that form the figure from the outside, from the artist, his process of manipulation of the materials, 'artifice', his act of making.[717] 'It is on the surface of the work that the two senses of process coincide—there the externalization of gesture meets with the imprint of the artist's act as he shapes the work'.[718] Over and over again Rodin compels the viewer to concede and acknowledge the work as a result of a development, a process that gave form to figures, 'an act that has shaped the figure over time'.[719]

The Earth and the Moon work does not provoke the viewer to read the work in terms of a story. The absence of a story is replaced however by a narrative process of understanding and experiencing the work. His work gives to the viewer the impression of an event which includes the work as a whole, each figure and the surface of the work.[720]

Rodin's sculptures do not belong to a place but by placing his sculptures in nature, on the ground, he liberated sculpture from its architectural abutment and brought the viewer nearer to the work. Rodin's figures are not standing or performing, but as noted above, 'they are their gestures'.[721] It is through these gestures that his figures come to express extreme conditions of feelings, that Rodin overcomes the isolation

[716] Ibid., p. 28.
[717] Ibid., p. 29.
[718] Ibid., p.30.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Ibid., p. 28.
[721] Stern, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

and homelessness of his figures. In the case *The Kiss* and *The Earth and the Moon* the isolation of sculpture is overcome by eroticism he gives to the pairs of his figures. An eroticism which continually evolves through experiencing the work but never fully revealed or externalised. The breaking up of unplaceability and isolation of *The Kiss* and *The Earth and the Moon* derives from the acknowledgement of the work as the result of a process and furthermore from the acknowledgment of the contradiction between the external and the private. But is the breaking up of the isolation of Rodin's sculptures fully completed?

The antithesis between the external and the internal forces could be seen as an antiphasis between overcoming of homelessness of his work and a verification of its autonomy. Rodin's sculptures are autonomous, they are not erected a social or cultural symbols but they refer to themselves, to the process of creation and making.
But it is this autonomy that keeps them isolated from place. What is special about his work is that he manages to break up partly the isolation of his sculptures and at the same time to preserve their autonomy. The process of creation that characterises its work is what allows both the overcoming of the unplaceability and the preservation of the autonomy of his work.

4. 4. The reconstitution of space in sculpture: Giacometti

Rodin's figures are not diminished by their background, their background becomes part of the work. As Danto argues, Rodin's figures appear as real humans, to be seen from any angle. Giacometti's figures on the other hand differ in both form and expression. And this is because they are aimed to be seen not as we see real humans but as we see the figures on the surface of a painting.[722] Giacometti manages to restore the space of sculpture that has been lost in ancient sculpture. A space that as Sartre states is both 'imaginary and indivisible'.[723]

Giacometti, Sartre writes, has found the absolute which in the beginning of his career based it upon relativity, upon an acknowledgement of the impotence of approaching

[722] Arthur Danto, 'Sculpting the Soul', in *The Nation*, (15 November, 2001).
[723] Sartre, op. cit., p. 185.

the absolute truth of human being.[724] Giacometti did not aim to capture the absolute being of the human but to capture the human as it is in the world. Sartre's designation of the absolute in Giacometti's work comes close to Heidegger's notion of *aletheia*, not always revealing but as both revealing and concealment. Giacometti, Sartre argues, did not aim to capture the absolute being of the human but to sculpt the human in the way it appears, that is from a distance (fig. 21).[725]

The work of Giacometti appears always in a distance and this is what Sartre names the absolute in his work[726], an absolute which at the same time contains the relativity of the truth of being. Giacometti, Sartre writes, places his figures into an imaginary frame, a shelter like a painter which gives to his figures the shelter of the surface and encloses them into 'an absolute distance'.[727] Most sculptors left their works to be taken by the infinite character of the space. Most sculptors 'confuse the flaccidness of extension with largesse, they put too much in their works, they delight in the fat curve of a marble hip, they spread out, thicken, and expand the human gesture'.[728] But Giacometti acknowledges that in human being there is nothing redundant, that space reduces being, for him to sculpt human is to reduce space, to compress it and 'drain off its exteriority'.[729]

In opposition to the sculptures of Rodin, Giacometti's sculptures are not to be seen from different points of view but, as in a painting, they are to be seen from a certain angle except that it does not matter where we choose to stand.[730] The angle is created through the space that surrounds the work. In Rodin's work but also in traditional sculptures, the viewer sees and learns about the works as he comes near them and at each instant notices new details. The space that surrounds the work of Giacometti interrupts the relation between the viewer and the work.[731] As Martin argues, the viewer becomes aware of the space that surrounds the figures.

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[724] Ibid.
[725] Ibid.
[726] Danto, 'Sculpting the Soul'.
[727] Ibid.
[728] Sartre, op. cit., p. 183
[729] Ibid.
[730] Ibid.
[731] Ibid., p. 185.

> Since the attribution of Giacometti's figures appears to be caused by the invading centripetal forces of the encompassing space, and yet there are also powerful centrifugal forces, we are made actually aware of the space.[732]

Does the awareness of the space of sculpture constitute a verification of its homelessness? Giacometti's sculptures appear isolated, Martin argues. They show forth 'the absence of that spatial withness'.[733] In opposition to Rodin's compositions where the figures appear to complete and correspond to one another, Giacometti's figures stand alone. Even in works where he presents figures in groups, such as his 1949 work *Three Men Walking* (fig. 22), each figure appears isolated and alienated from the others. To overcome their homelessness, Giacometti provides them with their own space. Giacometti like Rodin gives to his sculptures a part of world in which to belong. But Giacometti, in opposition to Rodin, gives to his figures a world, a shelter that is not part of them but something external to them. They overcome their homelessness because they occupy their own location, their own place. Like traditional sculptures Giacometti's sculptures bring forth place but this place is neither a public nor a social one but belongs to the sculptures themselves. The meaning of Giacometti's sculptures does not exist in the work itself but derives from its relation to the place and space that the sculptures own/occupy whether they stand, sit or walk.

The distance does not reduce the figures to parts or figures. 'Everything except matter: twenty paces one thinks one sees, but one does not observe the tedious desert of adipose tissue; it is suggested, outlined, meant, but not given'. Giacometti compressed space only through distance.[734] We do not approach the sculptures of Giacometti, but, as Sartre writes, 'these statues only permit themselves to be seen from a respectful distance', although 'everything is there'.[735] Giacometti's sculptures stay distant even when someone comes closer, even when someone touches them.[736] We do not discover or see something new. They remain like remote shades of human figures.

But how can the same work remain unaltered viewed from a distance or close-up? These two views do differ, Sartre writes. What we see when we come closer to the

[732] Martin, op. cit., p. 114.
[733] Ibid., p. 116.
[734] Sartre, op. cit., p. 185.
[735] Ibid.
[736] Ibid.

work is the object as mere matter, 'the block of plaster', but from a distance we see the work, 'the imaginary figure'.[737] As we move closer to the work, the work does not appear bigger but its qualities are expanded. The sculptures of Giacometti 'are wholly and all at once what they are'.[738] The details of the surface of the sculpture and the materiality of the work do not carry a meaning. The meaning of the work comes only through the work as a whole, the idea of the work. The idea, Danto writes, 'possesses such immediate translucidity, the idea alone is at one stroke all that it is'.[739] Through this idea Giacometti gives his own solution to the problem of the unity of the parts of the human body and achieves this by suppressing multiplicity. We do not observe the human body but it appears through the materiality of the work, the plaster or the bronze. His figures appear 'totally and at once', a mere presence.[740] For Danto this perspective remained him throughout his career, in his works of paintings, drawings and sculptures.

Giacometti wanted to reach closer to the appearance of the human being, 'deeper than what heads look like'. He was interested in how a head looks when someone is looking at somewhere or something. For Giacometti for three thousands years 'sculpture modelled only corpses'. Some sculptures 'were laid out to sleep on tombs, sometimes they were seated on curule chairs, they were also perched on horses. These frozen forms contain within themselves an infinite dispersion'. It is through our imagination that these forms obtain motion and life 'to the eternal collapse of matter'. As Sartre remarks, Giacometti as well as his contemporaries wanted to prove that sculpture is possible. The question that Giacometti set out to solve was how he could sculpt a human and not petrify him.[741] As Danto reports, Giacometti said that while he was drawing a girl he suddenly realized that her eyes and specifically her gaze was the only thing alive on her. 'One does want to sculpt a living person, but what makes him alive is without a doubt his gaze. Not the imitation of eyes, but really and truly a gaze.'[742]As Danto remarks, 'his tireless effort was to bring clay to life. Nothing but life was art in his view'.

[737] Ibid.
[738] Ibid., p. 186.
[739] Ibid.
[740] Ibid.
[741] Ibid., p. 182.
[742] Ibid and Danto, 'Sculpting the Soul'.

Giacometti manages to show to us the human as 'already seen', as the human appears, not merely as the human appears to him but 'as a foreign language we try to learn is already spoken'.[743] He creates his figures at the right human distance and each work shows to us the humans that we are, 'the being whose essence is to exist for others'.[744] Giacometti wanted, Danto argues, to create 'the human body as if it were almost purely a soul'.[745] He wanted to create a figure in which the viewer does no longer sees the work as a material thing. As Sartre writes, 'the figure places itself in the unreal, since its relation to you no longer depends on your relation to the block of plaster: art is liberated'.[746]

According to Sartre, Giacometti gives

> sensible expression to this pure presence, to this gift of the self. To this instantaneous coming forth, that Giacometti resorts to elongation. The original movement of creation, that movement without duration, without parts, and so well imagined by these long, gracile limbs, traverses their Greco-like bodies, and raises them towards heaven.[747]

This is the figure of the human, the true beginning and absolute resource of gesture. In opposition to traditional sculptors who sculpted the human body lost but lost being through 'an infinity of appearances' Giacometti gave to matter the one and real unity of the human that is, 'the unity of the Act'.[748]

Giacometti's art externalizes the veiled truths of reality 'in strange and wonderful objects' a physical reality which 'dreams disclosed'. Giacometti writes, 'for many years I have executed only sculptures that have presented themselves to my mind entirely completed'.[749] But after some years Giacometti altered his view on art and its relation between a work of art and an object. An everyday object as a mere thing does not present any vision or part of reality. If an object breaks then its use is cancelled and then 'it is nothing at all'. But if a work of art breaks or is damaged it still exists as long as it brings forth the vision that it meant to present.[750]

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[743] Sartre, op. cit., p. 186.
[744] Ibid.
[745] Ibid.
[746] Ibid., p. 185.
[747] Ibid., p. 186.
[748] Ibid.
[749] Ibid. Danto, 'Sculpting the Soul'
[750] Ibid.

In Heidegger's terms, an object, equipment must be perfect and complete in itself in order to function for its specific purpose. But for Heidegger the equipment reveals part of reality. The pair of shoes of the peasant woman encloses her world, her everyday activities. However this world and reality cannot be revealed, they are forgotten through the use of the equipment. When the equipment breaks and its function is cancelled, its truth comes forth. It is the authenticity of art and its self-sufficiency of art and not its formal condition that allows its truth, its reality to be present. As Giacometti remarks, in opposition to an object which is perfect and complete in itself, a work of art could never be perfect and complete because it presents an angle on reality, a specific vision.[751]

But Giacometti did not seek to present a part of the world. The part of reality that Giacometti aims to present is the reality of human being. Giacometti, as we have seen, wanted to reach deeper than the image of things and to reach the true being of the human. The lack of gestures, the mass and volume of his figures, abstract from them their ability to bring forth, like traditional sculpture, place. In opposition to traditional sculpture, Giacometti's sculptures cannot generate place or have a symbolical meaning about the meaning of a place but instead they themselves own and preserve their own place and space. The figures of Giacometti make us aware of the place that his sculptures occupy but also the space that evolves through them. As Martin remarks, 'since the attribution of Giacometti's figures appears to be caused by the invading centripetal forces of the encompassing space, and yet there are also powerful centrifugal forces, we are made actually aware of the space'.[752]

The awareness of their own space could be seen as their homelessness and isolation but on the other hand it could be turned to be an awareness of their independence and freedom. Giacometti creates a place, a world for his figures to stand as subjects. The being that he presents is not the one that is in the world, but the being 'which-lies-before' and collects everything into it. Giacometti figures verify the metaphysical concept of being in modernity. It is only when the human stays a subject, that his

[751] Ibid.
[752] Martin, op. cit., p. 114.

tasks and achievements 'have any meaning'.[753] Heidegger argues, in modernity the human as a subject is free.[754] And if the human is truly a subject he has the chance to slip into individualism, to enter as Heidegger put it, 'into the aberration of subjectivism in the sense of individualism.'[755]

[753] Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', p. 133.
[754] Ibid., pp. 127, 148-152.
[755] Ibid., p. 133.

III. Heidegger and metaphysics in art: the religious dimension of the work of Barnett Newman

> Art … has a fundamental catalytic function, which is to effect sublimation by all its means of expression. It should aim to lead by constant points of reference towards that total exaltation in which, unaware of self, the individual will identify with an immediate, rare, vast and perfect truth. If a work of art achieves this even for an instant, it has fulfilled its purpose.[756]

Introduction

Barnett Newman's work *Onement 1* (fig. 23) made in 1948 marks the beginning of his exploration of the repetition of vertical lines, or zips as Newman calls them, referring perhaps to the sound of the tape when it is pulled away. For Newman, the zips are not colored lines, or stripes, but 'color planes'.[757] The mark of abstract expressionism is the gesture of the repetition.[758] Abstract expressionist art succeeded in isolating expression through repetition of abstract shapes that appear to deny any reference to the world and its objects. However, expression in Newman's work is designated, not by a personal 'calligraphy of gestures' as in the work of Pollock and De Kooning, but with an impersonal 'typography of the vertical'.[759] Both series of Newman's work *The Stations of the Cross* and *Here* consist of variations of vertical lines. The viewer, according to Calas, is driven on the one hand to detect differences in repetition but on the other hand to decipher the expression. However, both works are linked with the symbol of the cross and are considered to express 'a religious narrative'.[760] But what is the meaning of the symbol of the cross in the work of Newman? Furthermore, how is the religious dimension of the work of Newman to be understood in relation to modernity?

The third part of the thesis examines more closely the way modern art, and particularly the work of abstract expressionist artist Barnett Newman, is to be

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[756] Iannis Xenakis, 'The Origins of Stochastic Music', in *Tempo, New Series,* no. 78, (Autumn, 1966), pp. 9-12, (p. 9).
[757] Arthur Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime', in *The Nation*, (17 June, 2002).
[758] Toby Mussman, 'Literalness and the Infinite', in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc, 1968), pp. 236- 250, (pp. 242-245).
[759] (Nicolas Calas, 'Subject Matter in the Work of Barnett Newman', in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, 1968, p. 115), pp. 109-115, (p. 115).
[760] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.

understood through Heidegger's philosophy of art. As we have seen in the previous part Heidegger accepts that art after the death of art could be seen as genuine happenings of truth. According Heidegger the artist of modernity challenges the defined limits of art and proposes an art that challenges the metaphysical conception of traditional art. Following Heidegger's position on the metaphysics of art as well as his approach to art in modernity I suggest that both symbolism and the religious dimension of Newman's work are to be understood as a kind of non-metaphysical art.

The starting point for this study is Heidegger's discussion on the Western metaphysics of being. For Heidegger the oblivion of the true nature of being is what characterizes Western philosophy since Plato, as well as medieval theology and art since the Middle Ages. Based upon the misunderstanding of being in Western philosophy, theology and art are as such metaphysical. The aim of the fifth chapter of the thesis is to present and examine the matter of truth in art in relation to philosophy and theology. Art for Heidegger not only confirms the same presuppositions of the true world but from this respect art as the sensuous seems superior to the Platonic and Christian truth. Thus, art that surpasses metaphysics in modernity could be seen as a genuine happening of truth.

