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COGITO is produced by students and is one of the main activities of the year for the three Societies. The first journal was published in 1966 and can be found in the UNSW Library under S105/19. COGITO is generally comprised of articles, essays and papers submitted by students of all levels. Sometimes, an academic may contribute an article to the Journal.

Contributions by students on any philosophical topic should meet these basic conditions:

1. Between 2000-6500 words in length.
2. Typed on paper, on diskette or file attachment to email
3. Good spelling and punctuation.

The editors will reply to a suggested topic or a summary of an article not yet written if it is sent to our email address.

Contact the Societies for past issues of COGITO.

Editorial

COGITO warmly welcomes Macquarie University's Platonic Society. It has brought a new source of submissions and editorial effort. This edition primarily showcases the vibrant work of Macquarie students, who have never before had such an opportunity.

We're honoured to have a special contribution from Greg Henderson. Greg was a Macquarie philosophy honours student who tragically died in 2003, just before the award ceremony where he was to receive the University Medal. The article published here was his final work.

COGITO was started by the Socratic Society in 1966 with the intention of publishing short philosophical works, most of them written by students. Publication has been sporadic with some six or seven editions being produced, mostly since 2000. The last edition was a joint effort between the Socratic Society of the University of NSW and the Russellian Society of the University of Sydney and now the Platonic Society of Macquarie University completes the triumvirate.

For the first time, with the publication of this edition, COGITO will be available on the internet as well as in printed form.

All of the articles in this edition of COGITO were peer reviewed.

More than ever before, philosophy is essential to a society that seems to have lost its way in a thicket of issues ranging from religion, through bio-engineering to business ethics. COGITO is the medium for fresh ideas and fresh thoughts on old ideas through articles, letters and reasoned opinions.

We hope readers will respond to the articles in this edition as well as contributing to future editions.

The Editors

John the salesman can't sell neckties with a neuroscience spiel: the prospects of replacement of folk psychology in mediating social practice

by Andrew Bishop

Humans are social creatures, they engage in a host of cognitive practices to navigate the world. In particular, they use folk psychology (henceforth, FP), a set of explanatory and predictive devices for our own and other's behaviour and psychological states. These devices are accompanied by concepts and notions deployed in practice (Churchland, 1981). FP is a result of shared implicit understanding of the relations and generalisations between external circumstance, internal states, and overt behaviour (Churchland, 1981). In social practice, FP enjoys a reasonable degree of success and popularity in its predictive and explanatory capabilities. Despite its widespread use, FP has been on trial. The charge against the accused is referring to non-existent mental states, the "propositional attitude" (Churchland, 1981). The prosecution's case rests on proving that mental states do not exist and that we should replace them. The suggested replacements are numerous; completed neuroscience (henceforth, NS; Paul Churchland, 1981), chaos theory (Garson, 1996) or connectionism (Ramsay, Stich & Garon, 1978). The defence is fragmented into two camps; the realists are the 'strong arm' of the defence team hoping to vindicate FP scientifically. The 'weaker arm', the instrumentalists, hope to gain reduced sentence, on account of good behaviour and service to society. The jury is still out, but this important verdict has caused of 25 years of speculation, as it has massive implications for the human condition.

FP may be under intense scrutiny in academic discourse, but is never questioned in the everyday conversation. FP has been the explanatory-predictive device of choice for practical usage for as long as we can tell. Social practice requires the coordination of behaviour and this, in turn, needs a theory to predict and explain behaviour. In FP, for example, we attribute dispositions (like shy or angry) as the cause of behaviour as a way establishing a cause that renders adaptive action possible. Given the information that 'the world heavyweight boxing champion is angry at you', the fact that the ontological status of FP is questionable, is cold comfort indeed. Hypothetically, you could have a pretty good guess about what would happen next and begin coordinating your behaviour according. This is because FP is a relatively reliable system of predicting behaviour. In this sense the social practices that we currently observe, are tied to FP. If eliminated, a replacing theory would have to fill the vacuum created in social practice. That is, to propagate into common usage a competing theory must able to mediate social practice. Furthermore, to launch a replacement requires that the replacing theory do a better job then the existing theory (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). Otherwise, people would have no reason to trouble themselves in adopting a replacement that does the same or lesser job.

In this essay I focus on Churchland's (1981) 'Eliminative materialism and propositional attitudes.' He acknowledges the social role of FP, but is cautiously optimistic about the

capabilities of a replacing theory, as the past has shown that replacement by an ontologically better theory provides better practice. Here I argue that it is unlikely that social practice will be uprooted and replaced by a NS. This not just because, as Churchland (1981) admits, 'old ways die hard', but rather that a replacement is bound to the constraints of deployment in the everyday social arena. Integration of NS into FP could occur as some concepts are altered and popularised into common usage. This arrangement would represent a stalemate as socially useful concepts of NS are adopted into the framework of FP. This integration would not serve to oust beliefs and desires but increase its empirical resources (Horgan & Woodard, 1985). Furthermore, I will examine Churchland's (1981) radical solutions to putting NS into social practice. In particular, he holds that brain-to-brain communication could provide the new vehicle social practice. While hypothetically possible, the meaningful 'language' of brain-to-brain communication is very uncertain. Overall, the most likely scenario is that FP will integrate NS and remain the champion of the social arena.

