

The Aesthetics of Reflection, Force, Animation, and Flux

The Will of Appearance
Vitality, Rhythm, and
Sensation

Emil Bakalli

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Professor: Christoph Menke, New York 2008

EMIL BAKALLI

The logic of the visible at the service of the invisible...my work inspires, and is not to be defined—it places us, as does music, in the *ambiguous* realm of the *undetermined*.

—Odilon Redon

Noise became music, only by being organized, and that such an organization presupposes a conscious human act...To *listen* is an effort, and just to *hear* is no merit.

—Igor Stravinsky

Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies; the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul... when I see colors I heard music.

—Wassily Kandinsky

How can aesthetics be correlated and intertwined into the web, or even into the whorl-labyrinth of perception, and thus; entangled in the logic of comprehending the notion of: imagination, of fantasy, of seeing, of vision, of beauty, of form, of sound, of color, of rhythm, of composition, of writing, of line, of shape, of creativity, of perception, of sensation, of vitality, and that of art-making in general, so to speak? Is it cultural, individual, institutional, universal, or just natural? Can aesthetical processes be *cognitive* or are they just *sensuous*? Is aesthetics revolving only in between the domain of *subject* versus *object*, or is there something more in this dichotomy? In this analytical discourse, my aim is to present and to show that, the notion of aesthetics operates in three major aspects: 1) that aesthetics emerges from the obscurity of human condition, leading to the consolidation of the aesthetics to human culture; aesthetics is a force, a play, a vitality, and a precarious schizophrenic and obscure inner ecstatic evanescence that operates *in itself*, and it is not affected from exterior or mechanical forcers/laws in order to immerse and exist; 2) is that aesthetics cannot be cognized, nor can it be measured, nor can it be an institution creating a static hierarchical form and appearance; 3) aesthetics is not anymore just the relation of subject versus object—there is introduced another factor, that of *subject* versus *culture*, *subject* versus *society*,

subject versus language, subject versus sexuality, et cetera. The third aspect has diverged from the subject vs. object structure of aesthetical thought because; it has been a concern of Heidegger and Foucault. My main position in this regard, is the repudiation of the aesthetics of cognition, advocated and formulated in the modern sense of aesthetics, by Alexander Baumgarten, in his book *Aesthetica* (1750). I strongly reject the notion that aesthetics can be measured as we see it in Aristotle's approach too: Aristotle believed that the beauty of nature and the beauty of art are different—Aristotle also, believed that the aesthetical idea is represented even mathematically with a given *structure* and *content*. So for Aristotle, aesthetics and the beautiful are embedded into the domain of reason because, content exists. Therefore, Baumgarten and Aristotle are not far apart: their aim is to rationalize and structure the realm of aesthetics—to cognize it. Another interesting figure here, which I will also reject, is Descartes or his dualistic Cartesian notion of mind and body or *sensuous imagination* versus *clear/distinct/reasonable* logical thinking of aesthetics. That being said though, what becomes obvious here, is that my philosophical and aesthetical repudiation will lead my arguments especially against cognitive aesthetics as Baumgarten would have it, and the Cartesian dualism and Aristotle's measurement and the given content of the aesthetical domain. My approach will be this: how aesthetics really operates in the reality of human activity, experience, in the spontaneity and the chance of human actions reflecting not cognitively, but by the very obscure, uncertain, flux, precarious force and vitality/animation of aesthetics as operating *in-itself*, without any extra and exterior force. In other words, the aesthetical understanding of Herder, Kant, Nietzsche, and Deleuze (although they have their own differences about aesthetical judgments, they have enough in common so that I could consider them as one line of the aesthetical argument: force, vitality, élan, intoxication, ecstasy, activity, flux, and the sensuous moments, etc.; all are to be found in their aesthetical articulations), will be my main support regarding my argument against cognitive and rational aesthetics.

At the end, I will approach the problem of aesthetics from the perspective of French Post-Modernism; where a central figure will be Foucault's observation believing that aesthetics has been immersed in the *power* of ideological formation—*institution-colonization of subject*, and that of German Hermeneutics where the milestone will be Heidegger who emphasizes the notion that aesthetics cannot otherwise but be *individual*—one sees the culture he/she lives in and then he/she is oriented and then *interrogates* and *interpreters* the events of subjectivity of that particular culture. Regarding the third aspect of aesthetics, I will favor Heidegger's approach—of *individuality* vs. Foucault's *power-colonization* forms of aesthetics. I will repeat that, the

force of my argument will especially be Nietzsche's and Deleuze's aesthetical understanding/positions.

The Aesthetical condition of Aristotle, Descartes, Baumgarten & Leibniz, in relation to Herder

What is of a mega interest here is that, the pathways that the aesthetical domain is perceived and formed by Aristotle, Baumgarten, Descartes, and Leibniz are not the same; and yet, they have certain important aesthetical features that I will repudiate, and this is the reason why I see them as a *trilogy—tetralogy* of aesthetical arguments; as that which, I will make my case against. The mediating point for the moment being, it is going to be the aesthetical concepts of Herder (Herder will be the bridge to my final argument which also, it is the most significant one). It is important to mention here that, Leibniz is the one that initially diverged from the other three philosophers above. Why did I choose the philosophical concepts of Herder? I chose him because he paved the way for Kant and Nietzsche or latter on for Deleuze; but also, for braking from the notion of rationality of the aesthetical judgment. Thus, we have a linear aesthetical progression here. I said that Aristotle believed that beauty has content and therefore it could be measured. Descartes on the other hand, states that the beautiful has no content and thus, it cannot include or be defined by measurement. In other words, the Aristotelian notion of aesthetics and beautiful is bound to *content*, which the opposite could be said for Descartes—no content. Descartes makes an interesting statement writing "To Mersenne", 18 March 1630: ...“You ask whether one can discover the essence of beauty...in general ‘beautiful’ and ‘pleasant’ signify simply a relation between our judgments and an object; and because the judgments of men differ so much from each other, neither beauty nor pleasant can be said to have any define measure” (19). Descartes is very clear about the idea that the ‘beautiful’ and the ‘pleasant’ cannot be determinant or defined clearly—no content. In relation to imagination, he will claim that imagination is an area that is passive and is *not involved actively*.