The study concentrates on the way art in modernity could be seen as a genuine bringing forth of truth. As has been seen in chapter three, Heidegger criticizes art that follows Platonism and aims either to represent the world as aesthetically beautiful and pleasant or to symbolise a Platonic idea through the image of the world and its objects. For Heidegger these two kinds of art are metaphysical and as such they are distanced from the genuine art that Heidegger is interested in finding. A work of art must firstly overcome symbolism, secondly representation and thirdly allow dwelling, that is the realization of the true being of the human 'here and now, in *this*—natural—world'.[761]

This chapter aims firstly to examine Heidegger's thinking on the validity of symbolic and representational art, considering also Byzantine art and the work of Giotto,

[761] Young, op. cit., p. 134.

examples that could be seen as valid forms of art. The investigation is developed through the matter of the validity of modern non-representation and abstract art.

Heidegger's discussion of modern art focuses on the work of particular artists such as Cézanne and Klee, whom he considered to be genuine establishers of the holy. To recap, initially we see the work of Klee as non-figurative; but then objects, figures, and nature slowly appear. Abstract forms begin to take shapes, to transform into meaningful objects. What on a first inspection appears meaningless subsequently takes on meaning, the invisible becomes visible, dwelling happens out of the ground of painting.[762] Cézanne succeeds in bringing forth the illusion of motion in his work not by means of distance, lines or forms but mainly through colour. The colours in his work concern the same 'dimension of color, that dimension which creates—from itself to itself—identities, differences, a texture, a materiality, a something'.[763] Motion in the work of Cézanne derives from the spatiality of colours within which objects obtain motion. Things appear to move 'they began to modulate in the instability'.[764] In his work we are engaged with space and objects at the same time, we look for space and what it contains together.[765]

Young argues that for Heidegger the kind of art that allows dwelling is the non-representational but not fully abstract art. In abstract art the world, the representational objects and figures are entirely lost or 'disappear'. In contrast, the object in a semi-abstract work, even if it fails to prevail onto the scene, is not entirely lost. As Young writes, 'if an artwork is to allow dwelling objects *must not* disappear'.[766] For Young, abstract art is valid as long as it encloses a world and allows it to happen, to appear. But in fully abstract art there is no subject matter or a world. Therefore, fully abstract art cannot be considered as a valid form of art as it does not refer to the world or its objects. Young's argument for the validity of art in Heidegger's philosophy of art stops with fully abstract art and this because abstract art is examined in terms of pictorial presentation. But abstract expressionist painting and sculpture aims to bring forth an expression not through the defined limits of

[762] Ibid., pp. 1-4, 94, 121-122,140.
[763] Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 141.
[764] Ibid., p. 140.
[765] Ibid., p. 141.
[766] Ibid., pp. 163-168.

painting and sculpture, but by engaging the viewer within the space of the work. The relation between the work and space or rather the way the work interacts with its space/place is what drives the way the viewer will experience and understand the work.

The sixth chapter of my thesis proposes an examination on the way abstract art is to be seen as a valid form of art in Heidegger's philosophy of art. This examination follows the discussion on metaphysical art and the matter of symbolism and representation in art in order to show how the symbol of the cross and the representation of the being is to understood in the work of Newman and generally abstract art. This chapter aims to show how truth or meaning is to be understood in art in 'the destitute days of modernity' and whether art can help human surpass his homelessness. The key matter of this chapter is the notion of anxiety in Heidegger and the way it brings together an authentic and inauthentic understanding of our being. The discussion is developed with an examination of the notion of being in Newman's works *The Stations of the Cross* and *Here* and *Broken Obelisk*.

5. Metaphysics and art

5. 1. Heidegger and metaphysics: philosophy, theology and art

Metaphysics understood either explicitly or implicitly, that is, either as a philosophical discipline or as an 'intuitive stance to reality', has been created and developed according to Heidegger upon a misunderstanding of truth, the 'oblivion of being', as he calls it.[767] The question of the meaning of being, Heidegger writes, remained 'unresolved' and 'inadequately formulated' and as such it has been forgotten.[768] The 'oblivion of being' is the inability or the weakness to understand the true nature of being, that is, not its essence but the being in its totality within the world.[769] We are 'victims of 'oblivion of being'', that is we cannot understand our being or the being of others.[770] Precisely, it is the inability, or as Bernstein put it, the 'failure to think the ontological difference' between being and beings, the difference

[767] Young, op. cit., pp. 123-124.
[768] Martin Heidegger, 'Being and Time: Introduction', in *Basic Writings from 'Being and Time' (1927) to 'The Task of Thinking' (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 41-87, p. 65
[769] Bernstein, op. cit., p. 73.
[770] Young, op. cit., p. 126.

between that which is presencing and that which it presence, between unconcealment as an event and something that has already been unconcealed.[771]

However, as Bernstein argues, the same history of being reveals the same process of forgetfulness of the true nature of being, of the being as both revealing and concealment.[772] For Heidegger *Dasein* is both gathering and self-affection, both inauthentic and authentic. 'Human beings exist in the world, and world is temporalized: human-being-in –the world, and the Being of world'.[773] Heidegger's thinking about the true nature of being as both revealing and concealment opens up 'the possibility of authentic human existence', a life that the human will not live blindly, a life where the human can truly dwell.[774]

For Heidegger the forgetfulness of the true nature of being is what characterizes Western philosophy from Plato up to 19th century German philosophy, medieval theology and art since the Middle Ages. Since Plato, Western thinking designates the truth, the 'being-in-itself' as the supersensuous, a platonic ideal, as that which is removed and free from the sensuous. This 'being-in-itself' is reduced, Heidegger writes, to the ground of a 'nonbeing, demoted, denigrated, and declared nugatory',[775] but at the same time it refers always to it.[776] The super-sensuous as the true being and true world is that which is 'fixed' and 'constant'. But this metaphysical conception of being and world, even if it is considered to be absolute and definite, is only partially so since it relies on mere appearance, and as Heidegger states is to be considered 'an error'.[777] Western philosophy, Heidegger argues, is not a genuine thinking about the truth of being but rather a philosophizing which takes the form of an 'onto-theology'.[778] Philosophy, Heidegger states, aims to reveal the general nature of the

[771] Bernstein, pp. 81-82.
[772] As Bernstein writes, 'the history of being is the history of the growing forgetfulness of the event of unconcealment, the event that withdraws, and must withdraw given that absence is a condition of presence, in the very process of revealing'. Ibid., p. 82.
[773] Martin Heidegger, 'Being and Times' Analysis of the Tool', in *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*; trans. James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo, (Bloomington; London: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 153-160, (p. 155).
[774] Hofstadter, op. cit., p. xiii.
[775] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 141.
[776] Ibid., p. 140.
[777] Ibid., p. 214. According to Heidegger the platonic world or the 'true world' of morality for Nietzsche is a false world. Art becomes thus 'anti-Christian, anti-Buddhist, anti-Nihilist *par excellence*'. Ibid., p. 73.
[778] Young, op. cit., p. 138.

world of the 'being of beings', that is an 'ontology' of being, but as Young writes, not 'as an end in itself but rather as the basis for an inference to a being of such a nature as to provide the ultimate explanation for the manifest character of beings', that is, a 'theology'.[779]

In addition, theology, as Heidegger writes, from its early stage 'fell under the spell of 'metaphysics''.[780] Medieval theology based in this conception of being and world denoted a god of an onto-theology. The misinterpretation of the 'Other of being' of platonic philosophy 'as another being, as the hidden, supernatural cause of natural beings' in Western theology affected, according to Young, 'the *abolition* of the Other of beings', and became not simply meta-physics but metaphysics.[781] For Heidegger Western theology did not seek merely to understand and interpret what lies after the physical and the empirical of this world, but it quested for a suprasensuous world, an infinite world/space that exists into and out of the universe. It places the understanding of human existence not in this world and earth but in an after life space.

The world in Platonic thinking and Christian theology is not the present and true world. The real, sensuous world that in Platonism is 'the world of semblance and errancy, the realm of error' for Heidegger is 'the true world'. The sensuous, the 'sense-semblant', as Heidegger calls it, 'is the very element of art'.[782] The present world, 'the real and only true word' is the world in which art could be 'at home'.[783] Thus, art not only confirms the same presuppositions of the true world[784] but from this respect art as the sensuous seems superior to the Platonic and Christian truth. The sensuous, Heidegger argues in his reading of Nietzsche, is higher and 'more in being' than the supersensous.[785] Hence, art, as sensuous, is higher than truth and more genuine from the supersensuous.[786]

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[779] Ibid.
[780] Heidegger, 'Appendix: Conservation with Martin Heidegger, Recorded by Hermann Noack', in *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, pp. 59-71, (p. 64).
[781] Young, op. cit., p. 139.
[782] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 73.
[783] Ibid., p. 74.
[784] Ibid., p. 73
[785] Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's thesis on the relation between truth and art seems to accept that art and the truth of art could be superior to Platonic and Christian truth. This position is placed in

For Heidegger the supersensuous 'lures life away from invigorating sensuality', it weakens the true values and forces of life and life itself.[787] When humans seek the supersensuous, then negatives values such as 'submission, capitulation, pity, mortification, and abasement' are turned into positive merits And those humans with these negative merits are seen as peoples of God and true beings and those with 'all creative heightening and all pride in self-subsistent life' are considered to be rebellious and sinful.[788] Art is the place where we could 'not perish from such supersensuous 'truth,'' and the supersensuous; art 'does not vitiate life to the point of general debility and ultimate collapse'.[789]

For Heidegger both art and truth are important for reality.[790] The question regarding beings and being implies or comes together with the question about the 'essence of truth'. As Heidegger put it, 'the question will arise as to how both are united in essence and yet are foreign to one another, and 'where,' in what domain, they somehow come together, and what that domain itself 'is''.[791] Precisely, the question of being, truth and art are 'inserted' one into the other.[792] The matter of being and truth comes together because truth *a priori* is the space of being.[793] As Heidegger writes in his account of 'Art and Space', 'art is the bringing-into-the-work of truth, and truth is the unconcealment of Being'.[794] Art is the place of truth and being.[795]

As we have seen in chapter three for Heidegger art reveals the way things and humans are. The temple, Heidegger writes, 'gives to things their look and to men their outlook'.[796] The temple reveals to the historical community in which it is placed, their gods and the fate of humans.[797] This revealing is the preserving of art

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opposition to Hegel's thesis on art, and its relation of truth and religion. For Hegel the sensuous is precisely what eliminates art in contrast to religion and philosophy. Ibid., p. 74.
[786] Ibid., p. 140.
[787] Ibid., p. 75.
[788] Ibid.
[789] Ibid.
[790] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 215.
[791]Ibid., pp.67-68. (p. 68).
[792]Ibid.
[793] Ibid.
[794] Heidegger, 'Art and Space', p.122.
[795] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, pp. 81-82.
[796] Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', p. 42.
[797] Ibid., pp. 56, 75.

and stays open as long as gods have not fled, as long as the sculpture of god is the god himself.[798] In ancient Greece art rose to its ultimate height as truth revealing. Art presented gods, and set the dialogue between divine and human fate, bringing it 'to radiance'.[799] The human was the preserver of art which for them was the holy itself, that which would mark their lives, fate and destiny.

In modernity art is no longer the place of truth, it does not constitute part of our experience and understanding of ourselves and of the world. Art does not present or symbolise the absolute and divine for humans.[800] Art in modernity became metaphysical and metaphysical art, according to Heidegger, cannot be the place of truth and thus it cannot allow humans to truly dwell. Heidegger's thinking of the relation of modernity and art put Heidegger into a search for an art that could overcome aesthetics and metaphysics. And if art after the end of art is possible, if art could be something more than an object of aesthetics or a metaphysical representation, the task of the philosopher, Bernstein argues, is to return to art 'the transformation of 'cognition' that could make it possible'.[801]

Heidegger's view on art as the place of truth and his designation of art in modernity fits with Adorno's position on the truth of art of modernity. Firstly, for Adorno art in modernity needs to be a place of truth. In the realm of late capitalism philosophy and art 'has lost most of its emancipatory functions'; therefore the aim of the authentic work of art is 'to stand in and defend the tower of truth'. Adorno does not see art and philosophy as identical but rather as inseparable areas, and places of truth.[802] Secondly, for Adorno the truth of art is always a negative truth, art does not give a positive account of what truth is, rather it tells us what we lack. The negative truth of art could be seen in Heidegger as the problem of modernity in a post-religious era. Art cannot assert or replace in a positive manner the loss of gods, the lost religion of the

[798] Ibid., p. 42
[799] Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', p. 134.
[800]Bernstein, op. cit., p. 73.
[801] Ibid., p. 115.
[802] Hohendahl argues that even if Adorno disapproves Hegel's negative approach of art after classicism he accepts from Hegel the notion of genius, and genuine art. 'Genuine art, for Adorno the last bastion that has not yes capitulated, is the sphere where the deception of in-strumental reason is without consequence'. Peter Uwe Hohendahl, 'Autonomy of Art: Looking Back at Adorno's Ästhetische Theorie', in The German Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 2, (March, 1981), pp. 133-148. (144.

past but it can acknowledge this loss and create a space within which we could become aware of that need for truth and dwelling.

5. 2. The two aspects of metaphysical art

Western art, Heidegger argues, following Platonism aims to symbolise a Platonic idea through the image of the world and its objects and to idealise and represent the world and its objects as aesthetically beautiful and pleasant. Christian tradition alters art's function and meaning. Tragedy lost its cultural significance and poetry became a humanistic message.[803] Post-Christian art replaced the cultic meaning of traditional art with aesthetic value based on artistic canons and techniques.

Heidegger's conclusion that Western art is as such metaphysical is based on two kinds of art, or arguments as Young calls them, that refer firstly to the symbolic (supernaturalistic or Christian) art and secondly to the representational (naturalistic or post-Christian) art. These two kinds of art are distanced from the kind of genuine art that Heidegger is interested in finding. Heidegger's aim is to deconstruct this metaphysical approach to art in terms of a symbolic or aesthetically pleasant image.[804] His aim is to find an art that could be placed in opposition to metaphysics or, as Young put it, an art that 'provides an antidote to metaphysics' and furthermore to re-appropriate the sublime and the holy of the destitute times of modernity.[805] Thus for a work of art to be considered as genuine art and a truly happening of truth firstly it must overcome metaphysics (that is, symbolism and representation) and secondly it must allow dwelling, that is the realization of the true being of the human here and now in this world'.[806]

Heidegger's criticism of symbolic, supersensuous or supernaturalistic art, as Young calls it, refers to the art of traditional Christianity which thematises the metaphysics ('not the meta-physics').[807] This kind of art includes religious images, legends, myths,

[803] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, p. 63.
[804] This task is what drives Heidegger's interest to East Asian art. Fóti, op. cit., p. 340.
[805] Young, op. cit., p. 124.
[806] Ibid., p. 134.
[807] Ibid., p. 137.

metaphors and similes.[808] The supernaturalistic art of Christianity is the art that following Platonism distinguishes the idea and form into the natural/'sensuous' and supernatural/suprasensuous/metaphysical realm. The sensuous is what is presented directly to us, while the non-sensuous is presented in an indirect way. The non-sensuous is the 'suprasensuous', that is, the supernatural. Art in traditional Christianity aims to bring forth through the image of the sensible world and its objects a supernatural, Platonic realm, a world which cannot be seen or experienced.[809] Heidegger's criticism does not refer to mere symbolism but to the symbolic or transcendental of a metaphysical and supernatural realm. An art of traditional Christianity aims to bring forth a supernatural realm, a world beyond the sensible and the natural.[810]

Genuine dwelling, Heidegger remarks, 'falls into oblivion'.[811] Dwelling is represented not in this world but in the eternal 'only as a post-human possibility'.[812] The human no longer understands himself in terms of his past or present but in terms of his future, of the eternal.[813] Human life is seen as a stage that finds fulfilment only after death. The being of the human becomes, Roberts says, 'future oriented' because it is being towards death.[814] Heidegger designates death from the standpoint of *Dasein* and he does not aim to rebut claims about the after life. He examines death not so much as a possibility or actuality but the way *Dasein* is related to this possibility, a possibility that is 'ever-constant precisely because death is certain'.[815]

