

Philosophy of aesthetics, nietzsche, avant-garde art essay

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“ Pure philosophical writing is the anti-image.” - Agamben

In exploration of frameworks of both covert and overt manifestations of indeterminacy, these concerns are revealed, as representations, in philosophies of aesthetic iconoclasm and art, artifacts as symbolic, and modern issues related to Being and subjectivity, both of which are analogous to Nietzsche's model of the relationship. For example, tragedy, comprised of Dionysian and Apollonian forces which combine in a chiasmic unity of oppositions, according to Professor Fred Ulfers, are characterized by Nietzsche as beautiful, singular and factual on the one hand (Apollonian), and sublime, multiple, and fictional on the other (Dionysian). What is reflected as desire and unformed wilderness arises as art and various forms of representation.

This representation outwardly of what is referred to as a transformation into sign inwardly caused the interior to become visible. Hegel's meaning in this instance is transitive, but confronts a 'signifying act which is double and contradictory;' the individual is at once 'the inner individuality and not its expression,' and 'something external, a reality free from the inner,' thus, 'something quite different from the inner.'"

This subject matter here finds its vast concept focused in its grounding in two synthetic parallel models. The first explores the manifestations of the "I" as a representative relationship of art and fact, recalling Aristotle's use of *rhythmos* (movement) and *schema* (fixity), in which he taught the meaning of the subject. The second is modeled on an abstraction of the American Frontier in which, as a metaphorical in-between marks a line of division

between history and settlement on one side, and wilderness and future on the other. This concept is further discussed in relationship to Plato's *methexes*, discussed by artist/philosopher Sam Weber as the participle, which partitions, and in doing so, creates a new relationship. Together these models encompass the autonomous meaning shelter in and disclosed by discussion of chronology and topology.

Foucault describes a heterotopia as creating either " a space of illusion that exposes every real space" or " a space that is other" relating to a frontier. The imbedded " I" between art and fact is analogous to that frontier. Analyses of art/I/fact where I continually gives up its presence to certain otherness of the future and the art factual manifestations of the past is in likeness to the former; thus, the idea of an autonomous I as a sign is fruitless.

In art, autonomy in terms of meaning has been an ideal since the period of the Enlightenment, argued here that this ideal reaches its supreme articulation in the avant-garde of the 20th century, and partially as the result of psychology and the widespread acceptance of the subconscious, popularly understood as a complete mind underneath the conscious mind of an individual. As the avant-garde syntactically represents the advance front of culture, and a break from classicism, the subsequent development of the museum of modern art, which preserves avant-garde genealogy, results in a history of autonomy, the methods of its disclosure, and the development in linking autonomy to ideology. In this way, the history of autonomy leads back to the history of display. One can then, I argue, trace the traditional

sequence of religious iconoclasm whereby the text of an event is understood as the productive source triggering a physical aesthetic presence; hence, causing the original referent to be destroyed.

Donald Preziosi reminds us that materialization reveals the “fabricatedness of what is claimed as non-fabricated,” this being the basis of iconoclasm. The material representation of the singular concept becomes subject to endless variations, which ultimately undermine the idea. It is in relation to this that I discuss the “will to wilderness” as one tending to be an apparent obfuscation as a tool for making known a deeper meaning which finds its aesthetic salvation and autonomy in the willful disunity of appearance and expectation. In this way, the I as a hypostatized Apollonian referent of Being gives up its certainty to the Dionysian multiplicity of aesthetic fabrication. As with Derrida’s difference, complete meaning is continually avoided, leading us to an infinite experience of present time.

A unique feature of the unknown is a stable identity, whereas Being and experience are referential. This is why the definite article is often appended to the specificity of that which cannot be known. The will to wilderness is thus a will to grant the present this stability only its very undoing and annihilation can accomplish. Here I may argue that the I, the frontier, the present, and the obscure work of art each give up their certainty to the unknown before them. This is a partial insight into Nietzsche’s aphorism, “Being begins in every now.”¹

Nietzsche’s aesthetics application for the formed and the unformed as a parallel to frontier and wilderness is equally illuminated by Plato’s *methexes*,
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as described Weber. The idea of the later being the “with” in *parting with* found its relationship to the discussion of difference by Heidegger in *Identity and Difference*. His “clearing” provided another parallel to the frontier, when considered as the ground which allows a relationship between past and future; I found Hegel’s “plasticity” particularly connective. This then overlapped with Heidegger’s simile of the “clearing” in which *dasein* presents itself. In trying to understand the relationship of the embedded subject as a material phenomenon, I found the persistent, inexorable challenge with Wolfgang Schumacher’s “homo generator.” The more exploration, the more I found myself uncovering territory that already existed by former thinkers. The more I understood what they had to convey, the more it was revealed to me that the answers to the questions plaguing me throughout my scholastic career lie within these ideas.

Pivotal to my philosophical queries regarding self discovery during this process led to this very simple question: If Dionysian and Apollonian forces are bound in chiasmic unity, a figure eight of sorts according to Ulfers, then where is the very limit where one force can become the other?

The answer that they are bound in tragic unity leads to the belief that one can be found in the other.

As example, accept for a moment that in the process of mapping--whether a landscape, a canvas, or a universe--a prepositional relationship between bodies is produced. As though a process of mitosis were taking place, the singular divides into the multiple with a frontier in between. Space is encroaching into frontier, moving its horizon forward and outwardly expanding. This would provide a new shape for wilderness which, in turn, <https://assignbuster.com/philosophy-of-aesthetics-nietzsche-avant-garde-art-essay/>

would provide a (new) understanding of the known world. But wilderness, by its very character, cannot be known, thus, cannot be mapped. If we allow the known of its relational identity by allowing uncertainty, its definite article, then we might immediately begin to understand the process by which each one of us univocally travels from moment to moment by giving up the certainty of the present to the future. It is for this reason that what is expected in the unknown is the eternal return of the same.

Real examples include the search for the original Garden of Eden and the Fountain of Youth in wilderness, the myths of Ancient Egypt of a heaven beyond life in which individuals remain eternally young, and the discovery of biographical meaning beyond the indeterminacy of the artistic surface.

What originated as two separate investigations--one into historical understandings of wilderness and how these affected pictorial and textual depictions of place on the American Frontier, and the other into the meaning of artistic creations designed to capsize meaning--ended up as this singular exploration of the brink of spatial and temporal horizons where the systematic intersections before/after and cause/effect are conflated.

To bring these abstract concepts together has been an enormously daunting task in the face of the innumerable parallels uncovered in the philosophical traditions utilized by me as author of this work. What was accomplished is my understanding that *difference* is not *otherness*, but eternally returning to the same, the *origin*. In a theoretical sense, this is the true meaning of tragic unity, according to Nietzsche. While this work originally sought to discover the limitations of such a unity through an investigation of real-world

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examples, what was uncovered is something more insidious...within the frameworks that shelter and reveal autonomous meaning, I was continually brought back to the question of why we might hold a concept of sovereignty in the first place, and, what might be lost in this rejection of the amorphous multiple?

The answer arrived through a study of the compelling urge to reveal the autonomy of meaning in the anti-aesthetics of the iconoclastic surface. The will to wilderness is, ultimately, a death drive, to uncover even in multiplicity a meaning that brings itself to its own grave.

1 Quoted in Tom Darby, Bela Egyed, and Ben Jones, Nietzsche and the rhetoric of nihilism: essays on interpretations, language and politics (Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1989) pg. 43.