Theories generally do not only possess an epistemic or ontological import, but also have a series of related practices. Consider Churchland's (1981) criticism that "primitive" societies understand nature in theories of intentionality. Without denying Churchland (1981) this claim, it can be used to parallel the links between theory and practice. In Greek mythology, there are examples of intentional explanations for a whole range of phenomena. For example, the Ancient Greeks believed that Demeter, the great god of agriculture, was responsible for the fertility of earth (Mavromataki, 1997). She watched over the crops and made the land fertile and tillable. The story takes a twist, in the reason why we observe the changes in the seasons. Her daughter Persephone was stolen from her and held captive in the underworld (Mavromataki, 1997). Those four months in the underworld caused the cold months of winter (ancient seasonal calendar) as Demeter was struck by despair (Mavromataki, 1997). The warmer weather in the other eight months is caused by the joyous reunification of Demeter and Persephone. Now it is certainly true that no modern person would seriously endorse this account of the seasonal changing of weather. What this intentional theory explains about the changing seasons is completely false. This false theory has been replaced by modern scientific meteorology. As a textbook *replacement,* the concepts and categories of that theory are irreducible to current meteorological theory. In short, they were eliminated. No meteorology student would consult a Demeter appeasement chart. This withstanding it is important to recognise the link between theory and practice. The Greeks held celebrations to both Demeter and Persephone in order to receive the favour of the gods and gain the benefits of piety. These theories about the gods create elaborate religious celebrations, for instance the Eleusinian mysteries (Mavromataki, 1997). The Eleusinian mysteries (as the origin of the English word mystery) are understandably elusive. But this practice would be completely baffling without knowledge of the theory that inspired it (Mavromataki, 1997). Without the Demeter theory there could be no Eleusinian mysteries. It is important in eliminating and replacing theories to think about the effect on practices.

Churchland (1981) accepts the links between theory and practice. The role of theory in day-to-day practicalities of human life is indispensable. Composers need music theory, engineers need geometry, and programmers need computer science (Churchland 1981). But the elimination and replacement of FP will lead, according to Churchland (1981), to better social practice. The history of science demonstrates how ontologically better theories lead to superior practice. Better chemical theories lead to better chemical practice. It is hard to deny that chemistry has made significant advances in practice compared to its medieval predecessor, alchemy. By the same light, it is reasonable to expect that better psychological

theories lead to better practice. The theories of possession caused the most barbaric practices of treating the mentally ill. The replacement, psychopathology, has practices are far more humane and even slightly more effective at treatment (Churchland 1981). In an air of confidence Churchland (1998, p. 11) asserts,

> [i]f and when the change ever happens, it will be because we are all gleefully pulled rather than grudgingly pushed. We will be pulled, if at all, by the manifold, personal, social, and practical advantages of the new framework: by the clarity it represents, by the freedoms it makes possible, by the cruelties it diverts, and by the deeper interactions it affords.

The eliminative materialist is happy to accept that theory and practice are intertwined. If a FP is replaced by an ontologically superior NS then it can mediate better social practice.

To defend FP, this paper will not appeal to its ontological virtues, but rather to the roles it plays in social practice. Common sense psychology, I will argue, is indispensable to social life. FP has 'evolved' to predicting and explaining behaviour, within the constraints of the social world (Von Eckardt, 1994). First, consider the practical necessities needed for a theory to proliferate into the social arena. For a practical theory of mind, if communicated in a natural language[1] , it needs a degree of simplicity (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). Indeed, the replacing theory would also have to be incorporated into a natural language with the same degree of ease as FP (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). This could prove problematic as the concepts and categories of NS would undoubtedly be rather complex, possibly using sophisticated mathematics (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). FP requires no formal training, no complex machinery, and no time-consuming data crunching. This is not a trivial concern as people in the social world need to make attributions in real-time in order to coordination complex interactions (Vaughan and Hogg, 2005). The social practice dictates that NS is practical in the 'field' so to say. Complexity promotes unwieldy usage, as people cannot spend hours consulting tables, texts and diagrams. Thus one suspects that NS, as expressed in natural language, would not proliferate into social practice compared to its straightforward rival FP.

In response, Churchland may object, that the past proliferation of scientific theories has not demanded that every person must understand the complexities of a theory to use it in practice. As such, the complexity of NS is not an impediment at all. A deeper understanding of the mind will allow implementation of new and useful concepts (Churchland 1981). These new NS concepts can become simplified for common usage. What generally happens as theories proliferate into society is that people pragmatically use the 'take home messages'. In everyday life, people understand that 'germs' can cause sickness and that given 'germs' are ever-present in the environment, it is important to maintain good hygiene to prevent infection by harmful 'germs'. These messages are the summaries of much more in-depth analysis. People in practical usage need not know that germs consist of bacteria, a living organism, or viruses, which are non-living. Nevertheless, they do know that 'germs' prosper in unsanitary environments, so it is better to observe proper hygiene practises. These conclusions are consistent with the theories and research that they originated from, although they are simplified to avoid complexity, they provide useful lessons for social practice (Moscovici 1988). Churchland it seems could argue that completed NS could be employed in the same general manner. That is the concepts and categories can be summarised into easier messages that provide better social practice.