What does it mean? For Descartes imagination is not the same thing as reason is and therefore, we cannot know the beautiful through reasoning or cognition: aesthetically speaking, beauty does not pertain to measurement or content, as for example Aristotle would have it. Here we have a total break from the Aristotelian notion of cognizable beauty. This is the most radical-aesthetical shift that Descartes takes, and for this, he is credited as the one that initiated the modern way of thinking. That being said, Descartes emphasizes the principle that imagination is productive, and it produces

various elements of difference, of innovation, of obscurity, and of creativity, i.e. imagination is that which breaks with representation, it breaks with resemblance—it brings freedom.

The notion of dualism that Descartes puts forward is this: the obscure-sensuous imagination versus the more defined or clear-distinct reasonable action of cognition, i.e. cognition/reason vs. sensuous/imagination. Descartes' *passivity* of Imagination is stimulated from the exterior forces so then, reason creates the possibility for us to activate our imagination; i.e. sensuality is not a field of action but rather of reaction. However, reason is just the stimulus which activates the inner order or the esoteric condition of mind, and then, imagination opens up where the sensuous or imagination looms in creativity. It is reason/cognition that which is responsible because it activates the inner mode of being—reason is to gain knowledge and to Act. In *Descartes Philosophical Writings*, "Rules for the Directions of The Mind", "Rule XII" he states: In ourselves there are just four faculties that can be used for Knowledge: understanding, imagination, sense, and memory. Only the understanding is capable of perceiving the truth, but it must be added by imagination, sense, and memory...the power of cognition...is just as distinct from the body as a whole as blood is from bone or a hand from an eye...The cognitive power is always one and the same; if it applies itself, along with the imagination, to the common sensibility, it is said to remember; if it does this in order to form new images, it is said to imagine; if finally, it acts by itself, it is said to understand."

From the above statement, we can clearly see that there is a tremendous significance that Descartes puts into the role of understanding, which in itself is the domain of Reason, and of cognitive powers. Imagination and the sensuous field is totally subordinated to the power of reason; because, reason moves us to act and that reason in itself is the motor or the engine of all that happens in our imagination and the sensuous. It is the faculty of understanding where all evolve and where the truth can be attained—the other three faculties, i.e. imagination, sense, and memory are just supplementing the grand role of Understanding—of cognition. The power relation is clear, where the faculty of understanding/reason stands high on the pedestal of the responsible action and thus of responsibility. The question that comes up is this: how aesthetics raises itself as a phenomenon of *sensuous* and that of pleasure while lifting our emotions and/or stimulating our imagination? If we follow the concept of Descartes, then we are bound to fail—we will not completely comprehend in depth the core and the physiognomy of the aesthetical [*aisthesis*] sedimentation.

Alexander Baumgarten in his book, *Aesthetica* (1750) introduced another notion of aesthetics [*aisthesis*]. He stands as an anti-Cartesian, because Baumgarten's aesthetical approach is a teleological principle, i.e., aesthetics implies the knowledge of the sensuous. It is precisely this notion that Descartes wanted to reject and avoid. Also, Baumgarten moves far apart from the Cartesian idea precisely because, from the moment we believe that there is knowledge of aesthetics, we are diametrically opposed to Descartes' idea of aesthetical existence. What Baumgarten does though, he emphasizes the principle that the aesthetic realm becomes a "theory", it is an art, so that the "sensuous could be cognized"—aesthetics is another kind of logic and it is named as the *second* logic. Baumgarten puts forward the aspect of sensation and the importance of it—while Descartes downplayed the power and the importance of sensuous or of the imagination; the action of reason is the application to the theory. In other words, Descartes' aesthetics or the sensuous and the object cannot play in the field of active; but rather, the sensuous happens to be already there—the subject/ego can be active "only" in the field of rationality, i.e. perception is happening to me, I cannot perceive myself. On the other hand, Baumgarten grounds himself around the notion that practice comes before theory—in the art of making we can talk about aesthetics, but before we do that we make work first. That means that the "subject" is made—it is a social phenomenon and a social activity and the effect of processes or practice. Thus for Baumgarten there are two faculties of cognition: 1) the higher faculty is the logic/rational [*noeta*]; 2) the lower one is the field of aesthetics [*aisthesis*], or of the sense, rhetoric, presentation, writing, and etc. The argument of Baumgarten is that the soul has a faculty or capacity to cognize, where the subject is used for the instance of "power". This is a teleological grasp of aesthetics, but what we also see here, is that Foucault would apply the same notion regarding rationalization or as Foucault would call it, the colonization of "subjectivity" captured, imprisoned or immersed within the cultural and the political system. Although, Foucault will change the existence and the situation of subject by substituting the dichotomy of subject vs. object, with the formula of subject vs. culture, subject vs. sexuality/bio-power subject vs. language, and etc.

I will return back a bit latter elaborating much closer on Foucault's thought. This divergence between Descartes and Baumgarten is shared by other philosophical figures as well, and particularly by Herder, who was against the aesthetical rationality of Baumgarten. Herder confronts both of them. In *Selected Writings on Aesthetics* Herder claims that: "Is the feeling of beauty inborn in us? Yes, for all I care! But only as aesthetic nature, which has the capacities and organs to perceive sensuous perfection; which delights in developing these capacities..." (197). Herder's argument is that every one of us is born with the capacity to understand and possess the faculties of beauty—of

aesthetics; although, these capacities might vary from one to the other. Thus, the aesthetical capacities are an innate phenomenon—it is the obscure domain that Herder emphasizes here. We see that Herder totally diverges from Aristotle, Descartes, Baumgarten, and as he would name it, from the Leibnizian chess-board regarding the principles of aesthetics.