For Heidegger to think of human existence in a non-metaphysical way we have to place it among the fourfold, among earth and sky, divinities and mortals. The mortals are the humans, and 'they are called mortals because they can die', because they are aware of their mortality.[816] As Heidegger put it, 'only man dies, and indeed

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[808] Ibid., p. 135.
[809] Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', p. 20, and Young, pp. 135-136.
[810] Ibid., and Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 74.
[811] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 146.
[812] Young, op. cit., pp. 137-138 and Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', p. 26. Stephan Bungay, 'On Reading Heidegger', in *Mind, New Series*, vol. 86, no. 343, (July 1977), pp. 423-426, (pp. 424-425).
[813] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, p. 63.
[814] David Roberts, 'Art and Myth: Adorrno and Heidegger', *Thesis Eleven*, no. 58, (1999), pp. 19-34, (p. 20).
[815] Bungay, op. cit., pp. 424-425.
[816] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 148.

continually, as long as he remains on earth, under the sky, before the divinities'.[817]'In anxiety' as he states, 'one cannot dwell'. Mortals belong to the fourfold by dwelling, that is, by preserving the fourfold 'in its essential being'.[818] Humans dwell only when 'they receive the sky as sky', 'they await the divinities as divinities', 'they initiate their own nature—their being capable of death as death—into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death'.[819]

For Heidegger *Dasein* is not designated as in the Christian tradition in terms of eternal after-death existence, but includes all three stages of human life: past, present and future. *Dasein* in Heidegger is not an infinite but a mortal being. His notion of *Dasein* is based on the union of the 'three dimensions of temporality'. As Roberts notes, temporality in Heidegger 'is disclosed by decision, the resoluteness in the face of death which accepts and assumes the fallenness, the thrownness of human being into finitude'.[820] Temporality is to be understood 'as the future past' and is based on the acceptance of human mortality. It is only through 'the future past' that *Dasein* can pass to the present of here and now and move towards authentic existence.[821] That is, the notion of *Dasein* lies upon the acceptance of our finitude nature of the fact that the future and past can only belong to the present of human life or rather fate. The resoluteness toward death is what converts inauthenticity into authenticity, existence into fate.[822]

The result of the infinite existence that Christian art gives to being 'is the disenchantment of the cosmos'.[823] The world presented by Christian art is the world that suppresses the possibility of there being a holy world, a world of dwelling. This is because symbolic art, as the form of Christian art, aims to go beyond what is intelligible and 'ungraspable' to make it 'grasped' and conceptualised. As Young writes, it can be seen as a 'conceptually tamed solution to an intellectual problem'.[824] For Heidegger in the Christian tradition the distance between god and mortal is

[817] Ibid.
[818] Ibid., pp. 148-149.
[819] Ibid., p. 148.
[820] Roberts, op. cit., p. 20.
[821] Ibid.
[822] Ibid.
[823] Young, ibid. p. 139. For Heidegger the 'true world' of Christian tradition is the suprasensuous world a world that is 'is an error'. Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 73.
[824] Young, op. cit., p. 137-139. (p. 138).

reduced. 'Since the mystery is the element in which alone the holy is to be found, the consequence of this is that 'God can, for representational thinking, lose all that is exalted and holy, the mysteriousness of his distance''.[825] God has now lost his exaltation and holiness and mortals have lost their ability to dwell in this natural world.

As we have seen the second type of art that Heidegger rejects as a genuine happening of truth is the representational or naturalistic art. For a work of art to allow dwelling it must present the fourfold and divine not as representing but as a thematising. Therefore, a work of art must avert supernaturalism but without regressing into representation.[826] In opposition to symbolic art, representational art does not concern the suprasensuous but the sensuous. Specifically, the argument of representational art applies, Young argues, to post-Christian (or the non-Christian art), the post-supernaturalistic art.[827]

With representational art Heidegger refers to the kind of art that idealizes objects of reality, and represents the world and its objects as aesthetically beautiful and pleasant. The horizon of representational art is, Young writes, 'exclusively, of natural beings'. Representation and mimesis concern the sensuous, the perceptible. Thus representational art cannot be about a 'supernatural world'.[828] Representational or naturalistic art is the art that represents and imitates the world. But Heidegger does not reject representational art in its whole. Ancient Greek sculpture that Heidegger considers as a genuine form of art is grounded upon representation. However, what matters in representational art, Young argues, is not whether the task of this art is to represent the world and its objects but the fact that it confirms a metaphysical conception of the world in the ground of naturalism.[829] In Dutch painting for example the representation of a scene or an event creates the impression that there is something behind it which could be continued on and on. Representation is putting us in this sense in an imaginary, a supernatural place. But for Heidegger the representation of

[825] Ibid., pp. 137-138, and Heidegger, 'The Question Concerning Technology', p. 26.
[826] Young, op. cit., pp. 134, 126. According to Merleau-Ponty Klee argues that in order for the painter to present the generating axis of a human he 'would have to have a network of lines so entangled that it could no longer be a question of a truly elementary representation'. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 143.
[827] Young, op. cit., pp. 137-142.
[828] Ibid., p. 141.
[829] Ibid., pp. 141-142.

the world as a supernatural or an infinite space is a metaphysical one. He was looking for a presentation of the world as it appears a revealing in relation to earth and the things in the world. (For a discussion on Dutch painting in relation to Giotto painting *The Raising of Lazarus* see p. 164-166).

Heidegger appears to distinguish symbolism from representation. But are symbolic and representational art always clearly distinguished or are they to be seen as two dimensions or elements of the same work as well? The move from the symbolic to representational art is not to be understood as strictly a chronological or historical shift. As we have seen Heidegger identifies symbolism with Christian art and representationism with post-Christian art. But symbolic art could be examined in terms of beauty and representation. Analogously, representational art could be examined in terms of symbolism and religion. Kant, Bernstein suggests, conceives representation in a symbolic manner.[830] Representation might be said to happen in a symbolic manner in Heidegger. However, Heidegger's task is to designate the metaphysics in both forms of art and specifically the structures that allow the viewer transcendence of what he sees as a metaphysical meaning. The symbolic in art becomes equivalent to the invisible, the metaphysical, but representation is to be understood only as the idealization of the visible world, the meta-physical.

For Heidegger, representational and symbolic art cannot overcome metaphysics.[831] Representational art aims to confine, represent, and conceptualize the mystery and thus destroys what is to be honoured; it converts the 'unknown and unknowable into the natured and known'.[832] According to Young, the anti-metaphysical art is the art that does not merely overcome symbolism and naturalism but rather is placed between supernaturalism and naturalism. Genuine art is the art that thematises rather than symbolises the Other of the natural world and does not present 'something other than natural beings'.[833] It is the art that brings to presence the world, thematises the mystery and the 'holiness of the world'.[834] As Young writes, genuine art 'discloses our world as a holy place, a place in which, first, we are absolutely (unconditionally)

[830]Bernstein, op. cit., p. 96.
[831]Véronique, op. cit., p. 341.
[832] Young, pp. 139-140.
[833] Ibid., p. 142
[834] Ibid., pp. 124, 140.

'safe', and, second, in which the things in the midst of which we find ourselves are disclosed as holy things, things to be adored and cared for'.[835] As Young continues, the art that thematises, the 'other side of world' and does not present it as 'a 'highest' member of the world', 'thematises the Other of manifest beings *without* falling into the self-defeating trap of turning it into another, occult being'.[836]

5. 3. The validity of Christian art and post-Christian art

Heidegger's criticism of Christian art and his rejection of it as a genuine form of art seems to follow old aesthetic and theological interpretations of Christian art. These interpretations, such as German aesthetics, do not consider all forms of Christian art but rather concentrate on Renaissance, Northern and Gothic art. In German aesthetics Christian art was usually interpreted as an art that aims to symbolise through the image of the finite, the physical and present world, the infinite, and the metaphysical world.[837] It was chiefly the German philosophers of idealism who formulated the primary aims of Christian aesthetics. Michelis argues that Schelling has said characteristically that if classical art aimed at the inclusion of the infinite in the finite, Christian art sought to achieve the reverse; that is, 'to make the finite an allegory of the infinite'.[838] According to Michelis, features of expressionism, such as the illusion of infinite space, 'upward flights' and other characteristics that appear in Christian art, mark specifically the Renaissance, Nothern Gothic art but not Byzantine art. Even if these characteristics are found sometimes in Byzantine art, they are used in a different form and purpose.[839]

Could Byzantine art be considered as a non-metaphysical art and thus as the kind of art that Heidegger designates as genuine art?

[835] Ibid., p. 133
[836] Ibid., pp. 139-140
[837] P. A. Michelis, 'Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Byzantine Art', in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 11, no. 1, (Sep., 1952), pp. 21-45, (p. 23). On the aesthetic value of Byzantine art see also P. A. Michelis, 'Comments on Gervase Mathew's Byzantine Aesthetics', in *The British Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 4, no. 3, (1964), pp. 253-262, and Charles Barber, 'From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm', in *Gesta*, vol. 34, no. 1, (1995), pp. 5-10.
[838] Michelis, 'Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Byzantine Art', p. 23.
[839] Ibid., p. 24.

The historical and theological interpretation of Christian art focuses on the understanding of symbols and excludes the importance as well as the function of their artistic value.[840] The artistic and symbolic status of Byzantine art is often misunderstood especially when it is not examined as a whole or when its position within the church is not considered. Byzantine art is often examined in terms of theological doctrines that misinterpret its aesthetic values and artistic questions. According to Michelis, 'the historical and religious analysis of an art's symbols (unless these are artistically self-sufficient) does not attribute artistic value to them'.[841] Michelis continues, 'Christian art has not provided purely religious symbols, intelligible only to the initiated, but forms capable of moving any spectator, not by the degree of sanctity accorded to them but by their purely aesthetic appeal'.[842] The icon is not to be seen merely as a religious symbol but it aims to be seen in a double way, as a purely religious symbol and as 'a purely religious work of art'.[843]

For Michelis aesthetic appeal refers to the notion of the sublime in Greek classical art. The sublime is to be understood in Heidegger's terms as the unity that arts bring between humans, as mortals and gods, as the divine and holy which is enclosed in the work of art and revealed through it by the community.[844] As Michelis argues the sublime of Greek classical art is what characterises Byzantine art and in particular painting, architecture and music.[845] In this line of thinking, Xenakis argues in favour of modern art through an examination of the bonds between ancient Greek and Byzantine music. The key for understanding music, Xenakis argues, is its pre-Christian origins and 'its subsequent development'.[846] 'The structure of the music of Ancient Greece, and then that of Byzantine music which has best preserved it while

[840] Ibid., p. 45.
[841] Ibid.
[842] As Michelis denotes, 'such forms can be best judged, then, in the sphere of aesthetics'. Ibid.
[843] Ibid., p. 40.
[844] According to Crowther the experience of the sublime is designated 'by its indirect allusion to the fact of human mortality'. In Kant as in Heidegger this takes on a transcendental meaning. For Kant, as Crowther indicates, it is through the sublime that humans experience their freedom 'to transcend behaviour and phenomena that are merely causally determined'. For Kant 'the feeling of the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation...this feeling renders as it were intuitable the supremacy of our cognitive faculties on the rational side over the greatest faculty of sensibility'. Paul Crowther, 'Barnett Newman and the Sublime', in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2, Photography (1984), pp. 52-59, (p. 52).
[845] Ibid., p. 45
[846] Iannis Xenakis 'Towards a Metamusic', in *Tempo, New Series*, no. 93, (Summer, 1970), pp. 2-19, (p. 4).

developing it, and has done so with greater fidelity than its sister, occidental plainchant.'[847]

For Michelis what has been preserved and developed in Byzantine art and Christian art in general is the sublime of ancient Greek art. The sublime accords with 'the spirit of Christian art'. The Greeks 'perceived' it and preserved it in Byzantine art. The Romantics, as Michelis remarks, 'revealed anew the feeling of the Sublime', were able to value and 'revive' medieval Christian art, whereas Renaissance artists, for whom the ideal was to be found in the beautiful, 'condemned it.'[848] For Michelis, the sublime dimension in Christian art was appreciated by Medieval Christian art but was replaced in Renaissance art by the ideal of the beautiful.[849] In Byzantine art the refusal of the artist to imitate the external, physical 'self-sufficient, consistent, and harmonious' world, Michelis remarks, seems to be a rejection of 'that which denies the spiritual'.[850]

In Byzantine art the rejection of the physical external world is not expressed through an elimination of imitation. Like ancient Greek art, Byzantine art did not reject the use of imitation. The way Byzantine artists imitated the world and its objects drove them to a more realistic (non idealistic) result than that seen in later movements in which the artists focused 'their attention on portraiture' in painting and sculpture. Christian art 'combated its realism with expressivism' in order to give, according to Michelis, to its figures a 'characteristic beauty' in the way classical art opposed idealism to realism, to render 'abstract beauty'.[851]

In the Byzantine church the predominant figures are painted to be seen from a distance. On the one hand, the pictures which are placed higher they are made the larger. On other hand, the most important figures of the representation are enlarged in size in relation with the setting and the surrounding figures following in this way the ancient Greek tradition of sculptural representations. In particularly, as Michelis indicates,

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[847] Ibid.
[848] Michelis, 'Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Byzantine Art', p. 45.
[849] Ibid., p. 45.
[850] Ibid., p. 43.
[851] Ibid., p. 36.

> the Byzantine artist, in placing his more prominent figures higher and therefore proportionately enlarging them, reverses the scale of optical diminution and surpasses it, in order to preserve the essential scale of values, appropriate to his figures. Thus, the Almighty is drawn on the scale of God. This indeed is in keeping with the Greek tradition, which placed in the ancient temple an over-size statue of the god.[852]

The Renaissance and Baroque artist created realistic and representational works of art which were to be viewed from a single point of view. When the viewer moves from this specific standpoint, realism and representation appear deformed and unnatural.[853] Byzantine pictures, on the other hand, seem unnatural from every standpoint and this is because they do not intend to appear realistic from a specific vantage point.[854]

In early Christian art the unnatural position of the figures and variations of size do not signify the orientation of the perspective but has a symbolic meaning, as the larger the figures are the more important they are.[855] The Byzantine artist acknowledges that the height and curved background deforms the representation. He uses techniques that allow him to overcome the problem not of the representation of the figures but of the way the figures are going to be viewed in the church.[856] The same can be said for the compositions of figures sitting in a circle. That is, the artist must achieve an overall view of the scene and at the same time preserve the analogies of the bodies of the figures. As Michelis argues,

> if finally we concede that the point of vision coincides perpendicularly with the center of the circle, then we would have an almost geometric projection of the bodies. Their heads would appear to rest directly on their shoulders, they would be practically trunkless and only their feet would emerge, unless they were lying flat in a circle. And indeed, here the seated figures frontally presented are lying supine in a circle forming a rosette. [857]

The artist thus proceeds to a schematic composition of the figures which functions in a decorative manner. For Michelis this composition does not aim to give to the viewer a specific perspective or a metaphysical message. Rather, the purpose of the

[852] Ibid., p. 41.
[853] Ibid., p. 42.
[854] Ibid.
[855] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[856] Ibid., p. 42.
[857] Ibid., p. 34.

geometric pattern of the picture is to draw the viewer's attention to the picture and ultimately to its content and meaning.[858]

In Byzantine art figures are placed in frontal positions with the exception of evil figures such as those depicting Judas, which appear in profile (fig. 24). In large Byzantine paintings the figures are drawn in a three-quarter profile within a curved surface or dome. The aim is to appear 'that they face one another as they communicate through the physical space where their movements meet. There is no depth behind the picture plane. Fictitious space was superfluous in the Byzantine painting'.[859] In Byzantine painting the figures are placed in a 'real space' in front of the viewer, who turns from a spectator to a participant.[860]

Demus, Michelis states, sees the gold background of such paintings as an empty surface; not as something aimed to signify infinite depth, but something that 'is left empty.'[861] In opposition to Demus, Michelis suggests that the space is not fictitious but aims to avoid the reproduction of a direct, naturalistic space in favour of an indirect space.[862]

> Now surely if the spectator's impression is that the figures move only in the real space in front of the icon, this would have the effect of making the church seem like a cage, in which the figures are imprisoned. In point of fact, neither Byzantine painting nor mosaic (with its monochrome background utterly bereft of a landscape) is devoid of fictitious space. Both must inevitably place their representations somewhere in space, and if they do not reproduce this space naturalistically (i.e., directly), they suggest it indirectly. In Byzantine painting and mosaic, the figures themselves do so through their gestures, their difference in scale, their gradation of tones, and variety of colors. Even their monochrome gold background with its scintillation gives the impression of ethereal, celestial space and diffused light, in which heavenly beings hover. And in thus trans-porting the imagination, Byzantine mosaic and painting, far from encaging the figures in the church, seem in fact to push back its very walls in an ideal plan.[863]

The space of the picture or of the mosaic seems to suggest an expansion of a fictitious space 'which unfolds both in front of and behind the picture; so that the figure, in

[858] Ibid.
[859] Ibid., p. 38.
[860] Ibid., pp. 38-39.
[861] Ibid., p. 39.
[862] Ibid.
[863] Ibid.

moving towards the spectator, increases the depth behind it' (fig. 25).[864] Byzantine art like ancient Greek art does not allow or provoke the viewer to transit to a metaphysical or illusionary place. The viewer-spectator communicates with the painting through the external, physical space.[865] It is this physical place that represents the holiness of the world and allows the viewer to be part of it.