Unfortunately, for NS it is common for the simplification of a concept into general use to lose its integrity. When theories popularise, the concepts and categories are integrated

into past knowledge. Theorists of social representations hold that scientific theories diffuse into popular consciousness via integration with previous theories with the manner of diffusion simplifying, distorting, and ritualising the new theories into previous explanations (Moscovici, 2005). For example, psychological theories of mental illness are distorted into folk theories of organic illness. More problematically, animal-mating behaviour is interpreted in common stereotyped gender roles (Bangerter and Heath, 2004). It seems likely that NS would undergo the same integration into FP; that the concepts of NS will diffuse into lay explanations. Indeed, there are signs that NS is undergoing popularisation (Moscovici, 1988). Consider, for example, the oft spoken phrase "we did like each other, but the chemistry wasn't there". Thus it seems more likely that this process of assimilation would lead to the integration of NS into FP, rather than replacement of FP by NS.

This argument offers a line of reply to Churchland's (1981) claim that FP is stagnant. FP would not be in a state of stagnation if these simplified concepts were incorporated into it. Of course, it is difficult before the fact to judge the levels of replacement and integration. Integration while providing empirical validity to NS, also provides evidence of empirical progress for FP. Churchland (1981) holds that FP has been stagnating since the time of Homer, that there has been empirical progression in the theory. Contrary to this argument, Terence Horgan and James Woodward (1985) suggest that FP has changed and progressed. For instance, there has been a definite shift in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries from explaining behaviour in terms of fixed character dispositions to situational factors. We also can see the popularisation of Freudian concepts in FP. People now are content in referring to unconscious beliefs and motivations in making causal judgments. Thus FP seems to advance and if it is able to integrate NS then it will remain safe in its position as the mediator of social practice.

At this point, there is a standstill between the embracing of a simplified NS and the integration of NS into FP. It is hard to know before hand whether NS will mediate social interactions or be distorted in a metaphysical game of Chinese whispers. This standstill can be resolved by looking to the constraints of the social world, as the replacement scenario requires that the concepts of NS be applicable in the social world. There needs to a way to mobilise these concepts to predict and explain behaviour. Otherwise the likely scenario remains integration. This means that even if popular culture is aware of NS, without a way of applying it, it will never form social practice.

So far, we have seen that the integration of NS into FP is the most plausible outcome because of the information available in the social world. In the daily interactions of people, causal judgments are made with little more than the observation of behaviour. Popular integrated theories like Freudian concepts and situational judgments require no more information than observing behaviour. NS cannot replace FP because it cannot implement a popularised 'take home message' of such knowledge. This is because the medium of the completed NS is the brain, neurones, and its structure. Because skulls are not transparent, the brain is only visible in laboratory settings (even then only through expensive machinery) and not in general social life. It is unlikely that to find out whether your guests are enjoying a party or what drinks they like, by asking them in step into an MRI machine. Knowledge of NS would be similar to knowing the theory of the internal combustion engine. Implement the theory requires being able to observe a motor, to predict and explain how it runs. The problem is that if the bonnet is closed then it is difficult or impossible to predict the running of the car. And with NS, the bonnet is always closed. Without knowing whether they are in neural state X or Y, it would be impossible to use all the concepts from NS. An individual could know the theoretical steps, say that neural state X (enjoyment) is always preceded by A (low stress) and B (receptive pleasure neurones) but you cannot perceive

these states (without expensive technology). If people have no pragmatic ability to apply NS then its proliferation will remain limited. While some integration is possible, it is unlikely that NS will replace FP but rather integrated into the social use of FP.

The eliminative materialists could retort that people could implement NS by inferring neural states from behaviour. It may be impractical to have perfect access to neural states via overt behaviour, but it is also impossible to access to the 'intentional states' via overt behaviour. The deployment of the replacing NS involves systematic correlations, between neural states and behaviour in a certain environment. This is analogous to FP. As FP is a result of shared implicit understanding of the relations and generalisations between external circumstance, internal states, and overt behaviour (Churchland, 1981). To follow on from the previous analogy if someone had knowledge of a car then they could work backwards and infer the state of the engine by the running of the car. This process is akin to as reverse engineering, and it may require education and socialisation for competent use (Churchland, 1981). This replacing theory allows for most situational eventualities and has causally linked behaviours to neural states. Then nothing is stopping the application of NS in social practice. It is reasonable to suspect that the concepts of the replacing theory would proliferate into society.