For the moment being, it will be Herder's aesthetical approach, that which, I will support my arguments. As I mentioned earlier a bit earlier, Aristotle believed that aesthetics is that which has content and is *measured mathematically*. In Albert Hofstadter & Richard Kuhns' Book, *Philosophies of Art & Beauty*, in *Metaphysics' Book XIII*, Aristotle states: "Now since the good and the beautiful are different..., those who assert that the mathematical sciences say nothing of the beautiful or the good are in error...The chief forms of the beautiful are order and symmetry and definiteness..." (96). Aristotle couldn't have been clearer than he is about the notion of aesthetical understanding—in this respect, he does not differ from Plato following him in many aspects about the notion of the beautiful. First, he supports the idea the art is a technical form of making, that there is contained the essence of measure. Thus, without measurement and aesthetical content of art cannot be exercised in its entire potential. Aristotle sees art through the prism of mathematical symmetry and as an inherent content—art in Aristotle's view is structured and represented as a cognitive or a rational scientific process; although, it is creative. It is creative as long as applies to mathematical understanding as well. As I proceeded a bit earlier, Descartes is not far apart from the Platonic and the Aristotelian notion of aesthetics. Although, Descartes diverges from both of them because, he does not supports the idea that there is a given content or measurement in the beautiful—he creates a dualistic concept that degrades/downplays the sensuous or the imaginative moments. Descartes' subordination of sensuous/obscure/imagination or of the confused realm of mind to the more distinct/clear or the reasonable field seems to be the answer. He gets way with his idea of "Understanding", i.e. of the "Rational", saying that; the sensuous is still operating on its own, but only from an exterior force of action—the imaginative or the sensuous is *passive* and it cannot act on its own, i.e. it is not independent and self-sustaining. Therefore, the obscure sense is controlled by the more reasonable act of reasoning/cognizing.

Now, with respect to Leibniz's canonized principle of the aesthetical and the beautiful, we have his structure looking like this: we have to kinds of ideas; 1) the *obscure* or the unknown/dark zone of our mind, 2) the *clear/clarity* which is branched in two subdivisions or pathways—the *confused* (sensuous) and the *distinct* (scientific).

Leibniz operates simultaneously in between tree-four zones of aesthetic ideas, like a *trilogy* or, to be more precise a sort of *tetralogy* of mind, as if it is a four dimensional mind in operation (obscure, clear-confused-distinct) living behind the dualistic notion of Descartes. Leibniz structures the irrational and imagination as something “active”, so there are non-conscious perceptions—we have perceptions even when we are non-conscious. In Leibniz we see that there is constituted the notion of *je ne sais quoi* [I don’t know what] that sparks from the unconsciousness and leads it to be *active*. Leibniz repudiates/apostatizes Descartes’ dualism, because for Leibniz *action* is found in the internal/inner world, i.e. perception is not bound to the field of consciousness and reason.

In *The Monadology*, Leibniz finds the Cartesian principle of mind-body very dysfunctional saying that: “...the natural changes of the Monads come from an internal principle, since an external cause can have no influence upon their inner being” (223). A bit further Leibniz continues: “The passing condition, which involves and represents a multiplicity in the unit [*unite*] or in the simple substance, is nothing but what is called *Perception*, which is to be distinguished from Apperception or Consciousness, as well afterwards appear. In this matter the Cartesian view is extremely defective, for it treats as non-existent those perceptions of which we are not conscious aware” (224). What are we seeing here, is that the Cartesian principle cripples our capacity to let our inner world function on its own, and that there is a plethora and a plenitude of internal perceptions that we simply are not able to constantly identify; however, they do exist and penetrate in our perceptive world—they act. The internal perceptions that Leibniz speaks of, seems to be found in the *confused zone* of our ideas because, they are temporal sensuous perceptions; they are instances/segments of ideas, they cannot be defined in generality: perception is an immediate action/activity—it is an unknown internal process not depended from reason/cognition. With that in mind, I will turn my locus on Herder and how he interprets all we have said so far.

Herder’s aesthetical polemics is directed towards Aristotle, Baumgarten, Descartes, and Leibniz too. What Herder does is that, he eliminates many sub-structures and really focuses on the [*obscure*], as that which is the most fundamental element of the aesthetical perception. For him *obscurity* and *feeling* are the ones that matter the most, in the order of human mind, and then, gradually cognition is formed and it occupies the cultural domain of human activities. He asks if the notion of subjectivity is the right approach and if the needed answer is to be found there. If Leibniz created the structure of 1) “obscure” vs. 2) the “clear/*confused-distinct*, Herder creates his own idea only on the notion of the *obscure vs. confused* cutting off the rest. So, the clarity of the

cognitive faculties is subordinated because it is too rational and does not help the understanding of aesthetical perception. Herder emphasizes the concept of inner [*force*] and that the beautiful is not and it cannot be cognitive; but rather, it is the feeling of obscure that really matters, i.e. aesthetics cannot be; both the making of art and also, at the same time the theoretical-aesthetical domain of art: either one of the other but not both simultaneously. That being said, in his book *Philosophical Writings*, Herder seeks to introduce the concept of *inner force* as a *unity* or *singular* one, stating: “Quite generally, nothing in nature is separated, everything flows onto and into everything else through imperceptible transitions; and certainly, what life is in the creation is in all shapes, forms, and channels only a single spirit, a single flame...The inner human being with all his obscure forces, irritations, and drives is only *single*” (195). We see that Herder with one single strike fiercely opposes the Cartesian dualism, Baumgarten’s idea of cognizing the realm of the beautiful or of imaginative, thus the sensuous; Leibniz’s “chess-board” of mind, and finally the Greek way of thinking having in mind Plato and especially the Aristotelian notion that there is a content in beauty and that it can be measured mathematically. Herder’s single strike is opened and directed into multiple directions and it is effective.

What Herder sees is that, human existence and human nature coexists as a unity and a single form complimenting one another. For him the aesthetic nature is a process, it is a flux of continues metamorphoses and change rearranging itself into/onto a new one—it is endless where temporality drives infinitely. The concept of force for Herder is defined by expressing itself as a single spirit and flame. It is not an entity but a process and *it is not a biological* force either. Therefore, Herder’s force of aesthetic nature is not to be mystified as a force; but rather, it exists only in its inner realization. It cannot be a precise form. It is a form that endlessly regains and reforms by producing itself or better to say, it is a self-sustaining force transgressing itself, and i.e. it produces out of itself something else operating in a constant transformation as a restless vital movement. Herder claims: “In the deep abyss of irritation and of such obscure forces lies in human beings and animals the seed of all passion and enterprise.” (195) It is this inner unseen spark of our activity that we do not ever get to see, but we can feel it in the results of our actions and passions evolving in the depths of our very core and existence. This is the force of life itself, it is the light and energy of the sun that our existence relies upon, it nourishes the sequences of our obscurity leading us to a constant progression, and into new happenings and directions becoming the other in both form and force. Therefore, there is no possible way for the “subject” to master this inner flux of infinite and endless transformation.