As Danto remarks, in the Christian tradition holy objects are mysterious objects in the sense that they often lack physical properties that would distinguish them from ordinary objects, such as the holy water from ordinary water, or the fragment from a tomb of a saint from any piece of masonary, or a saint's relic from 'a mere knucklebone'. Holiness in these instances comes through what Danto calls 'a natural metaphor', through a convention that has been invented and learned.[866]

The depiction of holiness in Byzantine art evolved through a number of techniques which allowed the artist firstly to overcome the problem of perspective and secondly to communicate with the viewer in the physical space of the church. Even though Renaissance art is often seen to stand in opposition to Byzantine art as it tends to seek the transition of the viewer to a metaphysical and illusory space, there are examples that resist this tendency. One of these examples is according to Danto the work of Giotto di Bondore, *The Raising of Lazarus* (fig. 26). The depiction of the miracle takes place not in the painting or the representation of an illusory space but beyond the painting, through communication with the viewer.

According to Danto, Giotto manages to represent the holy through a series of 'conventional signs'.[867] In contrast to common Christian art paintings, in the work of Giotto, just like in Byzantine art, the scene of the miracle of Christ is in the foreground, is something you see, it does not give the impression of the unfinished or endless. In the scene there is no behind.[868] This is different to Dutch painting, for example, where looking at it 'we know that there is something on the other side of the hill, that if we could magically enter the paintings and walk along the road, we would

[864] Ibid., p. 44.
[865] Ibid.
[866] Arthur Danto, 'Giotto and the Stench of Lazarus', in *Philosophizing Art: Selected Essays*, (University California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles London), pp. 106- 122, (p. 114).
[867] Ibid., pp. 117-118.
[868] Ibid., p119.

never end in blackness'. Giotto, on the other hand, is interested in depicting the way the objects and the world appear to someone that is 'wholly coincident with the action'. He is not interested in capturing in the sense of imitating the way the objects and the world really are or their qualities 'in excess of those that happen to fit the action'.[869] In Giotto there is never something other than what we see. The key of the depiction of the miracle of the rising of Lazarus is the woman holding her nose. The miracle is not depicted through the rise of Lazarus but through 'the fact that *Lazarus is raised*'.[870] The stench 'appeals to the mind rather than the senses, stands closer to words than to perceptual stimuli'.[871]

The halo in the representation of Christian art is in the world of painting but not in the visual, real world. The halo designates holiness by being invisible to sight in the way smell designates the miracle in the work of Giotto. Stench cannot be represented in a direct manner.[872] As Danto writes, odour as motion in painting cannot be depicted in a direct way.[873]

In the Christian tradition usually this miracle is depicted by portraying Lazarus either as being assisted, carried out by others, or sitting in his coffin. As Danto remarks, the logical order is first to remove the fetters and then to walk. However this order is reversed in the Bible where Christ 'cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus come forth*. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes'.[874] And this is precisely what Giotto presents, that is, Lazarus tight bound unable to even place his hands together to pray. The holy in Giotto's painting and the representation of the miracle do not derive either from the symbols of the halo or the representation of the Christ or through reading the biblical story in the work, but by presenting Lazarus standing by himself with tight fetters on his body. Lazarus is '*simply there*', with no explanation of how he got there.[875] The miracle is presented in its more direct way, mysterious and holy.

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[869] Ibid.
[870] Ibid., pp. 112.
[871] Ibid., pp. 121.
[872] Ibid., pp. 111-114.
[873] Ibid., pp. 113.
[874] Ibid.
[875] Ibid.

Byzantine art as well as the naturalistic work of Giotto could be seen as examples of the non-metaphysical art that Heidegger was looking for. Even if Byzantine art falls into the area of Christian art it does not function as a symbolic art. On the other hand, the art of Giotto but also a great part of the work of other artist such as El Greco's paintings, which as in Giotto's work hold a strong reference to Byzantine pictures and the ancient Greek tradition of art, as well as to Michelangelo's *Slaves*. Even if these works can be seen as examples of what Heidegger calls as naturalist or representational art they do not represent the world as an ideal, beautiful and pleasant place but manage to capture the holiness and mystery by presenting the world as it appears.

But still the holiness in these works derives through conventions that are learned. It is due to previous knowledge that the viewer can identify the scenes and the figures both in Byzantine and the representational art of Giotto. In contrast, in abstract art and especially in abstract expressionist art there are no direct references to the world and its object. Could abstract expressionist art be seen as a representation of a religious content or in Heidegger terms, of the holiness of the world?

6. The religious dimension in the work of Barnett Newman.

6. 1. The symbol of the cross in the work of Barnett Newman

For Calas, the work of Newman expresses in an abstract manner that 'the Being is an 'all in the now''.[876] The series of paintings of *The Stations of the Cross* (fig. 27) is comprised of fourteen paintings which Newman began in 1958 and completed in 1966. 'The means' as Danto remarks 'could not be more simple', black and white colour on canvas, which becomes his third colour.[877] However, it was not until he started the fourth painting of this series that he related the subject matter to the passion of the cross. Newman states that the work does not aim to represent the series of events from the traditional representation of *The Stations of the Cross*, even if his theme and number of the stations imply the walk of Christ, Via Dolorosa, as well as the traditional paintings of *The Stations of the Cross*. His aim is to reveal god's human

[876] Calas, op. cit., p. 109.
[877] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.

cry on the cross, the instant when Christ cried out 'God, why have you forsaken me?', 'Lema sabachthani?', which is the subtitle Newman gives to the work. The last words of Christ have been interpreted by Christian tradition as the 'outcry' of the human who is both mortal and immortal, of the man who is 'in the Now and in Eternity and never all in the here'.[878]

Newman writes in the programme of the first exhibition of *The Stations of the Cross*, on the question *Lema*?:

> this question that has no answer has been with us so long –since Jesus –since Abraham – since Adam –the original question. *Lema*? To what purpose –is the unanswerable question of human suffering. The first pilgrims walked the Via Dolorosa to identify themselves with the original moment, not to reduce it to a pious legend; nor even to worship the story of one man's agony, but to stand witness to the story of each man's agony: the agony that is the single, constant, unrelenting, willed—world without end.[879]

Malpas argues that in this version of *The Stations of the Cross* there is no answer to the question '*lema*?' This *lema* is an eternal question, a question of meaning brought in the event of truth, in the *ereignis*.[880] The road along Via Dolorosa is presented in the work in a symbolic manner; not as the passion of Christ but rather as the agony of every human. Newman's *The Stations of the Cross* represent not the stages towards immortality but the stages of human life in this world.

Newman's *The Stations of the Cross* like his series of sculptures *Here I* (fig. 28), *II* (fig. 29) and *III* (fig. 30), consist of variations of vertical lines and are considered to express 'a religious narrative'.[881] Newman produces only six sculptures *Here I*, *II* and *III* and three identical versions of the *Broken Obelisk*. In his series of sculptures *Here I*, *II* and *III* he follows the same pattern of the variations of the placements of zips where they become concrete and three-dimensional. In this series of works the interplay between the repetition of the vertical lines and the plane of the canvas of his

[878] Calas, op. cit., p. 113.
[879] Simon Malpas, 'Sublime Ascesis: Lyotard, Art and the Event', in *Ankelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 7, no. 1, (April 2002), p. 208, Jean-François Lyotard, 'Newman: The Instant', in *The Lyotard Reader and Guide*, ed. Keith Crome and James Williams, (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 330-338, (p. 334), and Yve-Alain Bois 'On Two Paintings by Barnett Newman', in *October*, vol. 108 (Spring, 2004), pp. 3-34, p. 12.
[880] Malpas, op. cit., p. 208.
[881] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.

painting becomes an interplay between the repetition of the concrete zips and the space between and around them. *Here I* is comprised by two verticals zips made out of wood, plaster, and bronze. With Robert Murray's assistance, Newman casts in 1950 a sculpture entitled *Here I (To Marcia),* for collector Marcia Weisman, who had impelled him to make the work. In 1965 he makes *Here II* comprised by three metal verticals and in 1965 to 1966 he makes *Here III*, comprised by a single stainless steel vertical. This work has rounded corners and a slightly reflective surface and is placed upon a pyramidal base that looks like it is floating off the floor, which gives to the work a monumental status. In *Here I* the two zips are different from each other. The artless and almost primitive form of the first zip and the geometrical form of the second zip create an antithesis which does not lead us to a coherent meaning but sends us back to the work itself. In *Here II*, Newman presents to the viewer a mere triple repetition of the same object on three separate pedestals.

Even if the vertical lines in these works refer to the symbol of the cross they represent, according to Calas, 'acephalous crosses since no transversal bars limit their upward thrust'.[882] But in Newman's work 'crosses are crossless'.[883] The cross functions not only as a symbol of now and eternity, of mortality and immortality, but also as a symbol of God, of the human who is both mortal and immortal, of the man who is 'in the Now and in Eternity and all in the here'.[884] Calas continues, the cross symbolises that we are 'never all in the here' and that 'the now is part of eternity'.[885] Newman's works are to be seen, Calas argues, as an existential gesture or statement that we are ''all in the now''. Newman recognises the crucified not as the immortal but as the mortal, as the 'man who was crucified'.[886] Calas writes:

> Barnett Newman identifies himself with the agony of a compassionate man who was crucified, not with the transfiguration of a mortal being. Acephalous crosses are for those who have been cut off from the hope of immortality. In the Now man is alone. His cry for help cannot reach the Above, for there is no above and no beyond. Man is alone in the Now.[887]

[882] Calas, op. cit., pp. 110-113.
[883] Ibid., p. 113.
[884] Ibid.
[885] Ibid.
[886] Ibid.
[887] Ibid.

As Malpas writes, Newman's crosses 'stand witness to the story of each man's agony: the agony that is the single, constant, unrelenting, willed – world without end'. [888]Newman presents in his work the homelessness of the modern world. He presents the world as an unsafe place in the absence of god. But can mortals truly dwell in a world that, as Heidegger put it, there is a 'lack of houses'? 'What is the state of dwelling' in modernity?[889] Can humans surpass metaphysics in modernity? Heidegger writes:

> However hard and bitter, however hampering and threatening the lack of houses remains, the *real plight of dwelling* does not lie merely in a lack of houses. The real plight of dwelling lies in, that the mortals ever search a new for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*. [890]

So does people's 'homelessness' come from the fact that the human thinks of the true dwelling as a need? But still, as Heidegger denotes, when the human thinks of his homelessness then it is no more a misery. 'It is the sole summons that *calls* mortals into their dwelling'.[891] Mortals could allow dwelling, they could bring it 'to the fullness of its nature' only if 'they build out of dwelling, and think for the sake of dwelling'.[892]

For Calas, Newman's work is a thinking of our homelessness but at the same time a verification of the metaphysical nature of being. Calas considers the work of Newman to be closer to the kind of non-symbolic and non-metaphysical art. But does Calas sees Newman's work to surpass metaphysics thinking? Or is Calas thinking of the human in Newman's work as itself bound to a metaphysical conception of being?

For Calas, Newman sees no hope in mortality but the agony of the human to live alone and in the now of mortality. He suggests that Newman aims to overcome the metaphysical and Christian theological concept of being and human life where it expands to the eternal. This eternal is understood as the non-being, as nothing, in

[888] Malpas, op. cit., p. 337
[889] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 159.
[890] Ibid.
[891] Ibid.
[892] Ibid.

ancient metaphysics as 'unformed matter, matter which cannot take form as an image (as a spectacle)'.[893] According to Heidegger, the meaning of nothing in Christian theology continues to be in opposition to being but in the sense of an absence. As Heidegger remarks, 'Christian dogma denies the truth of the proposition *ex nihilo nihil fit* and thereby bestows on the nothing a transformed significance, the sense of the complete absence of beings apart from God'.[894] The world in Plato and Christianity is not the present world. The present world, 'the genuinely real and only true world' is, as has been noted above, for Heidegger, the only world that art could be 'at home'.[895] The world of Christian art is the world that suppresses, in order to be a holy, this world, a place of dwelling.[896]

But if genuine dwelling in Christian theology refers to the possibility of an after-life, for Newman dwelling is not possible at all, because he presents a world where the god or gods are absent and the human is alone.[897] The being that Calas sees in Newman's work is still 'future oriented', a being oriented towards death as nothing, an absolute absence and emptiness. This negative approach to being is for Heidegger a verification of the metaphysical conception of being. Thus, even if Newman attempts to surpass the eternality of the being of Christian theology and orient it in the now and here, his conception of the human remains within the frames of the metaphysical thinking of modern age. In this metaphysical thinking the world becomes an unsafe place and therefore cannot be 'a 'home''.[898]And homelessness, as has been seen above, is the primary destitution of modernity.[899]

But in modernity, Heidegger states, the gods and god have left and there is no longer any place for them to return. For Heidegger the absence of god or Nietzsche's statement 'God is dead' are to be understood not as a critique of the Christian attitude but as a verification of humanity's forgetfulness of his genuine dwelling. Genuine dwelling does not presuppose religious places, churches or cathedrals or religious

[893] Heidegger, 'What is metaphysics'? *Basic Writings from 'Being and Time' (1927) to 'The Task of Thinking' (1964)*, pp. 91-112, (p. 107).
[894] Ibid.
[895] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 74.
[896] Ibid.
[897] Ibid., p. 137.
[898] Young, op. cit., pp. 130-131.
[899] Ibid., p. 125.

beliefs and attitudes. These places and attitudes can no longer give power to human dwelling; 'Christianity (not necessarily Christian faith) has contributed most to the withdrawal of the holy by becoming onto-theo-logic and a worldly-cultural power'.[900] The human can only dwell in the divine but in modernity the human 'is so obfuscated that the absence of the divine is not even discerned'.[901]

Rilke in his works *Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus* realizes this destitution of his age and the human's forgetfulness of his dwelling and his authentic existence. For Rilke, Heidegger remarks, the time is destitute not merely because 'God is dead' but because humans are not aware and even not capable of being aware of their mortality.[902] 'Mortals', as Heidegger put it, 'have not yet come into ownership of their own nature'.[903] The metaphysical conception of death for Heidegger impedes the human from being at home in the world and within things.[904]

Both Newman and Rilke appear to experience the metaphysical state of human being in modernity and the destitution of modernity. But Newman in opposition to Rilke does not acknowledge the absence of the holiness of God but of God itself. Newman seems to deny the possibility of the return of gods. Newman, even if he acknowledges the mortality of the human, does not accept it. In Heidegger words, he does not 'come into ownership' of the human's nature. Thus, the acknowledgement of the absence of gods and the awareness of our mortality in Newman's work could be taken to be a positive thing, a step towards the overcoming of our inauthentic existence. On the other hand the acknowledgment of the absence of gods and the loss of our authentic existence becomes in Newman's work what Adorno calls a negative expression of the truth in art. Thus the aim of art in modernity becomes to this way of thinking the acknowledgement of our homelessness, of our metaphysical and inauthentic state. Even if art cannot lead us completely to authentic existence, the awareness of our inauthenticity could bring us closer to the state of authenticity. How

[900] Heidegger, 'Thinking and the Holy', in *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, pp. 104-107, (p. 105).
[901] Ibid.
[902] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', p. 94, and 'Thinking and Homelessness', in *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, pp. 101-103, (p. 103).
[903] Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', p. 94.
[904] Ibid.

could the denial of mortality and hence the feeling anxiety take out humans from homelessness and inauthentic existence?