The inferring of a neural state from behaviour and situations is limited by the available information in the social world. When observing behaviour, the attribution of causality is only partially accurate; we often make mistakes in interpreting behaviours in a wide range of situations (Vaughan and Hogg, 2005). The conceptual knowledge that we possess is not the reason for inaccuracy. The information available is limited by the restricted capacity for interpersonal perception. Even if inferring neural states from behaviour is possible, it does not mean that people's ability to infer neural states will be any better than inferring mental states. It is comparable to the reasoning that just because we talk of chemistry instead of alchemy does not change the ability to tell the difference between gold and iron pyrites. This would make any replacing theory at best only as able or more probably even less able to predict and explain behaviour in which case we would have no reason to learn NS. Without providing any advantages in social practice, NS is unlikely to integrate into common usage.

The constraints of complexity and lack of information make NS the same or a less accurate and reliable predictor of behaviour. This is problem is to Churchland (1981) could only a mere technological issue. To mobilise NS into social practice we need to use different methods. Churchland (1981) in trademark confidence suggests that we could hook up some form of neural two-way walkie-talkie directly to the brain. The channels that open up between allow for communication with the same virtues of that displayed between the hemispheres of our brain (Churchland, 1981). The knowledge of internal structures in NS allows for the construction a new method of communication without natural language (Churchland, 1981). This would bypass the problem of using NS in a NL because there is supposed to be no limit to what can be expressed in brain-to-brain communication (Churchland, 1981). In addition, the problem of the ineffectiveness of reverse engineering could be solved with technology that deals directly with the brain. Perhaps if the use of natural language is the critical constraint that makes better social practice impossible, a different non-linguistic method could be applied. Churchland (1981, p. 8) said that when asked how people could understand and conceive others 'in roughly the same manner that your right hemisphere understands and conceives your left hemisphere, intimately and efficiently, but not propositionally.

This hypothetical scenario deserves to be taken seriously, brain-to-brain communication is no stranger than some other thought experiments in philosophy. For

example, evil demons that perform perceptual illusions on early modern French philosophers and the agoraphobic cave dwellers on voyeuristic silhouette watching day. First, it puts the elimination of natural language as a perquisite of the replacing theory rather than an interesting consequence of NS (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). Brain-to-brain communication may be able to replace FP, but as a technology and not as an out spurt of NS. The use of brain-to-brain communication does not make the user more able to understand the information dense subject of NS (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). If NS cannot be mobilised in NL because of its complexity, then technology is an auxiliary issue.

In conclusion, I have demonstrated that the role that FP plays in social practices is hard to discard even if it is ontologically false. Theories that people possess are not just in abstract, they inspire a set of practices. FP, the common sense understanding of psychology, contain social practices that enable the navigation of the social world. For the proliferation of even a successful replacement (NS) it must fill the role of common practice. FP is veteran of social practice it has been fully incorporated into natural language, requiring almost no effort to learn. The replacing NS is to complex and unwieldily for a collective in the social arena. Therefore, NS must be simplified into 'take homes messages', which could become integrated into common usage. This is problematic, as popularisation of concepts tends to defuse into the pre-existing conceptual framework. Whether the concepts of NS can replace FP depends on fulfilling practice. The reason why incorporation is more plausible than replacement is based on the conditions of the social world. NS suffers from the lack of relevant information in the social world. It is deprived of its subject medium, the brain, and its components. The lack of information in the social world means that it probably is no better at mediating social practice, but the prerequisite for replacement requires better practices. Finally, the proposed method of transgressing the problems of social deployment—is brain-to-brain communication—sidesteps the issue of incorporation into NL and the lack of information in the social world. This technology has a major drawback, as it is difficult to know what the meaningful units of expression are. If it does not use natural language then it is not possible to say that NS is being deployed. As there is no reason why a theory created in natural language should have to be communicated brain-to-brain. We cannot say that NS causes better social practice, rather that the obvious claim technology causes better social practice. Integration into FP is necessary because it is required to the demands of the social environment.

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1 Churchland (1981) argues that the replacing theory will not just do what FP does just in a complicated neuroscientific language. Rather it will allow for the implementation of the new concepts of neuroscience for better social practice. These concepts of neuroscience need not be usable in natural language. Churchland (1981) makes the point that the new understanding of internal structures, we can construct a new verbal system distinct from natural language. I will not enter this debate over the construction of a new language, as the objections raised deal particularly with whether the people can understand and deploy the information-dense neuroscience (Van Der Berg & Eardley, 2000). It does not matter if the communication medium is natural language or an alternative. People need to be able to understand and deploy a theory of mind in social situations.

The interaction of extended minds

by Ruth Cox

Andy Clark and David Chalmers argue that human cognition can extend beyond the limits of the physical body. Whilst conceding that some mental experiences such as perceptual processing may be internally determined, they assert that the environment can play an active role in aiding cognition, and in driving and maintaining thought processes such as beliefs. They argue "If a part of the world functions as a process which, *were it done in the head*, we would have no hesitation in recognising as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world *is* part of the cognitive process". This assertion supports their view that "epistemic credit" should be given to appropriate epistemic actions (1998: 8). Beliefs can be constituted and maintained partly by environmental features, if these external factors drive cognitive processes in the correct way (ibid: 12). The most important factors for assessing whether external elements count as a part of cognitive processing are portability and general availability for use (Clark: forthcoming).