The point is that, in Herder's mind there is no opening for external forces because the inner is moving itself—there is no such law in this internal force because it is interchangeable within-itself. Another way to say it is that, it is not externally regulated and most significantly, this is not a teleological process, because the physical laws do not apply in and on it. Herder strongly opposes Leibniz's aesthetics coining it as a *chess-board* and a philosophy of emptiness where the substance does not exist. Herder believes that human mind is self-reliant where a unity of inner force is attained and in a way it is not a process of mechanical Darwinian technicality bound to external laws, i.e. it is a force of "play" as an infinity of temporal unfolding of the play or a sunset of endless transformations. Regarding this notion of Herder's force of aesthetics of nature we could also say that, it is an instantaneous perplexity of continuous becoming.

It is fair enough to say that, in *A Monument to Baumgarten*, Herder has a profound distaste/disdain (although, ironically enough it started as a monumental writing) regarding the philosophical inquiries of Baumgarten and especially his notion of aesthetics. Herder states: "...he seeks a philosophical definition of poetic art and turns to psychology and enumerates with philosophical economy the cognitions that contribute to the poetic...this was Baumgarten's great insight—to apportion to poetry its own domain in the human spirit, in the soul, and to demarcate its boundaries exactly" (42, 43). What Herder sees in Baumgarten is his terminological and psychological sterile desire to determine the boundaries of poetic field and cognize it as a new science of mind/logic. What happens here with Baumgarten's aesthetics is that the cognitive and rational analysis has a stake, aiming to represent the sensuous as its own field. As we have seen so far in our analyses, Herder is totally opposed to this idea. He is privileging the *obscurity of feeling* as the most natural and absolute condition of human life, progressing gradually into the more rational and cultural environment—no human is born rational, we learn within culture much later on as life progresses: culture is the presentation of nature and vice versa.

Kant, Heidegger, and Foucault in relation to Nietzsche and Deleuze

We can say that Kant and Nietzsche find themselves closer to the arguments of Herder than any others'. Also, Deleuze's aesthetical approach is closer to Nietzsche's arguments than any others': be it as it may, insofar as far as we have analyzed the

aesthetic platforms and understanding of the previous thinkers; I will arrange Kant, Nietzsche and Deleuze in one cluster, at least for the moment being. Starting with Kant in *Critique of Judgment*, there are three significant dimensions/stages or modes of his aesthetical judgment, pointing out the notion that the *aesthetics is a taste of [reflection]*: 1) is the reflection of *sensus communis* which is to say, it is that which is valid for everyone and everyone has the same understanding of taste—it leads to pleasure and it cannot be a private reflection, rather it is a public feeling, a general agreement and the same experience of participants in regards to aesthetical phenomenon; 2) *mere reflection*, and be it as it may, it is a reflection that never gets us anywhere, that means that it is a reflection that roams around infinitely and plays around endlessly—it does not lead us to a concept because it operates in the zone of animation and vitality; 3) *self-reflection*, in other words we can say that it deals with my-self as I am aware of a mode of existence or being—it is not pleasure in the “object” itself, but rather, pleasure in myself as I self-reflect.

These three Kantian dimensions of the aesthetical taste as reflection are the milestone of Kant’s project of aesthetics. Regarding the first mode of reflection (*sensus communis*) Kant states: “But under the *sensus communis* we must include the Idea of a *communal* sense, *i.e.* of a faculty of judgment, which in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of the mode of representation of all other men in thought; in order as it were to compare its judgment with the collective Reason of humanity...”. (101) What we can distill and understand from this, it is the notion of universal comprehension of Taste as aesthetics of reflection; but also, what Kant wants to project is that, this universal grasp of the aesthetical judgment needs the mutual coexistence and co-operation or agreement of “Understanding (Reason)” and “Imagination (sensuous)”, as given mental powers in order for the “general law” to exist and, if that is the case then, this unity of *reason* (Understanding) and *sensuousness* (Imagination) as a taste can be called *a priori*, regarding the inter-subjectivity and interconnectedness of feelings that are not necessarily linked to a specific Idea/concept. Furthermore, in solidifying the aspect of coexistence of Understanding and Imagination in regards to second mode of reflection (*mere reflection*) Kant claims that: “...pleasure in the Beautiful is neither a pleasure of enjoyment nor of a law-abiding activity, nor even of rational contemplation in accordance with Ideas, but mere reflection.” (100) As I said a bit earlier, in regards to the concept of *mere reflection*, there dominates the perpetual kinetic mode of vitality and animation—it is a state of play where no rules are constituted as static, but a flow of endless processes. However, what comes up again and again in Kant’s strategy of the aesthetic judgment is that; Understanding which is to say, the domain of intellection/cognition and Imagination as the realm of instinct/discernment, must be

harmonious and not hegemonic in relation to one another. That means that Kant is not far apart from Herder's notion of *flame* and the *singularity* and *unity of force*—where no concept exists; but rather, the field of obscurity and existence *in-itself*.

What is of interest here is that, Kant does not perpetuate the aspect of power as Foucault would emphasize it. The question is: what Kant wants? What Kant aims at, it is the *play* of Understanding and Imagination as one unity; and yet existing apart from one another—but playing in a parallel mode feeding each other's desires to conceptualize and to sense through intuition and contingency. So then we could also say that, the Kantian aesthetics is a "self-sustaining law" which is an outcome of Understanding and Imagination, but a free law without boundaries, i.e., the autonomy of the aesthetics of imagination is a law of/on its own and thus free; the aesthetics of imagination is not a law of cognition as Baumgarten would say—cognition/reason also, cannot operate on its own faculties either in order for aesthetical sparks to exist. Be it as it may, Kant emphasizes very strongly the notion of *aesthetic autonomy in the realm of Imagination*. In other words, the aesthetics of pleasure does not depend from the act of cognition; however, it does not mean that it cannot cognize—keeping in mind that I am able to cognize, but the aesthetics of imagination is not cognition either.