6. 1. 2. Modernity and homelessness

For Heidegger, Western man and especially modern man is 'uprooted and homeless' because he experiences his mortality.[905] The task of experiencing the measure of life brings us closer to the question of death, bringing 'the unsettling experience of anxiety'.[906] Anxiety is an experience of the homelessness of western humans. Anxiety and uncanniness do not refer to specific things that we might fear but derives from 'nothing and nowhere'.[907] The feeling of anxiety and terror come when we take death as an absolute nothing, an empty or negative nothing.[908]

Can the human in modernity come into ownership of his own nature? Could art in modernity bring the human closer to his own nature and allow him to dwell? How is this homelesseness to be understood in Heidegger's phenomenology and understanding of art? Is there a possibility for the human in modernity to be at home?

For Heidegger, the relationship between the human and world is not to be understood as a relationship between the human and a collection of objects external to ourselves. As Svenaeus writes, 'the world indeed being nothing other than a cultural, intersubjective *meaning-structure*, lived in by us and, ultimately, a mode of ourselves'.[909] The world and its objects are not external to us, nevertheless they are 'constitutive for the being of *Dasein*'.[910] Thus, the human as Da-sein, as 'being-there' and 'being-in-the-world' constitutes a unity with the world and not a relationship of

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[905] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*; p. 102. For Svenaeus anxiety is a primary concept that helps us understand homelessness in Heidegger as well as in Freud. Fredrik Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', in *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, vol. 3, no. 2, (2000), pp. 125-137, (p. .7).
[906] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*; p. 103.
[907] Heideger's notion of anxiety is analogous with the notion of uncanny anxiety in Freud, which is taken as the fear of /towards the unknown. Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p .8.
[908] Martin Heidegger, 'Guidewords for Reflection upon Being', in *Basic Concepts*, trans. Gary E. Aylesworth, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 42-57, (p.45), 'The Age of the World Picture', p. 154 and *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*; p. 103.
[909] Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p.126.
[910] Ibid.

subject and object.[911] 'Being-in-the-world' as Macquarrie puts it, is not 'a spatial but an existential relation' of human and the world.[912]

For Heidegger, the notion of Da-sein reveals that unhomelikeness and uncanniness are part of human existence.[913] The 'Da' indicates the finitude and contingency of human being, an awareness of mortality of human being. The human is not in its simple mortality but in the fact that he acknowledges that he will die. It reveals that the human is 'thrown into a world that pre-exists it and which it does not choose, and yet which fundamentally constitutes it as the being it is'.[914] The world as the physical space contains the human's body but as such this environment 'is inherently meaningless'. Furthermore, *Dasein*, includes also the notion of as Being (Sein), which indicates that Being seeks to provide meaning to its life. The Being 'is reflective and plans or projects its life into the future'. This interplay between mortality and meaning that characterizes *Dasein* takes place because *Dasein* aims to find meaning in life and world but cannot because, as Edgar writes, 'there is no intrinsic meaning to be found'.[915] 'Meaning must be bestowed upon its existence, not discovered.[916]

For Heidegger, the human being is unfamiliar with people and objects in the world and constantly tries to make sense of them. This effort to understand life and the world is enhanced by his wonder at that which he does not understand. However, the feeling of wonder could be transformed into a threat or terror when he confronts something 'too unfamiliar or uncontrollable'. This understanding does not lead always into the feeling of terror but it could be 'attuned' in joy, boredom and sorrow. As Svenaeus remarks, 'it will always be attuned in some way'. This attunement of the

[911] Ibid. 'Human understanding is, consequently, for Heidegger, always being-there (*Da-sein*) in the sense of being-in-the-world. The hyphens indicate that *Dasein* and world are thought as a unity and not as subject and object.' Andrew Edgar, 'The Uncanny, Alienation and Strangeness: The Entwining of Political and Medical Metaphor'.
[912] John Macquarrie, *An Existential Theology, Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*, (S. C. M. Press: London, 1955), p. 14.
[913] Edgar, 'The Uncanny, Alienation and Strangeness: The Entwining of Political and Medical Metaphor'.
[914] Ibid.
[915] Ibid.
[916] Ibid.

life situation illustrates the significance of things in life and why, Svenaeus writes, 'we are open to the world as a possibility for ourselves'.[917]

According to Heidegger, to be in the world does not imply having a sense of belonging in this world. For Heidegger we are human beings when we are born to homelessness.[918] That is, homelesssnesss is an a priori condition of human existence and is understood in the sense 'of unhomelike being-in-the-world'.[919] The notion of 'being-in-the-world' or otherwise of 'being-at-home' is at the same time 'a *not*-being-quite at- home in this world'.[920]According to Heidegger we belong to the world in the sense that 'we are *in* the world' and the world and its objects take meaning through our lives, actions and projects.[921] Things in the world obtain their meaning as long as they belong to 'a lifeworld of human projects'.[922] Unhomelikeness and uncanniness unveil that our existence does not have a meaning in itself. Our existence 'is only given meaning through the being-in-the-world'.[923]

The awareness of our life and the world of our actions, tasks and communication always runs through a homelessness in the sense that even if this world and life are mine they are also simultaneously not mine, as I do not have the total knowledge and control of my life and world. But as Svenaeus remarks, 'this is not a deficit' but a required phenomenon; 'I am delivered to the world (*geworfen*) with other people and being together with them (*Mitdasein*) is a part of my own being'. Even if this world I live in is first of all and primarily mine in the sense that it is not an objective world of physics, this subjectivity also applies to everyone else, and so 'to this very 'mineness' also belongs otherness'. [924]

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[917] Fredrik Svenaeus, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', in *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy,* vol. 3, no. 1, (2000), pp. 3-16, (p. 8).
[918] The notion of homelessness in Freud, according to Svenaeus, 'is conceptualized in terms of processes at work in our minds beyond conscious control. No one will ever fully know himself, since the mind is an opaque region – and necessarily so. This traumatic, a priori homelessness in itself does not make us ill – rather, it makes us human. If the unhomelikeness becomes too obtrusive, however, we will end up in illness'. Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p.125.
[919] Ibid.
[920] Svenaeus, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p. 7.
[921] Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p.126.
[922] Svenaeus, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p. 8.
[923] Ibid.
[924] Ibid., p. 7.

> The context of contexts, or world, in which we live our lives as thrown projects, is the total possibility of our life—our hopes, wishes, dreams, plans, etc. but the full possibilities of life always stand in the shadow of our death as our 'ownmost' possibility, as the ineluctable horizon of all our projects. [925]

In these instances where everything ceases to be significant and taken for granted, we are 'confronted with world as world, as our thrown project, but the never completely buried awareness of the scope of this project, i.e., of our being-toward-death, presses upon us'. [926]

In anxiety what prevails is human existence; everything in life and world, each project appears to be meaningless and empty 'against the backdrop of a basic meaninglessness – a homelessness of life'.[927] And then through anxiety the world appears 'as a meaning-structure of human understanding which has no meaning *in itself*' as a collection of objects and projects.[928]

Death is that which impedes humans from being at home in the world and within things.[929] The nothing of death cannot be placed in a category such as an event, ownership or object, a concrete thing. [930] We cannot even understand death by the death of someone else because being on this side we always lose its right sense.[931] Anxiety does not come through the uncertainty of death but on the contrary, Svenaeus remarks, it comes through 'a *certainty*'…about our own death, about the fact 'that I will die and that nobody else can die in my place'.[932] And this death is part of this life and it does not come 'after life', but a death *within* life itself. It is the 'finitude' of our existence and what gives its giving it its 'basic character of unhomelikeness'.[933]

6. 1. 3. The overcoming of homelessness in 'the destitute days of modernity'

For Heidegger we can overcome, Svenaeus remarks, the negative feeling of homelessness. The future is always open for us; 'there is always something more to

[925] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*; p. 102.
[926] Ibid., pp. 102-103.
[927] Svenaeus, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p. 8.
[928] Ibid.
[929] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*; p. 103.
[930] Ibid.
[931] Ibid.
[932] Svenaeus, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p. 8.
[933] Ibid.

come in the future, something that I live towards and that I do not yet know'.[934] For Heidegger, this possibility reveals 'the openness of life' and gives homelessness a positive tone.

Yet, according to Svenaeus, the openness towards one's future is not to be taken as an absolute certainty. Part of this openness is due to the uncertainty, which provokes anxiety, that one's next moment could be one's last. The future is not for ever, I am certainly going to die and living towards my death I am constantly dying, 'I am dying in every moment in the sense of being towards my own death'.[935]

However, it is through anxiety that we come closer to the understanding of our existence. Heidegger's notion of anxiety and homelessness does not concern only the way we live but existence itself. According to Svenaeus, the 'call of anxiety' concerns the self, it 'rises in yourself, from yourself, as a reminder of the uncanniness of existence'.[936] When anxiety arises in humans it awakes and attunes 'an authentic understanding'.[937] This anxiety arises 'through a call of conscience', that is the call that comes from being on our own, and the only message that it brings according to Svenaeus is 'this basic homelessness'. It is a reminder, 'an uncanny call' of our own finite existence. 'To listen to this call and not flee from its message of a basic uncanniness is a 'wanting to have conscience', it is 'authentic thinking about death''. [938] As Svenaeus writes, 'the basic *Unheimlichkeit* of existence – my a priori homelessness in my world – is something which…emerges most clearly in the experience of existential anxiety leading to authentic, individual understanding'.[939] The authentic understanding is not an absolute one and complete in itself but for Heidegger it comes together with homelessness and inauthenticity. For Heidegger the notions of authenticity and inauthenticity are two modes of understanding with each one complement the other. They should not be taken as two different ways of living

[934] Ibid.
[935] Ibid., p. 9.
[936] Ibid., p. 8. 'In Heidegger's outline in *Sein und Zeit* human beings are awakened to the basic homelessness of being-in-the-world by a phenomenon that has a long history in philosophy and theology: the call of conscience (*der Ruf des Gewissens*)'. Ibid., p. 9.
[937] There are two aspects of anxiety, the trauma of homelessness which makes possible authenticity. On the other hand anxiety could turned to be pathological and this if it controls the way one's way of living, 'of one's whole being-in-the-world, engaging too much of one's *everyday* understanding'. Ibid., pp. .9-10.
[938] Ibid., p. 8.
[939] Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p.126.

but as two means of knowledge, the philosophical and the 'unreflected', 'everyday understanding'.[940]

The trauma of homelessness makes possible authenticity. But anxiety here must control one's way of living, 'of one's whole being-in-the-world' or engage excessively someone's '*everyday* understanding'.[941]Authentic anxiety as the complete withdrawal from all our everyday understanding and activities lasts only for a moment.[942]

> Suddenly, the head of the hammer flies off, and the tool can no longer be used for striking nails. The activity is now interrupted, and we are forced to focus upon the hammer, to become conscious of it as a broken tool which must be repaired or replaced, if we are to be able to go on building the house.-[943]

Only when an activity breaks down we can grasp the hammer as a tool and not a mere thing. This resembles what happens in authentic understanding. Breakdowns of an activity bring out the possibility of coming closer to the truth of the world and its objects; 'to explicate *parts* of the world-structure as tools'.[944] Furthermore, it is through this moment of authenticity that the human could come closer to the measures of his finite life. The call of our finitude could bring us from inauthentic to an authentic conception of life as existence and of death as nothing.[945]

In particular, overcoming homelessness and opening up the possibility for the human being to come closer to his true being and dwelling presupposes an overcoming of the metaphysical and inauthentic way of thinking of his existence. The nothing, according to Heidegger, indicates a presence and not a mere absence or lack of beings. As he writes, 'if, however, the Nothing is obviously not a being, we cannot at all say that it 'is'. Nevertheless, '*there is given*' the Nothing'.[946]

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[940] Ibid., p. 129.
[941] Svenaeus, 'Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', pp. 8-10.
[942] Svenaeus, 'The Body Uncanny – Further Steps Towards a Phenomenology of Illness', p.129.
[943] Ibid., p. 129.
[944] 'Authentic anxiety seems to mean a breakdown of all ordinary understanding and activity. Is this not equivalent to the defective transcendence (failure to relate to the world) of the ill way of being in the world? Is it not in a way similar to a total lack of transcendence (death, coma)? This would indeed be true if the authentic anxiety lasted for a long time, but according to Heidegger it does not.' Ibid.
[945] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, p. 45.
[946] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, p. 45.

> Perhaps it is one of the greatest of human errors to believe oneself always secure before the Nothing so long as being can be encountered and dealt with and retained. Perhaps the predominance of this error is a main reason for blindness *vis-à-vis* the Nothing, which cannot affect beings, and least of all when beings become more and more 'existant' [*seiender*].[947]

To overcome metaphysics, the nothing is no longer to be understood in a negative way but rather in a positive way as the nothing of ''plenitude'… undoubtedly 'something''.[948] This nothing, Young suggests, is not to be understood as an ontological but as an epistemological nothing, as 'being beyond our ultimate standards of intelligibility; 'nothing (comprehensible) to us'', the mystery.[949] As Hass and Maraldo argue, it presupposes 'a step 'back' to that positive privative' that is, to the thinking of Being as un-concealment.[950] To know the mystery, it must be presented not merely as revealing but both as revealing and concealment.[951] However, in the destitute days of modernity the mystery does not manifest itself as both concealment and un-concealment but it is concealed and 'somehow appears'.[952] This partial appearing leaves open the possibility for authenticity, for the human to genuinely dwell. For Svenaeus it is anxiety that can stimulate authenticity.[953] In modernity works of art should stimulate anxiety, in order to make us aware of our inauthenticity. In this sense art remains one of the places that dwelling could happen in the destitute days of modernity.

For Young, abstract art is valid when it encloses, thematises a world and allows it to appear. Fully abstract art, as Young contends, is not a valid form of art as it does not thematises the world or its objects.[954] But this thematising of the world that Young is

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[947] Ibid.
[948] As Young remarks, the shift form the notion of nothing as emptiness to nothing as 'plenitude' is what characterizes Heidegger's philosophy as well. It is in his later thinking that Heidegger, Young argues, develops his understanding of the nothing in a positive way. Young, op. cit., p. 132.
[949] Ibid.
[950] Heidegger, *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, p. 104.
[951] Ibid., p. 107.
[952] Ibid.
[953] As Young argues, the art that allows this possibility is the art that overcomes metaphysics, the art that allows the experience of the world as a holy rather than as an unsafe place; in anxiety the human cannot truly dwell. 'Anti-metaphysical' art is the art that liberates us from metaphysics and thus allows us to dwell. Young, op. cit., pp. 126-132. See the discussion by James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo in *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger*, p. 104.
[954] Even if Fóti appears to reject like Young abstract expressionism as the kind of modern art that could be consider as art of genius in the ground of Heidegger's thinking of art he leaves however this question of its meaning open. For Fóti the challenge of abstract expressionism art or in general the

looking to find in fully abstract art is taken in terms of pictorial presentation. In abstract expressionist art there is no a priori a subject matter or a world. The happening of the world that Heidegger discusses in semi-abstract art is, in abstract expressionist art, not captured within the work but comes in relation to its space. The validity of abstract expressionist art cannot be understood in pictorial terms of representation or abstraction but in spatial terms, on the way the work occupies a place, and its relation with the viewer.