I will analyse Clark and Chalmer's argument and respond to a number of the objections that have been made to different aspects of their reasoning. Doubts have been raised that non-conscious entities could be included in cognitive processing. It also seems to be important that the components of cognitive processing should be portable. If external aspects are not part of the brain, they might be disconnected too easily to be reliably used or they could be subject to interference and deception that does not occur internally. I argue that these issues are relevant, but not insurmountable for an extended theory of mind. There are many instances when the mind does extend beyond the barrier of one brain – not only to include inanimate tools as in Clark and Chalmer's examples – but also to connect with and use the capacities of other minds. There are substantial benefits in incorporating more than one brain into coupled cognition processes. However, there are also significant issues to address in terms of the portability, reliability, and endorsement of the information that is used.

I argue that these problems can be sufficiently overcome in at least some instances of intersubjective extensions of mind, and that socially extended cognition can offer some positive advantages in the monitoring and controlling of some of the difficulties of internal processing. However, the extension of minds into other minds does make the trustworthiness of other people particularly important, because it is possible for others to actively or accidentally sabotage individual cognitive processing. If reliability and automatic endorsement of information are to be supported and sustained, the use of folk psychological assumptions about the beliefs and desires of others becomes relevant. Attempting to accurately interpret and predict the thoughts of other people in order to anticipate their behaviour is essential if your mental processes may be effectively dependent on them in some instances. In fact, this may explain why the ability to use these behavioural indicators is necessary, although it will not demonstrate exactly how they might work. I use two examples to demonstrate that it is possible for trustworthiness to be assessed accurately enough to make extended cognition advantageous; namely, the infant and caregiver relationship and the act of driving in heavy traffic. In these circumstances, the

benefits of interaction with other trusted minds can far outweigh the possible disadvantages.

Active externalism of cognition

Humans often use specific manipulation of aspects of their world to facilitate cognitive processes. These "epistemic actions" alter the world so that mental processes can be assisted or augmented. For example, scrabble tiles can be moved and sorted to reveal new word combinations, and geometric "Tetris" shapes can be rotated to reveal the best options for fitting the game pieces together. These internal and external cognitive couplings are specifically present and active. The non-brain components play a direct causal role and they have an immediate impact on human behaviour. If these external aspects change, the behaviour may also completely change. In situations where external things and humans are linked together in this type of mutual interaction these 'coupled systems" should be understood as extended cognitive processes (Clark and Chalmers 1998: 8-9).

Some mental states, such as beliefs, may also be constituted and maintained through coupling with the environment. For example, "Otto", an Alzheimer's sufferer, constantly relies on his notebook to recall important information. Indeed, Otto uses his notebook just as if it was part of his biological memory. The beliefs that are formed and sustained in the information that he writes down are held and recalled in the same way as the internally stored beliefs of "Inga" who does not have any unusual memory problems. Both the internal and the extended cognitive systems explain the behaviour that arises from processing the stored memory information in precisely the same way because of the degree of parity between them (ibid: 12-13).

However, not all external components are able to have sufficient parity to function as if they were internal cognitive systems. They must fulfil certain criteria. Constancy of connection and direct availability of the cognitive resources are important. The external information must also be automatically endorsed when it is used and it should be information that was automatically endorsed in the past (ibid: 17). Otto carries his notebook constantly. He always refers to it when he needs to recall information and he believes what he has recorded without question. This means that he would fulfil the criteria of portability, reliability, and endorsement and that he is also using extended cognition, for his cognition includes more than the processes within his brain.

Problems for active externalism

a) Consciousness

It may be argued that cognition is necessarily a conscious process. Objects such as scrabble tiles are not conscious and so they cannot be part of thought. They are merely inanimate tools. Many ordinary cognitive processes, however, such as memory retrieval, are also not conscious (Clark and Chalmers 1998: 10). Currently occurring mental processing often includes long-term dispositional beliefs as well as prevailing conscious beliefs. The long-term beliefs are a part of the processing, but they are not consciously recalled before they are used (Clark forthcoming). Cognitive processing does not rely solely on conscious content whether it is solely internal or if it is extended.

Nevertheless, this objection could become more pressing and more problematic when it is considered within the framework of cognitive processes that extend across multiple minds. Each of these component minds may be using some conscious processing, but this consciousness will not be contained solely within one brain alone. This does raise different

issues of control and of the potential for deception, which I will address more specifically at a later stage. It could be a collective consciousness and still be part of the same cognitive process. However, consciousness itself is not necessarily a problem for the theory of extended cognition. Not all cognition is conscious whether it is internal or extended, and extensions that include other minds could actually involve multiple consciousnesses.

b) Portability and reliability

The issue of portability is closely tied to the reliability and constant availability of cognitive processing. If external coupling cannot be maintained constantly, and if it might be decoupled easily, this is a significant problem for reliability. Nevertheless, this difficulty is not confined to processing that includes extended components. Reliability is a problem even in integrated internal systems. Even when cognition is entirely internal, there are times where brains will be unreliable. People may be asleep, intoxicated, or unconscious. Brains can be damaged through injury or disease. It is important that external information is usually available when is it needed if it is to be action guiding, but this is also necessary for internal information. The fact that information may be unreliable is not sufficient reason to say that it cannot be a part of cognition. The mental processes of people who have poor memory recall are still considered part of their mind (Clark and Chalmers 1998: 15). Many internal mental faculties are only used when they are required. Connection does not necessarily need to be constantly maintained, as long as it can be reliably established when needed.