One could say that this is the paradox of Kant, where both domains are *autonomous*, but both attuned or harmonized together as a unity. But what Kant really wants, is to attain the unity of Understanding and Imagination as if they are to *play* together infinitely or eternally. And this mutual play comes through experience, because it is the happenings of experience that enables the collaboration of both, e.g. the man and the world. In Kant's logic, we have to overcome the Cartesian dualism which Kant so much rejects. Finally, Kant's thinking is that Understanding (Reason) does not overpower Imagination (sensuousness) and vice versa—*there is no split of the two*, rather the *reconciliation* of both fields. Regarding these domains, the difference between Kant and Herder is that Herder was pro-split—Herder overemphasized the aspect and the significance of the "obscure" (imagination) more than reason. Although, Herder too, wanted a unity of force as a unity, but that singularity was predominantly overwhelmed by the indeterminate/contingent sensuousness. Kant does not want this sort of partition of either one. Kant does not perceive the relation of power and domination of either one mode of being and existence. Therefore, with Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment, we have at once the rejection of Aristotelian notion of the beautiful, the Cartesian dualism and the passivity of imagination, Baumgartner's notion of imagination as the law of cognition or the second logic, Leibniz's overpowering force of inner principle as the main driving force of perception and imagination, and finally

Kant played off with Herder agreeing with him at the begging of his aesthetical discourse, and then he departed from him. With all this in mind, Kant seems to have triumphed over all creating a new way of thinking—as the first modern and really innovative thinker, including the paradoxes of his aesthetical taste or judgments—a formal way of thinking abstracting the notion of aesthetics and putting it on a pedestal of *universal idealization*. Kant says: “The *beautiful* is that which pleases universally, without a concept.”(40) Here we have the realization or the epiphany of conceptual understanding of what aesthetical taste means: the Understanding and Imagination intertwined and reconciled as one, but that happens because only human beings can experience beauty and the beautiful. And here comes up to third notion of aesthetic; reflection, which is to say, that of self-reflection were I find pleasure not on the *object* but in myself—being aware of my presence and selfness.

So then, what Nietzsche is saying along the way, is that the purity of aesthetics and art is not that of the beautiful, because it cannot be described, i.e., aesthetical principles cannot be rationalized or logically described from the field of the beautiful—what is or what it means. Nietzsche’s direction in a way is against Kantianism as well. In Kant we saw that reason and imagination should coexist in a mutual field for the aesthetical spark to happen, where there is [no] friction and no power conflict in between them. In Nietzsche’s platform we will see precisely the opposite, because there is an *impossibility/contrariety* of the two (Apollinian/reason and Dionysian/imagination), we have that which we call it aesthetic. The project of Nietzsche is the clear repudiation of enlightenment and the Socratic virtue of reason (rationality), because Nietzsche believes that, it is this notion of reason that humanity has justified and will continue to justify its actions—reason is too opaque. Nietzsche returns his eyes way back to the proto-Socratic art of Greek tragedy. It is this particular tragedy that he will reflect and say that, the reemergence or the return to this particular kind of emotion is that which we must pay attention to—here we find that *purity* of aesthetic sphere that Nietzsche is looking for, i.e. the purity of the highest activity, a purity of a real autonomous aesthetical logic of human activity and endeavor. In *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche divides aesthetics in two realms, that of Apollinian and that of Dionysian stating that: “...the continuous development of art is bound up with the *Apollinian* and *Dionysian* duality—just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations...These two different tendencies run parallel to each other, for the most part openly at variance; and they continually incite each other to new and more powerful births, which perpetuate an antagonism, only superficially reconciled by the common term “art” ...let us first conceive them as the separate art worlds of *dreams* and *intoxication*.” (33). It is

clear that from the start, Nietzsche bolsters this glittering/flamboyant or even radiant existence of both *Apollinian* and *Dionysian* concept: the first, he coins it as the realm of dreams, contemplating and presenting fierce effects; and the second, the depth of Dionysian which is a dazzling intoxication and euphoria, elating the moments of art creation. But he also perpetuates the aspect that there is always a non-stop antagonism or a sort of inner polemics in between them, and it is precisely here we have the outcome that we call “art.” They continuously provoke and animate each other’s existence in a sort of perpetual flow of [*tension*], and because they are in a state of agitation, they recreate new possibilities of aesthetical purity—art. There is never a Kantian mode of reconciliation or a sort of a mutual coexistence of imagination and reason for the aesthetical emergence; but rather, there seems to be that, they have coupled each other and they do so instantly. They need each other to exist but they do not agree with one another.

In other words, The Apollinian dreams are beautiful images, they are perfect and they have a structure, i.e. there are two significant components here, that of *logical causality* and *clearly defined forms*. This Apollinian image is presented to us with forms; it is that which interprets life and makes us feel the tangibility of forms making our life more intelligible/apprehensible and giving a structure or clear purpose in life. Nietzsche says: “This joyous necessity of the dream experience has been embodied by the Greeks in the Apollo: Apollo, the god of all plastic energies...is the “shining one” the deity of light, is also the ruler over the beautiful illusion of the inner world of fantasy. The higher truth, the perfection of these states...” (35) Therefore, the Apollinian energy is the immanent mode of being or it always pervades our daily world. It is the *truth* we seek because the manner we enter our aesthetic human world, it is from the gate of the Apollinian plasticity, e.g. forms and appearances; then gradually we might be able to really dig deeper and find the real emerald of what creates all of this appearance and plasticity in our perceived world—it is the Dionysian intoxication that which enables the Apollinian to emerge or to enable it to be the immanent illusion of our fantasies. As Nietzsche states: “...we steal a glimpse into the nature of the *Dionysian*, which is brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of *intoxication*...complete self-forgetfulness... Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and nature is reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates one more her reconciliation with her lost son, man.” (36, 37) As Nietzsche walks us in these pathways of the Dionysian intoxication and the gush of life and this drunkenness/elation we feel that the shivering emotions are caressing our bodies, because these feelings are our primordial once; we dance and we are lost in the rhythms of the musical ecstasy becoming one body with the melodic excitement—we