As Biro indicates, Heidegger does not speak about the 'radically formal abstract art of modernism'. [955] Abstraction, Biro argues, is in Heidegger's philosophy 'almost an absent term'. In so far as Heidegger uses the term, it refers to the process where an experience or phenomenon alters into an object.[956] Heidegger's turn on modern, abstract art that could stand beyond the metaphysics of symbolism and representationalism aims, according to Fóti, 'to reveal the pure gathering-emplacing dynamics of space'.[957]

As we have seen in chapter three, art, for Heidegger, encloses world and then allows it to happen, to appear. Art is a place in the sense that it articulates a place and makes it available.[958] But in abstract expressionist art there is no a priori a world. The happening of the world that Heidegger discusses in semi-abstract art is, in abstract expressionist art, not captured within the work but comes in relation to its space. The validity of abstract expressionist art cannot be understood in pictorial terms of representation or abstraction but in spatial terms, on the way the work occupies a place, and its relation with the viewer.

A fully abstract work of art is not without a content or subject matter. Painting through abstraction presents, according to Danto, a content free of pictorial boundaries. As Danto writes,

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emblematic art is linked with the matter of the death of the painting but historically it remains open. Fóti, op. cit., p. 350.
[955] Biro, Matthew, *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 151.
[956] Ibid., p. 150.
[957] Fóti, op. cit., p. 340.
[958] Ibid., p. 346.

> from the beginning, abstraction was believed by its inventors to be invested with a spiritual reality. It was as though Newman had hit upon a way of being a painter without violating the Second Commandment, which prohibits images.[959]

The work of Newman is not to be seen as lacking a subject-matter. It needs the subject-matter because, as he states, the absence of a subject-matter makes the painting 'ornamental'.[960] For Newman decorative arts, although beautiful, fail to communicate ideas.[961]

6. 2. The representation of the line in the work of Barnett Newman

For Newman the art of the past is designated in terms of the Platonic ideal, the Greek 'invention of beauty'.[962] The aim of the artist was to make beautiful works, aesthetically pleasing pictures and sculptures. Art is placed in the ground of aesthetics, of subjective taste and becomes, in Heidegger terms, meta-physical. The influence of the Platonic ideal reaches its highest level with the art of the Renaissance. The artist of the renaissance aims to capture a Christian Absolute in terms of the Greek ideal of beauty.[963] As Newman states, 'instead of making *cathedrals* out of Christ, man, or 'life'… [t]he image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation, real and concrete, that can be understood by anyone who will look at it without the nostalgic glasses of history'.[964] The aim of the European artist is not to imitate or represent the world in terms of beauty but to reveal it through lines and colours. But still, as abstract as the work might be, the lines imply landscape, figures and objects. As Newman remarks about the work of Mondrian, horizontal lines are to be seen as the earth and vertical lines as what 'stands and grow' on earth.[965]

The line is either a thing or its imitation, Merleau-Ponty remarks.[966] The lines in modern European art appear to transcend the objects in the sense that they do not

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[959] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.
[960] Lyotard, op. cit., p. 132.
[961] Newman refers specifically to Islamic art as decorative and thus empty of subject matter art. However, Newman's rejection of decorative art is developed into a criticism of some abstract works of art which he considers, through the elimination of the subject matter, force the work into a 'mere arabesque', a mere decoration. Glaser, op. cit., p. 416.
[962] Malpas, op. cit., p. 203.
[963] Ibid.
[964] Ibid.
[965] Glaser, op. cit., p. 418.
[966] Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 143.

follow the real lines of everyday objects, they do not imitate the visible but in Klee's words, they render the visible.[967] It is what sustains the thing and allows it to become visible. The lines draw our attention to identify the things, being 'always between or behind' the things, but at the same time 'they themselves are not things'.[968] The lines designate the things but the things are that which, as Merleau- Ponty put it, ''form themselves' from themselves', become visible throughout the two dimensional scene of the canvas.[969] As Merleau-Ponty writes: 'neither the contour of the apple nor the border between field and meadow is in this place or that, that they are always on the near or the far side of the point we look at'. [970] Merleau-Ponty continues,

> it is a certain disequilibrium contrived within the indifference of the white paper; it is a certain hollow opened up within the in-itself, a certain constitutive emptiness—an emptiness which, as Moore's statues show decisively, sustains the supposed positivity of things.[971]

> Making its way in space, [the line] nevertheless corrodes prosaic space and its *partes extra partes*; it develops a way of extending itself actively into that space which sub-tends the spatiality of a thing quite as much as that of a man or an apple tree. [972]

If the line in art is to be understood in terms of geometry it will then be comprehended not, as in classical geometry, as if imposed on a empty background but rather as in modern geometry, as 'the restriction, segregation, or modulation of a pregiven spatiality'.[973] Painting makes us see objects in the way we see the real everyday objects but most importantly we see in it an 'empty space'. Depth becomes the third dimension of painting.[974] The paradox regarding the third dimension which is the missing dimension in painting is that, Merleau-Ponty writes, 'we are [as Cartesians] always on the hither side of depth, or beyond. It is never the case that things really *are* one behind the other'. [975] Depth in painting becomes then 'an illusion of an illusion'.[976] In a representational or presentational painting we see, as Danto argues,

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[967] Ibid.
[968] Ibid.
[969] Ibid.
[970] Ibid.
[971] Ibid., p. 144.
[972] Ibid., p. 143.
[973] Ibid., p. 144.
[974] Ibid., p. 133.
[975] Ibid., pp. 131-134.
[976] Ibid., p. 134.

through the surface of the picture, in the same way that we see through a window. The space of the picture is a virtual space that deploys objects, scenes, motion and time.[977]

In sculpture the line plays a decisive role not only in the way it will sustain the object or the figure but also in the way we will see the work. The line in sculpture is always ideational, its dimension is represented through the subject matter and the boundaries of the work. In modern sculpture the line is not broken in favour of the form of the figure as in traditional sculpture but is either constant and sturdy or conspicuously broken and detached. The represented figure or object is never the immediate figure or object, but takes form and meaning by the way it is sustained by the lines.[978]

Painting and sculpture search not only the external movements, Merleau-Ponty writes, 'but for its secret ciphers, of which there are some still more subtle'.[979] Motion and stasis derive, or in Heidegger terms, appear, happen, from the way the line is drawn, carved or moulded. From the way each part of the body, the arms, the head and feet are taken each one at a different moment, 'transition and duration' arises on canvas, in stone, or bronze.[980]

But in this sense a picture or a sculpture is not an object in its own right, but is understood by terms of what it represents. It is, as Merleau-Ponty writes, 'something other than itself'.[981] It is for Heidegger a metaphysical kind of art, an art that does not present in the sense of thematise the world and its object but it turns them into something else, into the known and aesthetically appealed. The viewer is placed in a pictorial space, an imaginary place and he is called to observe, to examine and interpret the formal properties of the work in terms of aesthetic concepts and ideals.

For Newman, even if European artists attempted to destroy the past 'rhetoric of beauty', they failed to overcome aesthetics. The 'cult of beauty' not only did not stop in the Renaissance but continued to characterise modern art and to influence

[977] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.
[978] Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., pp. 143-145.
[979] Ibid., p. 145.
[980] Ibid.
[981] Ibid., p. 143.

movements particularly from impressionism to cubism.[982] Modern European art remains aesthetic in its process and purpose, as Malpas argues, it remains within the framework of Renaissance imagery of the world and its object. [983] The experimentation and innovation in new forms and materials is still placed within a context of a platonic 'pure plasticity' of classical and romantic art.[984]

6. 2. 1. The subject matter in abstract expressionist art

Abstract expressionist artists, on the other hand, create a work that does not enclose or represent the world and its objects. Specifically, they aim to isolate an expression through mere abstract shapes, colours and lines that appear to deny any reference to the physical world.

What abstract expressionism aims to do is to distance painting from picture and the picturesque and bring it closer to the condition of the painting as an object in itself, as an object that represents or presents merely itself. [985] The aim is to 'separate painting from what it is not' to push painting away from the transcendental, the imaginary and the narrative.[986] Abstract expressionist art engages the viewer on its own terms, as Danto writes, without any mediation; we do not see or rather 'we are not supposed to see' through the painting.[987] The canvas of the painting is no longer the ground for an imaginary projection or[988] a means for the representation of a meaning or a world but is to be seen, as Biro suggest, as a 'record of the artist's dialogue' with his materials.[989]

[982] Malpas, op. cit., p. 203.
[983] Ibid. But even when it appears to deny any reference to the world 'for an empty world of geometric formalisms', Malpas argues, they fail to present or come nearer to the sublime. Therefore European art to this way of thinking is designated by beauty or by a denial of beauty but in either case establish something new. Malpas here seems to place Newman work in his American modern tradition of abstract expressionism in opposition with other scholars that appear to incline towards an understanding of the work of Newmna in terms of systematic and more geometrical art. On the reation between geometry and art in the work of Newman see, Gert F. Bär, 'Aspects of Geometry and Art', in *Journal for Geometry and Graphics*, vol. 8, no. 2, (2004), pp. 231-241.
[984] Malpas, op. cit., p. 203.
[985] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.
[986] Biro, op. cit., p. 188.
[987] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.
[988] Biro, op. cit., p. 188.
[989] Ibid., p. 187.

Newman states that the Europeans are 'concerned with the transcendence of objects' whereas the Americans aimed to move beyond the representation of the world and its objects and to capture 'the transcendental experience'.[990] That is, to bring forth an experience, an expression, through the same materiality of painting or sculpture, through colour and line. The materiality of the work, the canvas and the paint become, according to Krauss, an emblem, a sign, the signature of the artist. These emblems, Krauss suggests, do not exist independently of its audience as in traditional and modern European works of art[991] Representation in art does not address someone specifically or a particular audience. The emblem in abstract expressionist art confronts the viewer and takes meaning only when understood in relation to a viewer or a 'receiver'.[992] The viewer, as opposed to a passive observer, is now aware of his own 'creative input into the viewing experience'.[993]

More so, through aesthetic experience the unity of the work, its creator, and the viewer becomes manifest. The manifestation is to take place in a material world, the place in which the work is placed or exhibited becomes, as Ingarden writes, 'the background and displaced itself in the shape of the ontological foundation of the work of art'.[994] Ingarden's proposal of a re-definition of aesthetics and aesthetic experience is grounded in the process of the shaping of the work of art which as such is not exhausted in the process of the creation of the work, in the experience of the artist. The work of art 'discharges itself in a certain active bodily behaviour during which the physical ontological foundation of the work of art is shaped'.[995] The viewer 'being temporarily disposed to the reception and recreation of the work itself, is also not only activity, but in a certain sense at least creative'.[996]

But how does the abstract expressionist artist manage to bring the viewer into the creative process of his work?

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[990] Glaser, op. cit., p. 418.
[991] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, pp.148-153.
[992] Ibid.
[993] Biro, op. cit., p. 153.
[994] Ingarden, op. cit., p. 260.
[995] Ibid., pp. 260-261.
[996] Ingarden, op. cit., p. 261.

Abstract expressionism's mark is the gesture of the repetition.[997] In Pollock it is the gesture of the spilt paint or the repetition of brush or finger spin in oil paint (fig. 31). Seeing his work up close the viewer uncovers the process of his painting. He gets 'absorbed', Mussman writes, with the way the pools of dried paint are formed and the way some colors are mixed with others.[998] However, seeing his work from a distance the viewer is taken in by the repetition of signs and colors. Even though in this optical field there are not represented objects or figures, the repeated abstract lines create an illusion of a three-dimensional space.[999] Through this space, the viewer individually could proceed into a process of understanding these lines and marks as represented objects or figures.[1000]

Through the materiality of the work, techniques and the large scale of paintings and sculptures, abstract expressionists created a language that concerns existence and the self. Through a succession of abstract gestures Pollock and De Kooning succeeded in bringing forth 'individual subjectivity' and reflecting the subconscious of the self.[1001] However, existence in Newman's work is designated, not by a personal 'handwriting of gestures' as in the work of Pollock and De Kooning, but with an impersonal 'typography of the vertical'.[1002] Newman's work manages through an impersonal 'typography of the vertical' to bring forth the consciousness of the self.[1003] Newman, 'through the repetition of stereotypes', succeeds in creating an objective language that manifests the being of consciousness.[1004] His aim is to capture an instant of 'total reality', to bring forth, Glaser argues, 'the 'absolute Being' of consciousness'.[1005] The now of consciousness emerges through the totally non-representational forms that approach the primitive and archaic. With this turn towards the primitive and archaic, Newman aims not to bring forth the original self, the absolute consciousness, but to discover what consciousness can and cannot put together.[1006]

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[997] Toby Mussman, 'Literalness and the Infinite', in *Minimal Art: A critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc, 1968), pp. 242-245.
[998] Mussman,op. cit, pp. 242-245.
[999] Biro, op. cit., p. 183.
[1000] For Mussman 'hand-manipulated' art is still designated by anthropomorphism. Mussman, op. cit., p. 248.
[1001] Calas, op. cit., pp. 109-115, (p. 115).
[1002] Ibid.
[1003] Ibid.
[1004] Ibid., and Glaser, op. cit., p. 418.
[1005] Glaser, op. cit., p. 418.
[1006] Malpas, op. cit., pp. 205-126.

For Newman the vertical lines, or zips, are not colored lines, or stripes, but 'color planes'.[1007] The zips in his work do not form a pictorial space or an atmosphere. Each zip expanding from the bottom to the top of the painting 'is on the surface and on the same space as we are. As Danto remarks, painting and viewer coexist in the same reality'.[1008] And this precisely is Newman's aim, that is, to make his works, 'objects in their own right', to engage the viewer directly with the work by means of the same work as an object in itself.[1009]

6. 2. 2. The representation of the self in the work of Barnett Newman

Irrespective of the particular angle from which we see Newman's works we see the same object or image, but as such do not carry any elements that could lead us to a meaning. Newman cancels the narrative reading of his work with a process of repetition that tells nothing other than its own being.[1010] As Krauss writes, 'repetition forces a self-conscious account of process to usurp attention from the object's role in the overall narration'.[1011] Newman's works appear empty. But even if they do not represent anything and any reference to the world appears absent, his works do not lack meaning. The emptiness of his work is not to be taken as an absolute nothingness but as a spatial element that collects the things together, in a present time and place.[1012] Meaning does not exist in the work but happens 'in the process of experience itself'[1013]

The repetition in Newman's paintings is manifested through the zips, the way they are drawn and their position on canvas, the colour of the canvas and the canvas itself, which in some works becomes his third colour. Thus, the antithesis between colours and lines becomes a vehicle for the viewer to generate meaning. In Newman's work the meaning derives from both observing the differences in repetition of the vertical

[1007] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.
[1008] Ibid.
[1009] Ibid.
[1010] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 20.
[1011] Ibid., p. 35.
[1012] Fóti, op. cit., p. 340.
[1013] Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, p. 30.

lines, the zips and deciphering the expression.[1014] Colours and lines become metaphors or symbols of feelings or emotions, of progression and stasis. In Newman's work *Abraham* (fig. 32), the black colour zip becomes a symbol of Abraham's fear, terror and anxiety confronting the unknown.[1015] The hidden two white vertical lines bring the viewer closer to the process of Newman's creation of this painting.[1016] Coming closer to the work the black is revealed as being imposed upon the white lines to indicate 'an altogether different order of things—that there is as much difference between the two states of the painting, say, as between Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac' or, as Bois suggest, as in Kierkegaard's text, Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia.[1017] Newman's works *Abraham* and *The Stations of the Cross* represent two biblical stories of human sacrifice. Newman appears to read Christ's passion with Abraham's faith and belief. 'Abraham and Jesus are two singular figures understood not from the point of view of God's project, but from that of Man—of a questioning Man; they are two distinct figures of a relationship to the absolute'.[1018]

In his work *The Stations of the Cross* the relations among the variations of the repetitions and the antithesis among the zips, their background and the space that surrounds them, drive us to see the work as a process or climax, as an expression of 'a religious narrative'.[1019] In *The Stations of the Cross* meaning is developed through moving from *Station One* to *Station Fourteen* and by enhancing our understanding of each work and its relation with the other works.[1020] We see the repetition of colours but also encounter the contrast between the white and black, narrow and broad areas, strong and weak lines, paint and raw canvas. In some works the strong site is towards the left, in others towards the right. In some works the lines are hazy while in others they are clearly distinguished. The first paintings in this series have both black and white vertical lines. In the *Ninth Station*, the black vertical lines are replaced by three white lines upon plain canvas. This theme continues to the *Tenth* and *Eleventh Station*

[1014] Calas, op. cit., p. 115.
[1015] Bois, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
[1016] Ibid.
[1017] Ibid.
[1018] See Professor Jean-Daniel Causse's approach to the relationship between Jesus and Abraham, footnote 17, Ibid., p. 14.
[1019] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.
[1020] Ibid.

but changes by the intense black of the *Twelfth* and the *Thirteenth Station*. Next, in the *Fourteenth Station*, black suddenly disappears.