Some external coupling with objects or other people is permanent and portable, but this does not mean that these external components are constantly used for cognition. Fingers that are used for counting are reliably present, barring amputations (Clark & Chalmers 1998: 11). However, they are only used for counting when they are required. Siamese twins are permanently coupled unless they are medically separated, but this does not necessarily mean that their cognitive processes are constantly linked. They might well rely on each other for memory recall or other cognitive prompts, but they could also choose to maintain entirely separate cognitive processes as if they had never met. Permanent portability does not guarantee coupled cognition.

Reliability is not necessarily better for internal processes. Biological working memory is limited to only five or seven items at a time, and it is vulnerable to interference. It would be extremely unstable and unreliable if external information sources were not used. It is arguably the case that working memory is actually in these external structures and that they are the reliable holding store (Rowlands 1999: 145-146). External memory records or "exograms" can be virtually unlimited in size and types of media. They are capable of sustaining multiple entries and retrievals and they can be permanent. Internal memory is limited in size, format, and accessibility, and it is as impermanent as a human life (Donald 1991: 315).

Unlike internal processing, external cognitive coupling requires the use of perception. Kim Sterelny argues that internal processing is more reliable than external perception because there is less deception within internal systems. He suggests that evolution will select over time for internal efficiency, and that this will drive appropriate and more accurate responses. This is not the case for perception. It is subject to active "sabotage" from external agents because the world is unreliable (Sterelny forthcoming). It can be difficult to perceive the world reliably, but internal systems are subject of distraction and damage that can create a disruption to cognitive processes. False internal beliefs can be generated accidentally, or even deliberately planted within biological memory during psychological experiments. We have a degree of vulnerability regardless of whether the input is from the brain or extended beyond it. In general, we treat our memories and other internal resources

as if they were stable and reliable. We also tend to do the same with environment input. We treat perception as if it were within the mind because it is the best and most efficient strategy (Clark forthcoming).

The vulnerability of individuals to perceptual deception can be overcome by using extended cognition (Clark forthcoming). If individual minds are processing input from the world through perception, it will be difficult for the perceiver to know whether a problem or mistake has occurred. Using other people's minds for clarification of perceptual information seems to make evolutionary sense in these instances of perceptual deception or mistakes.

c) Control

Keith Butler argues that computational and cognitive control unquestionably involves internal processing (1998: 205). However, many parts of the internal mind are not involved in control, and no subsystem may have the final control (Clark forthcoming). Memories or knowledge that are in long term internal storage may have a role in decision making, but this process will not differ significantly if the information is in an external but appropriately coupled format. If the source of the information is other people, this could potentially be more problematic. If a number of people are involved in cognition, it might be difficult to identify the locus of control. There may potentially be two or more sites of control in a coupled cognitive process. People may not necessarily have the same goals, and issues of deception and contested space become more problematic.

d) Other people as a problem

Sterelny agrees with Clark and Chalmers that humans enhance their environments by using external tools as "epistemic artefacts". This eases the burden on individual human memory through the use of pictorial or written records, public language, and group knowledge sharing. Difficult cognitive problems are made easier through representing them perceptually in sketches or maps, and perceptual problems are simplified by using learning tools such as props and practice aids. Workplaces are also deliberately engineered by organisation and sequencing of tools.

However, Sterelny argues that interpreting and working with others generates a much higher cognitive load than individual processing, and that other people may deliberately or unintentionally sabotage our cognitive efforts. Unlike Clark and Chalmer's examples, most external artefacts are "non exclusive" tools that may be used by a number of other people, and other people are not "in the job of making our life as easy as possible". These artefacts are jointly produced, used in common and contested spaces, and used by other people. This increases the demands for cognitive processing and makes it harder for individuals. He gives the example of a group producing a meal using a recipe, and argues that this task involves monitoring of others, negotiating and sharing tasks, space, and tools. This makes intensive demands on the memories of the participants because the task requires information that is not available "on line at the site of action". He also argues that interaction with others results in a high cognitive load because it must involve extra monitoring and guarding against deception. External cognition necessarily takes place "in an environment of active sabotage by other agents", and involves signals that are subject to interference, ambiguity and unreliability (Sterelny forthcoming).