become a part of the kinetic earth, we are dissolved and blurred with nature itself—our universe is brought down to our feet and has penetrated our depths of heart. We have become one with nature. We have forgotten our physical presence and we have been transformed into a vanishing cloud, our individual transgression has taken place, and we have become the earth itself—nature. Now, what is important to pin point here, is the fact that both the Apollinian and the Dionysian mutually amplify or inflate each other so that they can enable their existence. The Apollinian dream which is the mode of semblance cannot exist without the Dionysian intoxication which is the real truth and essence, i.e., they stand side by side as enemies that need to love one another. Dionysian is our very terror and horror of existence, and yet without this imminent terror and horror no beautiful things can ever be produced, nothing comes to being or reality without the Dionysian intoxication—our unknown self. That being said, the Dionysian has both the negative and positive aspect of human existence, it is the necessary horror of emotions for art to exist. It is as if the Apollinian can be created as an appearance and plasticity only by the Dionysian inebriation/intemperance; the Dionysian has no particular form, no appearance, it is that force that only our heart and animated actions and vitality can sustain it, as the flame and the accent of our existence in the human world. Dionysian force evaporates but it never loses its intoxication and its élan. It is as though, the purity of the Dionysian art form cannot exist, and the Apollinian art form cannot exist either as appearance or as a phenomenon: they need each other. They endlessly fight each other and are in a constant intensity or conflict as fierce opposed forces, and this force of opposition produces in reality that which we call it Art.

Now, we have arrived at our final destination where Deleuze operates. He speaks of [*force*] as well, but in a sort of different notion from the force and intensity that Nietzsche or Herder were talking about. So what is of interest for Deleuze is that there *is a point of escape of body-subjectivity* in between *force* and *form* where it operates in between both of them without a conflict?! While for Nietzsche the intensity and impossibility or impasse of force and form would enable the production of pure art forms. My proposal is not that, I want to reconcile Kantian and Nietzschean concepts with Deleuze's attempt and with his philosophical framework—we will eventually see that how the resonate mindfulness of Deleuze will cohere much closer with the mind set of Kant, Nietzsche and even Herder, then with that of Aristotle, Descartes, Baumgarten, and even that of Leibniz; because this was the initial point of my coherencies, as to argue against the latter ones.

Let's get a closer look to what Deleuze is proposing. He proposes the idea of the "body without organs" and "the body escaping itself" and that there is a moment of

retreat from subjectivity itself, but also, this body is not that of inner experience—perception is when object and subject intersect creating that which Deleuze calls the “affect”. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze allures/appeals to the notion of “affect” that stands beyond man and stands above subject—it is more than that. Deleuze elaborates the notion of aesthetic preservation saying that: “What is preserved—the thing or the work of art—is a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects...Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose vitality lies in themselves and exceeds any lived...The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself.” (164) What Deleuze is advocating here is a radical change from all philosophies and aesthetical propositions we have touched upon so far. Deleuze is not concerned with the aspect of subject anymore; but rather, his position is before and beyond subjectivity itself, i.e. it surpasses everything. What *affect* really means? What is *percept*? What is the answer to the statements that a work of art is a pure and only *sensational* phenomenon existing by-itself and in-itself? My questions are not the sort of ones that one can lapse into a rampant skepticism, because that is not what I am searching for. What I am perpetuating here is the idea that Deleuze’s body is an [*imminent body*] where the escape has not occurred, it is on the verge of roaming, or it has already incited the materialization—but it is not something that takes place as representation, thus it is not narration either. Furthermore, Deleuze in *Francis Bacon*, interestingly enough describes Bacon’s statement saying that: “The body exerts itself in a very precise manner, or waits to escape from itself in a very precise manner. It is not I who attempt to escape from my body; it is the body that attempts to escape from itself by means of...in short, a spasm: the body as plexus, and its effort or waiting for a spasm.” (15) In this attempt, perhaps, we have in front of us a statement that also says that, body is a flux, a desire, striving for something, diverging into multiplicity, fluidity, enchantment, and freedom that is not restricted within the dichotomy subject-object; but rather, it is waiting for the spastic élan to take place, i.e. it is the schizophrenia of body’s desire as a free nomad perpetually dismantling itself.

However, this dismantlement takes place precisely because, the body-without-organs is not an organ-less body per se, but rather [a body without-organization or a body-with-no-organism]—a body that breaks free from itself that does not like to be disciplined and be subjected as an organism. This fluidity and flux and spastic nomadic body reemerges, pervades the world, and reconstitutes itself in new directions and possibilities. In other words, it is the body that lacks the system of organization that Deleuze has in mind, and that is why Bacon uses the word “spasm” in the first place. That means that we are dealing with a web/network or as Bacon put it, a “plexus” of contingent moments of nomads that enable us to say that: there is no totality here or as

Jean-Francois Lyotard in *Postmodern Condition*, asserts that there is no more “grand-narratives” involved but, it breaks into a plethora of mini departures and of many unpredictable compounds. In this case, it is the notion of plexus or the system and networks that Deleuze advocates as the synthetic aspect of contingency and continuation of the body that escapes, has escaped, or waits to escape for a new direction but without particular destination as [*connective, disjunctive, and conjunctive.*] The body is never encapsulated because the body is a shadow that dissipates/depletes to a formless thing, i.e., it is a thing that surpasses subjectivity and man. This notion of the body as the former presence, or as some mist in disappearance is again amplified in *Francis Bacon* where Deleuze allures stating that: “It is no longer the material structure that curls around the contour in order to envelop the Figure, it is the figure that wants to pass through a vanishing point in the contour in order to dissipate into material structure.” (17) In other words, this is the body that escapes through an expansion and depletion, blurring and penetrating the physical lines of the Figure itself. This vanishing point functions as the point of never ending departing body, penetrating through the invisible point that escapes our ability to perceive it objectively and subjectively. There is no confinement in this disfigured body parts, but dust, and a wave that dissolves while reaches the shores of subjectivity. It seems that even the faculty of subjectivity does not get to taste this dissipation and penetrating moment of escaping body, i.e. it is prior to subjectivity. It is the drift/rupture that makes it possible but this rambling does not enable the subjective state, to capture the vanishing instances of the body becoming the mist and the recreation itself, endlessly. A bit further, in the Chapter of *Hysteria*, Deleuze claims: “Thus the body does not have organs, but thresholds or levels. Sensation is not qualitative and qualified, but has only an intensive reality, which no longer determines with itself representative elements, but allotropic variations. Sensation is vibration.” (45) We are dealing here with the questions I posed a bit earlier, which is the notion that Deleuze exerted; of sensation, affect, and that a work of art is nothing but a sensation. Sensation is that emotional earthquake that rampantly trembles our being, it is the lava of touch of the artist or the manner the materials are compounded, enabling art to claim itself and stand by itself, as it endures time and space, until the artist unfreezes the lost and the incoming instances of what there is and of what has to become, i.e. it encapsulates the clouds of our emotions and our shadows and giving to them the force of life that also, enable us the feel existence and presence. But this sensation is realized through the coexistence of material as well. How/why is that so? Because sensations nest in the structure of the material and when that happens the material is no longer just a material in the initial state; but rather, the material has become an infinite “sensation” that we are unable to localize—it is there we feel the materiality of the world, the human world.