> Then, all at once, *Twelfth Station* is dramatically black, as is the *Thirteenth Station*. And then, in the *Fourteenth Station*, black again abruptly disappears. There is a strip of raw canvas at the left, and the rest is white, as if Christ yielded up the ghost as St. Matthew narrates it. The work demonstrates how it is possible for essentially abstract paintings to create a religious narrative.[1021]

As Calas writes, 'black is set against white, black and white confront us with the dullness of raw canvas. Black lifts the raw canvas to the purity of white'.[1022] But is it light that the artist wants us to see?[1023] Could the antithesis between black and white be seen as a metaphor of that between light and darkness, day and night, life and death? As Calas suggests it is not the illusion of light that Newman is trying to capture. Everything in his work is reduced 'to an immediacy felt in the tension between lines and planes, raw canvas and/or white and black surfaces, or twilight zones of gray'.[1024] The artist, Calas writes, cannot 'bring forth' light through mere colour. The impressionist artist was the first to manage to 'isolate light' and the abstract expressionist artist the first to 'isolate existence'.[1025] The impressionist artist brings forth the impression of light by presenting not the landscape or scene but the effect of the passage of time on the landscape and scene. The abstract expressionist artist brings forth existence by allowing the effect of space and time itself to come forth in relation to the viewer.

Newman's aim was to create an art that could express abstract concepts such as time duration and a kinaesthetic motion. As Glaser argues, Newman wanted to create with his work 'a concrete experience, a concrete point of view which could create an awareness, or 'insight' or 'revelation' of one's relationship to oneself and the world'.[1026] Specifically, according to Danto, Heidegger's discussion of human beings as *Dasein*, that is, as 'being there', is partly the intended experience of Newman's works; 'that our thereness is implied by the scale of the paintings themselves.'[1027] In

[1021] Ibid.
[1022] Calas, op. cit., p. 114.
[1023] Ibid.
[1024] Ibid.
[1025] Ibid., p. 115.
[1026] Glaser, op. cit., p. 418.
[1027] Danto, 'Barnett Newman and the Heroic Sublime'.

Newman's work you acknowledge that you are there and furthermore you become aware of yourself and 'of your own scale'.[1028]

Newman, as we have seen, sees our scale as mortals in an era without gods. For Newman even if the human must acknowledge his mortality and his homelessness he passes through the feeling of anxiety. Anxiety is inherent in the acknowledgement of the scale of the human in modernity and of its homeless condition that his work brings forth.

But as we have seen anxiety is the step towards the overcoming of the human's homelessness and thus inauthenticity. It is through anxiety that human can awake an authenticity and hence can come closer to the understanding of its being and of its existence. Authentic anxiety can remind to the human its finitude existence.
The aim of Newman's work is to demonstrate the here and now of the human and precisely to isolate the moment, the 'instant' which this awareness arrives.[1029] This moment could be seen as the moment that authentic anxiety lasts as the withdrawal of the human from all its everyday activities, the moment that authenticity lasts.

In each work Newman projects a different aspect of being and its relation with the world. In *The Stations of the Cross* the being is presented through a process of repetition of lines and colours, as a climax towards authenticity. In his series of the *Here* Newman plays with the matter of the visible and invisible, of present and absence and of reflection. Furthermore in his sculpture the *Broken Obelisk* the being comes forth as a gesture, a creation.

6. 2. 3. The deconstruction of subjectivity in the work of Barnett Newman

For Biro, the meaning of abstract expressionist art, or otherwise what its 'abstract' forms 'represent', comes by the projection of the various aspects of Being, 'by the decentering or deconstruction of subjectivity'.[1030] According to Biro, the deconstruction of subjectivity becomes a process which includes 'the projection and

[1028] Ibid.
[1029] Lyotard, op. cit., p. 331.
[1030] Biro, p. 189.

destabilization of subjectivity' in order to 'produce an indecidable play of multiple forms of subjectivity'.[1031]

The deconstruction and destabilization of subjectivity could be seen as the representation of Newman's work and in particular his sculptures *Here* and *Broken Obelisk*. In *Here I* and *II*, subjectivity is presented partially and incompletely, either as difference, or identity, as visible and invisible but never as the complete image of the self or of the being.[1032] The zips in *Here I* and *II* function in a dual manner, as the work itself and as the framing, the surrounding of other zips in between. The zips function in Merleau-Ponty's terms, as the dimensions of the invisible, they do not merely bring forth the invisible, but reproduce it out of absence.

As Merleau-Ponty argues seeing an object does not presuppose seeing its effects. He writes, 'the visible in the profane sense forgets its premises; it rests upon a total visibility which is to be recreated and which liberates the phantoms captive in it'.[1033] What Newman manages to do is to allow duplications in the sense of reflection. The duplications or reflections of the zips are the unreal things. They are impressions, or 'ghosts' as Merleau-Ponty put it, which have merely a 'visual existence' but at the same time they are real effects. [1034] Thus, in the world we have two individual external things which related to each other by causality: the real thing itself and its reflection 'which happens to have an ordered correspondence with the real thing'.[1035] What is visible is designated by the invisible, by that 'which it makes present as a certain absence'.[1036] But in *Here III* the single zip appears as merely present. It does not allow the production of something else beyond itself as an external thing but its slightly reflective surface reflects or represents merely a sense of its surrounding, of light and shadow, a sense of duration, or in Lyotard's words, of a 'minimal occurrence'.[1037]

[1031] Ibid.
[1032] Ulf Strohmayer, 'Belonging: Spaces of Meandering Desire', in *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed. by Georges Benko and Ulf Strohmayer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 162-185, (p. 171).
[1033] Merleau-Ponty,op. cit., p. 128.
[1034] Ibid., pp. 129-131.
[1035] Ibid., p. 131.
[1036] Ibid.
[1037] Lyotard, op. cit., p. 135.

In *Broken Obelisk* the notion of being comes not through the repetition of the symbol pyramid but as a gesture, Newman's gesture to signify creation. As Strohmayer writes in his essay, 'Belonging: Spaces of Meandering Desire', 'to reflect is to see: oneself; is to experience contradiction in experiencing experience—a mesmerism of repetitive representation. When God made Adam, Michelangelo figured, he touched him. A gesture. No repetition.'[1038]

Broken Obelisk is a monumental sculpture more than twenty-five feet tall. Newman designs the sculpture in 1963-64 and in 1967 makes three identical editions that are displayed in Houston, in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and on the campus of the University of Washington in Seattle. *Broken Obelisk* is dedicated to Martin Luther King after his death and stands, Polcari suggests, as an 'antiwar monumentalization'.[1039] It expresses, Polcari continues, the period after the World War II and symbolizes 'the triumph of life over death and the human spirit over suffering'.[1040] The sculpture is made from six thousands pounds of Corten steel, a material that is designed to rust. Newman brings in two symbolic monumental objects a pyramid and an obelisk, two symbols that related traditionally with the memoralization of human life after death. The sculpture, however, represents a reversed obelisk or a zip where the top is broken and placed upon a pyramidal base. This unity of two opposite cultural symbols, the pyramid, a symbol of death, and the Obelisk, a pantheistic symbol of immortality and eternity, is not to be seen merely as a representation of the matter of rebirth or as a struggle of life and death.[1041] Newman in this work brings Egyptian and classical geometry together. But he de-emphasise the prominent status of the pyramid, which now functions both as the work and as the base, and the illusion of the infinite extension of the traditional obelisk which is now both upside down and broken. He thus overcomes, the static geometrical perfection of these symbols thus interrupting their metaphysical significance.[1042]

[1038] Strohmayer, op. cit., p. 167.
[1039] Stephen Polcari, 'Barnett Newman's Broken Obelisk', in *Art Journal*, vol. 53, no. 4, Sculpture in Postwar Europe and America, 1945-59, (Winter, 1994), pp. 48-55, (pp. 50-51).
[1040] Ibid., p. 48.
[1041] Ibid., p. 50-51.
[1042] Ibid. p. 55. With the minimal and systematic and op art the total absence of any reference to the external work these formulas and patterns seems to stand by themselves. The work of Vasarely, Space-rugó, is both impressing and confusing as you cannot discern the overall shape. What is hidden is part of the artist's intention, it is the secret that remain for the viewer to reveal. p. 238. According to Bär Newman in his work Broken Obelisk visualizes mathematics in the forms of two pyramids and a

What attracts the viewer's attention and creates, in Polcari's words, 'a dramatic central focus in the sculpture' is the point of the unity of the two symbols.[1043] This unity of the reverse obelisk and the pyramid becomes a metaphor of a fulfilled event. It becomes Newman's gesture to capture or represent the finitude of the human's existence, the past, present and future of the human's fate. For Heidegger it is precisely the gesture, the hand of drawing or writing, the hand of carving and sculpturing is what reveals to us the hidden aspect of the truth of things.[1044]

Newman seems to acknowledge the impossibility of presenting the absolute identity of being. What he manages to do however is to reveal some aspects of the being as both authentic and inauthentic existence of the human in modernity. As Strohmayer remarks,

> the question is not so much whether or not there is an absolute (identity) –for even if there were, its non placeable characteristics would not be ours to name –, but how we handle the slippery yet fundamental materiality of whatever remains….All we can do [then] is to show how the other side looks from our point of view.[1045]

Newman by acknowledging and projecting our inathenticity and homelessness shows us the authentic side of being. In Adorno's terms Newman projects a negative truth, it shows us what we lack. The truth of Newman's work cannot replace this lack but by revealing it signifies its important and our need for truth.

The negativity of the work of Newman is connected with the notion of abstraction in his work and modern art in general. Even if abstraction is developed in modern art as a contradiction to representation it can not be entirely separated from representation.

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prismatic body. Newman actually uses the golden ratio for this work. 'With the help of two special similar isosceles triangles we see that the apex of the pyramid divides the total height according to the golden ratio'. Gert F. Bär, 'Aspects of Geometry and Art', in *Journal for Geometry and Graphics*, Vol. 8 (2004), No. 2, p. 233.

[1043] Polcari, op. cit., p. 54.

[1044] Fóti, op. cit., p. 344. A gesture is what brings together the world and vision, the world, hand and glance. The hand of the artist is what reveals to vision what is hidden. For it is precisely the handwriting , the sign that Heidegger finds to unify the world and vision. As he argues, for Heidegger Asian art is a non-metaphysical art and 'western representation cannot reach to where Asian art and particularly Japanise art already is. Ibid., p. 341. This claim could also be said for Islamic art. Even if it does not have direct affinities with Asian art it is like Asian art non symbolic and non-representational and express through repetition of patterns a religious meaning.

[1045] Strohmayer, op. cit., p. 176.

Newman's task to overcomes aesthetics and representation of the world leads him to an art whose meaning comes forth in the 'revelation of one's relationship to oneself and the world'.[1046] Yet this revelation remains within the realm of aesthetics and representational but in a negative manner. According to Biro, it is a negativity that is essential for the understanding of both abstraction in art and modern art in its whole.[1047] As he writes,

> this negativity is that aspect of the modern art work that has the potential to stop or arrest the spectator's contemplation – to suggest, in other words, that acts of interpretation have limits and that art, like reality as a whole, also resists attempts to give it definite meanings.[1048]

But the negativity of modern art is essential to the concept of modern art. This is because, Biro remarks, this negativity 'is the source of its autonomy vis-à-vis the spectator'.[1049] Therefore, as much abstract modern art intents to be abstract it is 'always interpretatively recuperated' meaning that, it is always understood in terms of representation, as Biro puts it, it is 'treated as representing something'.[1050] Regardless of the negativity of abstraction, the meaning of abstract art will always be placed within the limits of representation, 'abstraction will always ultimately be recuperated by representation'.[1051] As Biro writes, 'no matter how 'other' a work of art may first appear, no matter how far outside of the conventional structures of 'making sense' it initially stands, it ultimately becomes representational'.[1052]

For Biro representation is not the mimesis or the idealization of the world and its objects but the reference or in Heideggerian terms the thematisation of the world and its objects. Abstract art does not imitate the world but allows it appear, it makes visible the hidden aspects of things. In painting the world appears as partial, enclosed into the two dimensions of its surface. Looking it from a distance we reveal what appears to be missing, 'what profane vision believes to be invisible'.[1053] In contrast

[1046] Glaser, op. cit., p. 418.
[1047] Biro, op. cit., p. 151.
[1048] Ibid.
[1049] Ibid.
[1050] Ibid.
[1051] Ibid.
[1052] Ibid., p. 153.
[1053] But this does not mean according to Merleau-Ponty that painting gives tactile properties to the world that depicts. In fact, Merleau-Ponty argues, painting not only does not evoke tactile at all but the

to painting sculpture manages to create a concrete view of the world, to come closer to the way things are, to the way they appear to us and to the relation of the human and the world. Its meaning and truth do not become visible merely through its materiality or three-dimensionality but also in its relation with place and space. Sculpture does not necessarily require to be seen from a distance in order to see what is missing. In order to see the other aspect of being of sculpture presupposes to acknowledge its space. In the work of Giacometti distance becomes part of its representation.

Conclusion: The representation of the holy in modernity

Newman's work represents subjectivity and 'the heroic-tragic subject of existentialist thought'.[1054] The religious dimension of Newman's work derives from the acknowledgement of our scale as human beings, in Heidegger's terms the awareness and thinking of our mortality in the here and now and the thinking of our being in relation to the realm that lies beyond us, as the realm of the mystical. And for Heidegger the mystical is the place in which 'the holy is to be found'.

Sculpture and art in general in modernity does not enclose and represent the world as a holy but as a destitute world in which gods are absent and the human is homeless. But the acknowledgement and thinking of the modern condition of world and of the human is what reveals the other side of truth, the one that is missing from the modern era. 'As soon as man *gives thought* to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that *calls* mortals into their dwelling'.[1055]

Art's failure to reveal the holiness of the world or, as Bernstein argues, art's 'lack of cognitive power' and its exclusion from truth becomes its 'source of power' its 'negative cognition'.[1056] As Bernstein writes:

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existence of the world upon painting becomes possible thanks to the limitation of the tactile. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p. 127.
[1054] Fóti, op. cit., p. 348.
[1055] Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', p. 159.
[1056] Bernstein, op. cit., p. 134.