I will argue that interaction with other people does not always result in higher cognitive load; in some cases, it may lower the individual load. Learning new skills is probably very demanding on cognitive resources. Interacting with unfamiliar people may also be subject to substantial checking procedures and this is probably very cognitively demanding. However, at different times and in different situations it may make better evolutionary sense

to adopt a stance of trust towards other people. There could be high additional cognitive load in shared cognition situations where trust cannot be established, but if trust is present, the task of checking for deception could effectively be suspended. Continually guarding against sabotage would be a very substantial load on cognition in itself. If this were a constant factor in every interaction there may be little cognitive capacity left for other more important tasks.

The boundaries between trust and scepticism regarding the environment and others are not permanently fixed. We have developed specific strategies for deciding whether to accept certain sources of information without continual checking, and we do not always guard against deception and deliberate manipulation to the same degree. At some stages of human existence, we do not even have the capacity to do the checking. We attempt to assess if other people are a reliable cognitive source and whether they are likely to have motives that will sabotage our well being, but we do not do this constantly in all situations. In some life circumstances, the potential for positive benefits from cognitive coupling far outweighs the possibility for harm that could result from deception or sabotage. Situations are assessed and monitored in terms of a series of personal and social scaffolding mechanisms that permit higher or lower degrees of trust to be present.

Establishing and maintaining trust requires specific skills for interpreting and monitoring the behaviour of others. Humans use the "folk psychology" framework to interpret intentions, beliefs, and desires. This helps them to predict the behaviour of others in order to assess their potential to be trustworthy. We make decisions to trust certain individuals or certain types of people based on our own capacities to judge, and on socially structured safeguards. Though accepted, this type of assessment of other minds and their motives is not fool proof. We may well be wrong on some occasions, just as we can be mistaken regarding the contents of our own brains or the environmental information that we interpret through perception. However, the benefits that are available when we do link successfully with other minds can far outweigh the costs of the times when we are deceived.

The benefits of active externalism — coupling with other minds

Each of the problems of consciousness, portability, reliability, and control impact on the potential for cognition to extend into other minds in different ways and at different times. However, they are not always insurmountable difficulties, and at times the benefits of extended cognition can overcome at least some of these difficulties. The following examples will demonstrate the advantages that can be gained.

a) Infants and children

Certain life situations may make external cognition particularly attractive, or even essential to sustaining life. The cognitive coupling relationships between infants and their caregivers demonstrate many of the components that Clark and Chalmers would attribute to extended cognition. Almost all information about the environment and other people will be provided or mediated by the caregiver. In many ways, the infant is almost entirely reliant on this external source. To the extent that infants are limited in their mobility and dependant on adults for personal care, there is a high degree of constancy in coupling.

This connection is also highly portable, not because the infant carries the external cognitive source around with them, but because they are usually carried around by or very close to the caregiver. Questions of endorsement are of limited relevance in these circumstances. It is possible that the information about the world that is imparted from

caregiver to infant could be deliberately misleading or just accidentally wrong. However, given that there is no other source that offers such a vast amount of potentially useful data, the possible benefits of using the external information will outweigh any concerns about reliability.

The brains of very young infants do not even appear to have good mechanisms for judging whether external resources are reliable. There is evidence that shows young children quickly acquire the ability to understand folk psychological concepts of beliefs and desires, and that they can use them to interpret and predict the actions of other people. However, they do not automatically appreciate that other people can be wrong. Experimental "false belief tasks" suggest that most three year olds will not be able to understand that other people make mistakes. If a puppet's toy is moved from a box to a drawer whilst the puppet is out of the room, young children will expect the puppet to believe that the toy is in the new location of the drawer. This happens even though the puppet left the toy in the box and did not see it being moved. Young children are not capable of understanding that the original but false belief would be maintained by someone who does not have access to the new evidence (Sterelny 2003: 212). Perhaps there are evolutionary benefits for infants in concentrating on receiving and processing cognitive input from extended sources rather than wasting their own cognitive resources on assessing its viability.

There may also be other evolutionary advantages in increasing the reliance of infants on others in their society. Even though children demonstrate that they have a capacity for memory by referring to past events, adults provide a lot of the structure or "scaffolding" for children's memories. Joint reminiscing is an important component of developing the ability to recall specific events. Adults initiate these practices and parental and cultural models are used to form memories in an interpersonal process (Sutton 2004: 202). These external cognitive sources are often specifically tailored to make them easier for children to use. This produces more reliable memory recording and recall than could be achieved by internal processing alone.

It could be argued that infants are not capable of full cognition and that their interaction with caregivers is not relevantly similar to Clark and Chalmers' examples of external cognition. However, they use the belief structures and information about the world that they glean from their caregivers exactly as adults would use internally derived beliefs and information. It is directly and reliably there for the majority of the time and automatically endorsed. Infants have problems with poverty of information about the world and limited capacities for processing. They supplement this with active externalism. Otto has problems with cognition in terms of his memory deficit, and he supplements his memory from external sources in the same way.

b) Relying on the predictability of others and automatically endorsing their input

In many social situations there is a massive amount of trust in others and in the socially provided environmental triggers that will influence occurrent behaviour. Driving a car through the busy streets of a city requires the assumption that other drivers will act in ways that are reliable and predictable. It would be disastrous for drivers to act as if they could not rely on the evidence of others' beliefs and intentions on most occasions. In the vast majority of cases, indicating that you intend to drive your car in a certain direction is taken as evidence that this will be what will happen. We interpret this behaviour as indicative of an underlying set of beliefs or intentions. Of course, this process is not always successful and accidents do happen. However, given the number of people who are involved in this shared cognitive task it is remarkable that accidents do not happen more frequently.