That is why in *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze attempts to say that: "Sensations, perceptions, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived...Sensation is not realized in the material without the material passing completely into the sensation, into the percept or affect" (164,167) But this *being* that is valid and surpasses life itself is maintained by the energy of "force"; however, this cloud of sensation that exceed life itself in the realization of a art work is enabled by the material becoming sensation and vice versa, but neither one is the other. The material has to exist for the glittering sensation to nest and as long this is the case sensation penetrates the realms of infinite state of that being that stands above all, above any lived, above life itself and human condition, but it is created by the situations of human presence located in time and space. So then, how is this force attained? Where is to be found? Does it find the answer to what Deleuze coins as "the artist is the seer, a becomer?"(171) Aesthetical condition and art is all about the capturing of invisible forces and making them visible beyond figuration and through the situations or reflections of human's sensation. In *Francis Bacon* Deleuze would state: "For many painters, however, the problem of *capturing forces*...this other problem was *the decomposition and recomposition of effects*..." (57) So then what is the force of mountains that Deleuze talks about in Cezanne's painting? The mountains are rendered visible and the landscape too, but is not the one we can see when we sit and perceive it as the passer-by or the viewer. The force of Cezanne's mountains is to be found in the very condition of the painting itself, in the rendering of its colors and its hues, in the strips and rough-soft or spontaneous shapes of the brush strokes, including the dynamic and rhythmic sound of composition, in relation to the tactile qualities and forms that are created during the indescribable moment that the painting is processed and worked. Even Cezanne himself cannot fully give us an answer to that, because it is not artist's place to answer, but to create forms and moments of different worlds of existence in time and space.

To sum up, we are not concerned and dealing here with neither abstract, nor narrative art forms, because the *force* that Deleuze is talking about finds itself in a multiplicity of artistic sensations and formations (that is why he talks about artist's decomposing and re-composing, constructing and de-constructing variations of art sensations and forms): it is not a formal (Kantian) approach or a representative one either. That being said, we can say that what has to be comprehended here, is the *force* as *a vision* of the mountain (Cezanne's mountain) that is captured or located and not the mountain per say—not the physicality of mountain but the sensations that a mass of mountain provokes in our presence. *This force is encapsulated with the vigor and*

vibrancy or rhythmic juxtaposition of brush strokes and the interconnection of a variety of hues, tactile and layers, opacity and transparency, depth and surface and thickness—it is that which as one compound creates a sensation. Art becomes a sensation. This force of sensation is invisible and becomes visibly sensational to our eye when it is materialized either as colors, lines, canvas, words, sound, etc. This is achieved not so much in the materiality itself, but *when the material becomes a thing as thing* and an existence in space and time reflecting our human experience.

The force that Deleuze attempts to project is an instance of a shadow that has an existence, i.e. a sensation and affect that relates to body and Figure. The body-figure-organism is that which the shadow is; but it has a form and it is a life and alive as the sensation of a moving silhouette and a living form-body-figure. This shadow has depleted or expended from our physical presence but at the same time, it has created another sensation that exists in itself. The force of Cézanne's mountain would not exist if there were no mountain in the first place—the mountain *Is*, and the same could be said about the body that exists, it enables the force and the sensation if a silhouette exists as an affect and percept—a pure sensational being above subjectivity. The Statue of Liberty in New York is a Force, a Percept, and a Sensation that translates one thing: Freedom. The beautiful sculpture is magnificent and humongous, but the sensation is not to be found in the metal sculptural identity in the Lady of freedom, but rather, it harbors freedom in its feet and shores. This sensation and affect is embodied in life and it is above any lived reality. This is the force and sensation that Deleuze seems to advocate; that which I embrace and propose as to be the valid one.

Deleuze walks on the same path where Heidegger has previously stepped on (although there is a major difference among them, there still is a mutual relation related to the work of art), regarding the understanding of what art is. If For Deleuze art is nothing but sensation, for Heidegger art is a symbol and an allegory of a concept or of an idea. Heidegger has articulated the notion that art is a thing-being or thingness. It seems to me that this is not that far from what Deleuze has suggested that art is a thing that stands above life and it is an affect and percept that has a being as it exists. For Heidegger this thing is a thing-concept, a being-concept. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger states: "What is the thing...? In what the senses of sight, hearing, and touch convey, in the sensations of color, sound, roughness, hardness, things move us bodily, in the literal meaning of the world. The thing is the *aistheton* that which is perceptible by sensation in the senses belonging to sensibility...a thing is nothing but the unity of a manifold of what is given in the senses. Whether this unity is conceived as sum or as totality or as form alters nothing in the stand character of this thing-concept." (Hofstadter & Kuhns, 657) The common ground between the Heideggerian

hermeneutics and Deleuze is precisely around the notion of sensation of the/for the/in the/about the “thing”, the material “thing” provoking our human bodily presence. Another point of connection is that Heidegger is not concerned whether or not this is a total unity or a multiplicity and plethora of manifold sensations or a variety of thresholds of senses. Heidegger’s position is that art creates the sensation of a thing, e. g. a painting, a sculpture, a book, a sound, a performance, and etc. Now, this thing ought to be self-sustained or stand by itself as a being—a thing in Heidegger’s view is formed of matter where the material is embedded with a given form. In another words, this materiality of the so called *thing*, must move us sensuously and that is not far apart from Deleuze’s position that art is nothing else but a sensation.