> Modern art works, works of genius, thrive on their own essential impossibility, on their failure to be works of great art, to disclose a world; and they can do no other, for that is where art is. Hence through them we come to experience the sense of the periphery *as* a *periphery*, and thus the meaning of the sway in the centre. The art work solicits in remembrance and anticipation of a power, a potentiality of art…This potentiality when treated as present actuality—the presumptive truth—claim of the work—conceals the actual meaning of the work, its work of remembrance and anticipation. When this work is accomplished the present is brought to presence in its specificity; the impossibility of great art is the historical fate of art under the sway of technology. [1057]

Art in modernity is aware of its death and its failure to be the kind of art that it was in the past, but it seeks 'a potentiality of art'. This potentiality is what conceals its own individual meaning or truth, for Adorno, a negative truth and for Heidegger a metaphysical truth. Even if the modern age is the age that forgets true being, art could still enclose the event of truth, providing the possibility of coming closer to it. As Malpas writes, 'if a work of art can hold within itself the minimal instance of an event, it retains something that is irreducible to speculative comprehension'. [1058]

[1057] Ibid., p. 135.
[1058] The event of the truth of the art of avant-garde 'holds out against the constant threat of art's being reduced entirely to the laws of technological innovation and the marketplace'. Malpas,op. cit., p. 127.

Conclusion

The development of modern sculpture could be seen as a process towards the liberation of art from aesthetics cannons and techniques that kept sculpture petrified into a beautiful form. The modern sculptor aims to reach deeper the appearances of the world and his objects and to come closer to the truth of beings and of world. Each artist with his work seeks to reveal another aspect of this truth. Rodin aims to bring forth the expressivity and feeling of human being. Brancusi aims to present the core of things, Picasso with his construction their structure and furthermore Duchamp to make us rethink the essence of art and its boundaries with reality itself. Giacometti aims to capture the finitude of the human existence and the way the human's image appears to others. Barnett Newman aims to capture the same condition of the human's finitude nature, to present the anxiety and agony of the human in a world in which he is alone.

Modern sculpture and modern art seeks through abstraction to project the being of the human and world. But abstraction cannot surpass the limits of aesthetics and representation. Abstraction in modernity becomes a kind of negative representation. But it is this negativity of modern art that places it within the realm of art and furthermore allows the viewer to experience it and understand it. Due to this negativity modern art in Heidegger philosophy of art could be seen as a valid form of art, as an art that averts the metaphysics of symbolism and representation and furthermore could be seen as a mode of truth of being and world in the post religious era of modernity.

The homelessness and 'unplaceability' which characterises modern sculpture is its acknowledgment of the homelessness of the human in modernity an era without gods. Sculpture in modernity cannot as traditional sculpture immortalize gods but to isolate an aspect of the human's nature in the destitution of modernity. Modern sculpture and modern art represent the metaphysical condition of modernity, they reveal the truths that have passed into oblivion but also the position and freedoms of the human in modernity as a subject.

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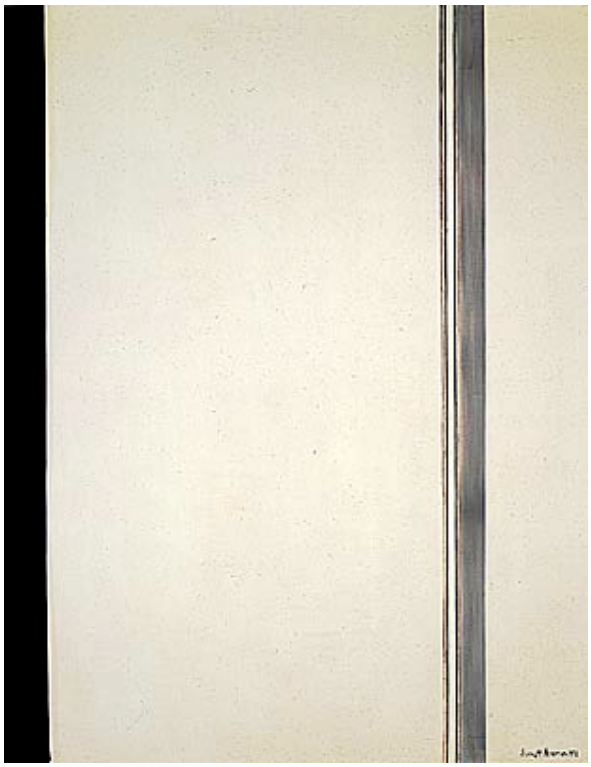

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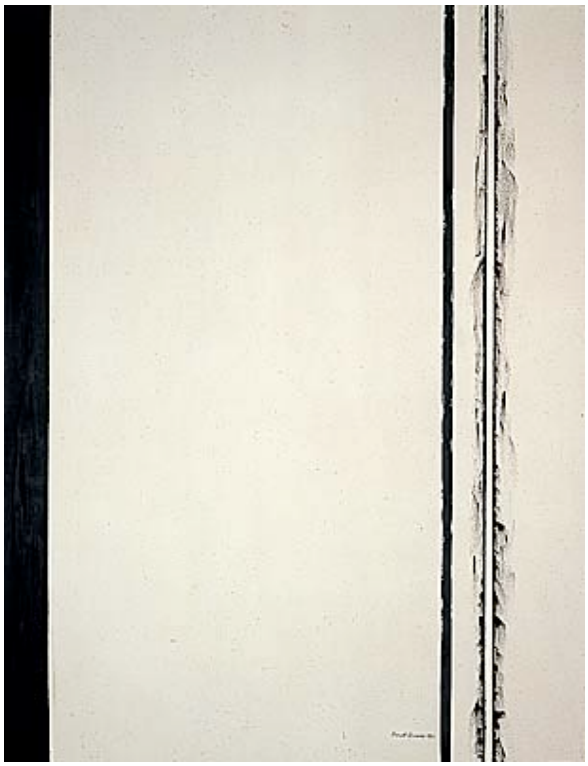

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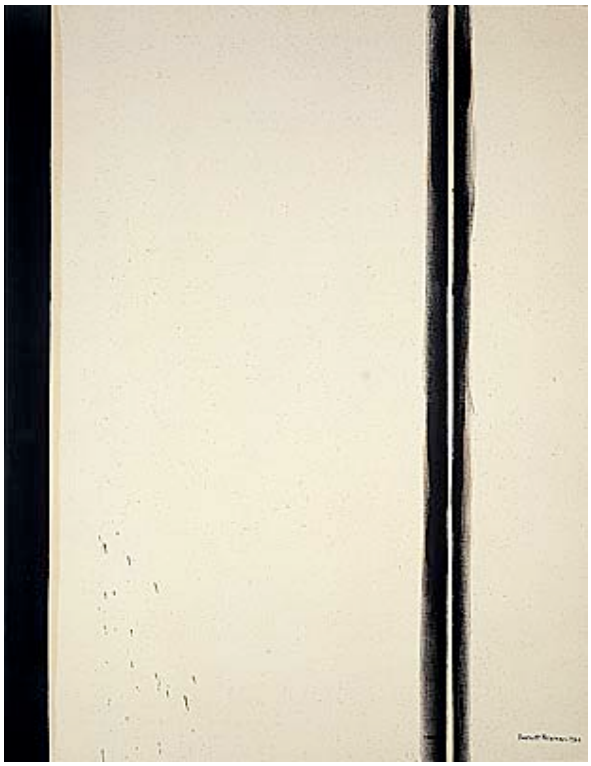

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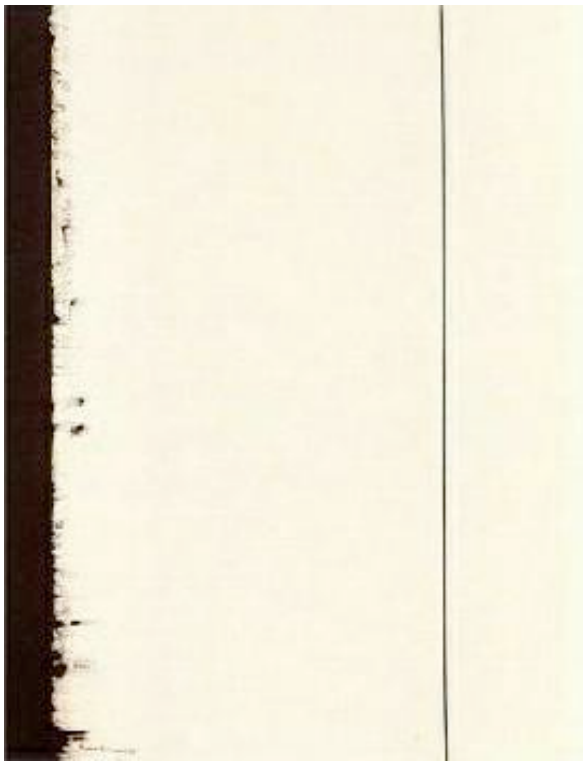

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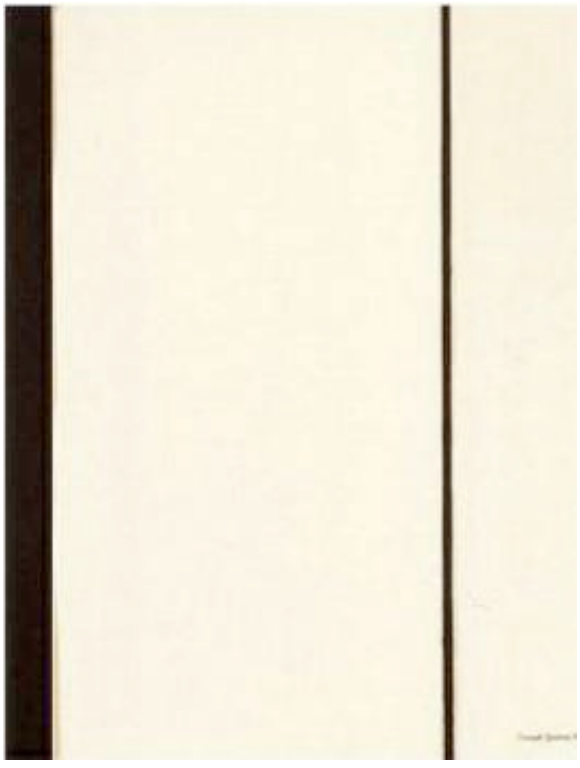

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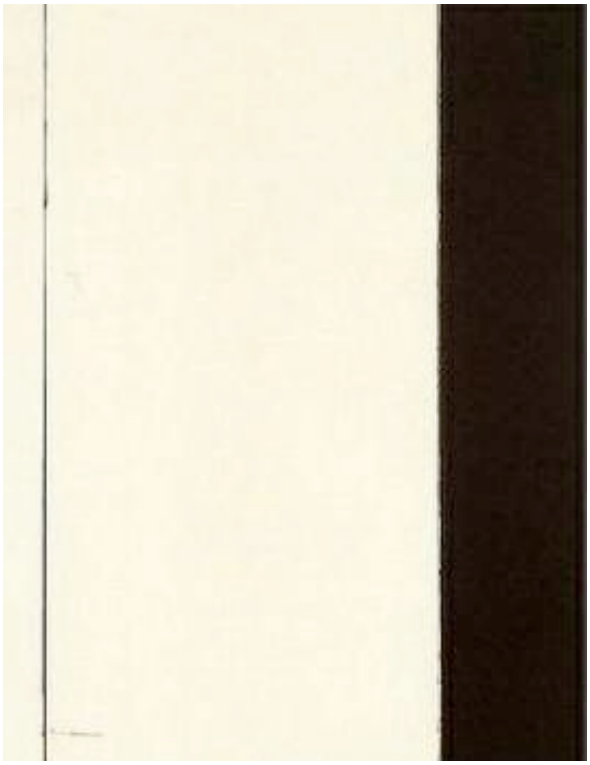

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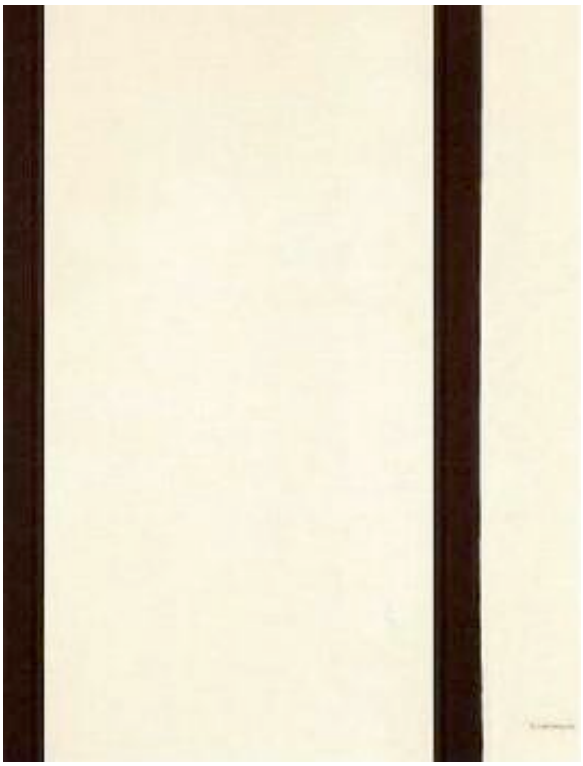

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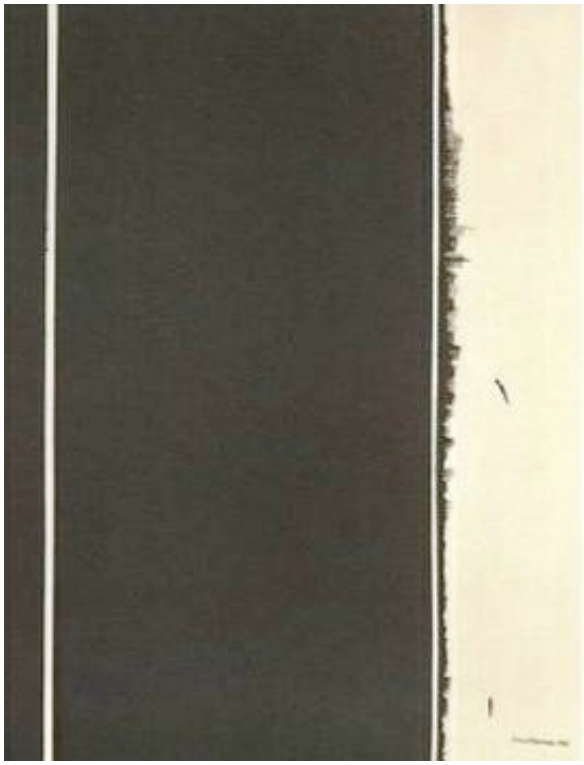

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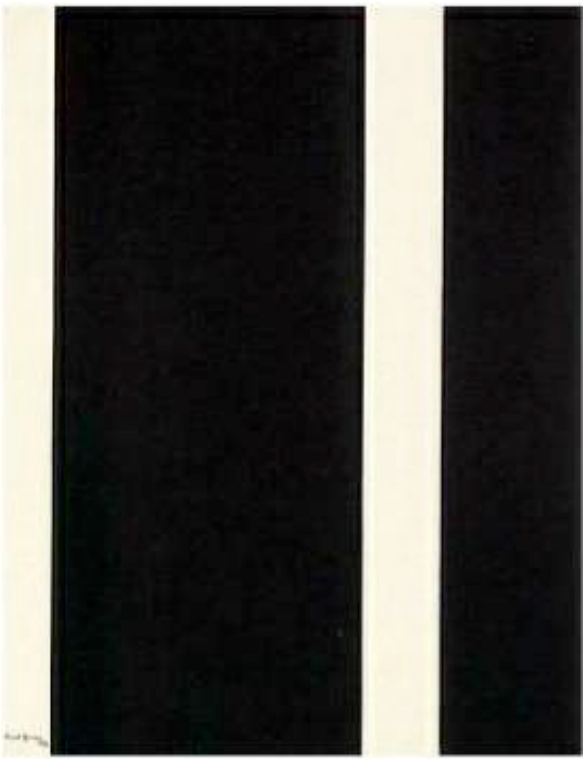

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