Where they diverge though, it is to be found in the notion that, Heidegger maintains the position that subject-object parity is essential only as one Unity in regards to the sustainability of form-matter relation, thus fermenting the structure and the origin of the work of art: Deleuze has moved beyond that aspect of subjectivity to a stage where the subject no longer matters. But before I depart from Heideggerian hermeneutics of understanding of what art is and what an art form means, I will pin point what Heidegger himself solicits: “The origin of the art work is art. But what is art? Art is real in the art work. Hence we first seek the reality of the work. In what does it consist?” (669) Heidegger’s argument is that the work of art consists of something and this something for Heidegger is coined the “equipment”. So then the origin of the work of art is to be located in the presence of the components that create this work and the manner they appear to be themselves as a unity or as whole-form, but also, their particularity of material placement or arrangement. This equipment could be anything, e. g. a tube of color, canvas, paper, stone, granite, marble, metal, words, etc. All these materials create a thing, a form, layers, nuances of seeing, perceptions evoking imagination and our state of being, our relation to the material world and life itself. They just move us and make us feel the very core of our being sensuously. Thus it is this equipment/materiality or this *thingness* of the work of art that acts like an intermediate component, leading to our definition of sensation; which is to say, sensation in a being in itself. Why am I aspiring in bringing Heidegger in this aesthetical debate? From this point, there springs an attempt not so much to reconcile Heidegger and Deleuze because, that is just not as important as to reveal certain aesthetical features that they commonly share such as, the aspect of sensation and the material/equipment of an art work. I am not pursuing an oscillation of the subject, truth in art forms, and doubting Deleuze’s notion of sensation founded in art. As I emphasized in the introduction of my inquiry, I find my aesthetical position in agreement with especially the position of Nietzsche’s and Deleuze’s position, operating closely in the field of the Heideggerian stand.

My disagreement is with Foucault's approach to subject. For Foucault aesthetics is the attempt to define Modernity and not so much the relation of subject-object. In Paul Rabinow's *The Foucault Reader*, Foucault claims that: "How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions"... "Truth" is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements" (49,74) From this approach we get to say that, Foucault says that we are not dealing anymore with subject-object relation, but rather we find ourselves in the midst of subject-culture, subject-society, subject-language, subject-sexuality or subject-bio-power. Thus in Foucault's prism, we have to see that the truth of subject lies into domination and power. Also, it seems that for Foucault subject is totally *colonized* by the system of power, where the aesthetic domain is the ideological expression of power as such, in a new structural subject of power formation—only in this way, we could find a new subjectivity (autonomy) of human action, i.e., subjectivity has become the element of activity through the processes and the practices within society—through socialization and structured discipline. What that means? It means that the subject is made. In other words, we have the internalization of the subject where the subject does to it-self what society and culture orients it to do, without being conscious of how it does it—the colonization of the subject through disciplinary action. On the other hand, Heidegger's position is that there is no subject because the center of gravitation springs from the object—there is a *unity* factor that is; being-there-in-the-world. In Heidegger's view, the sensation and the situation of this unity determines the *mood*, position, situation, and sensation of the object. Heidegger does not prioritize the primacy of subjectivity. Heidegger privileges the individuality of the subject and that the subject is oriented in the culture that lives in, and then, it interprets the events of subjectivity of that particular system as one whole; while Foucault advocates the institutional aspect of subjectivity immersed into the power of the system.

However, I do advocate and I do sympathize with the position of Heidegger. Because the subject is always free to choose and to penetrate into systems of variation—the subject cannot be static and hermetic within a power structure: but it is recreated into different modes of existences that relate to the events of a given culture. The subject as Heidegger claims it to be, is not captured from a dominant power, because the object operates in the domain of that which we understand as the obscure, the dark, the sensible, the vital, the vibration of the sensation of our being—it is fluid and in a perpetual flux and *temporal-ecstatic*—nesting sporadically in the realities of a situation, but not controlled by it, because there is a unity that performs the mood of being there as such. Heidegger's remark is that, this kind of aesthetic sensation can be

anything; it can be a sum or a multiplicity of variations, that which we call the Thing-Concept the Thing-ness of the Thing. It is the sensation of the Thing as that which as Heidegger says, literally moves us bodily. It operates as one unity.

Finally, I have arrived at the initial point of my departure, which is to say: what is the freedom of aesthetical existence mean? Where is the work of art seen as maintaining its authenticity, integrity and itself—how? First and foremost, I have been advocating the force of obscurity, vitality, animation, incitement, intoxication or the unknown-dark and drifting/rupturing side of the imaginative and the sensuous mind vs. rationalization, cognitive aesthetics, dualism, the passivity of the sensuous or imagination, the institutionalization of aesthetics through power, measurement and the content in art. Therefore, my argument has been against Aristotle, Baumgarten, Descartes, Leibniz, Foucault, and I have played off or departed from Herder because of the *split* notion of the two faculties opting for obscurity's predominance. Kantian Understanding and Imagination (noumenon-phenomenon structure), it was the stage to lead my argument in favor of Nietzsche and Deleuze, while with Heidegger, I do agree regarding the aspect of the work of art. However, my absolute position, the one I have embraced, it has been the art force of Nietzsche in regards to the intensity and the conflict of Apollinian and Dionysian forces: art is produced when these two forms or energies are in incongruousness and endless intensity; and also, in Deleuze's position of what art is. It is that sensational moment of our being, confronted with the magnitude that operates beyond objectivity and subjectivity and higher than whatever lived. It is the dust of a feeling that infiltrates and sticks in our memory forever and becomes a part of our being—of us. It captures the unseen aspect of our life. It defrosts fragments of our sensations; those which, we do not usually understand and perceive by ourselves: art enables us to see our-self, our inner obscurity of creating forces that relate to our lives—the force of freedom, the force of a mountain, the force of love, the force of angst or anxiety, the force of fear, the force of the unknown, the force of earth, the forces that we know but cannot see—we just feel and sense them.

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