Social scaffolding mechanisms have been created to minimise the risk of harmful

interference by others. Drivers are required to undertake special training so that they can be more capable of being trusted by other drivers. Learner drivers are identified with "L" plates so that the mutual trust level can be readjusted in their particular circumstances. Specific environmental triggers such as traffic lights are used as a form of shared cognitive scaffolding. It is generally assumed that these indicators are accurate. In instances where the system fails, there are ways of indicating to others that they should not maintain the usual level of trust. Hazard warning lights specifically give this type of message.

Sterelny (forthcoming) argues that these "non-exclusive artefacts" should result in extra cognitive load because they are shared tools and they necessarily need to be adapted for individual use. However, there would be a much greater cognitive burden on each driver if they were forced to consider and predict the movements of every other car as they drove across busy intersections. Epistemic artefacts such as traffic lights and hazard warning lights do not have to be individualised for every use. In fact, their use can be extended to cover a variety of instances and still be mutually understood and jointly beneficial. Traffic lights can indicate that drivers should give way to other cars, or look out for pedestrians or oncoming trains. Hazard warning lights can be used to indicate a flood, a fallen tree, a break down, or a traffic jam. In the framework of a shared cognitive process, these artefacts have been specifically designed to minimise deception problems and confusion. The assertion that people are not trying to make other lives easier does not seem to apply here. In fact, these cognitive aids are specifically designed to make life easier for all of the participants. It is in the best interests on all the drivers to cooperate and to use the same cognitive prompts for their perception and decision-making. Their lives depend on it.

We are vulnerable to deception when we are driving through heavy traffic. However, we assume that the chances of espionage are sufficiently low to ignore the possibility (Clark forthcoming). The behaviour of other drivers is interpreted to indicate whether it is safe to proceed regardless of the state of the traffic lights, but in general, we proceed as if the information from artefacts in the environment can be automatically endorsed. Sterelny (forthcoming) is correct in his assertion that use of external symbols can be cognitively demanding, but this is a much bigger problem for a novice than it is for an expert. Learner drivers will often have big problems interpreting and coordinating the many sources of information that are used in operating a car and driving safely. Experienced drivers are able to incorporate external cognitive prompts much more seamlessly. In fact, they may frequently get home safely without any conscious memory of what a particular set of lights indicated or what other drivers where doing even though they have used this information in order to move safely through the world.

It could be argued that this is not an example of extended cognition. The individual drivers are merely using a set of tools to enhance their own cognition and there is not sufficient portability, reliability, and automatic endorsement to qualify as a case of coupled cognition. It is true that the "epistemic artefacts" are not constantly coupled to the drivers, but they are continually present and used for the duration of the task. Traffic lights and their operational mechanisms are originally socially endorsed rather then being personally endorsed, but they are usually reliable, and are automatically accepted in practice without interrogation. They actively change individual behaviour and provide triggers for predicting the behaviour of others just as internal beliefs are understood to do. However, accepting that the minds of other people and mutually created social scaffolding could be part of our own cognitive processes raises the need for certainty and security in the world. If we have to rely on others, we need substantial mechanisms for deciding who is trustworthy.

Conclusion

I have examined Clark and Chalmer's argument for the extended mind and critiqued a number of the objections to their rationale. Extended cognition does not always fulfil the criteria of portability, reliability, and endorsability that Clark and Chalmers suggest are required to make it a part of the extended mind. However, it can be reliable and endorsable in many circumstances, and we have devised social scaffolding mechanisms to try to overcome the potential for deception and sabotage. Internal models of cognition might seem to be more reliable, but they represent inaccurate views of how our cognitive processes actually work.

There are positive benefits to be gained from extending our cognitive processes not only with "epistemic artefacts", but by coupling with and utilising the resources of other minds. Acquiring the initial skills to use these shared cognitive tools could require a significant degree of cognitive capacity. However, once these skills of extended cognition can be applied with a degree of expertise they could actually allow for significant short cuts in processing. By extending our minds, we pool cognitive resources and this has the potential to be highly beneficial for all because it can reduce the individual cognitive loads. Extended memory and other cognitive resources can be mutually beneficial, but they will be useless if we spend our time sabotaging each other instead of sharing the resources that we have available. Trustworthiness is essential and mutually beneficial to our joint cognitive survival. This is an important social issue. If we are forced to spend large amounts of our cognitive capacity checking for deliberate deception, this represents a huge waste of personal and collective cognitive resources. This means that we have mutually advantageous reasons to adopt and maintain accurate ways of interpreting the behaviour of others, and of establishing social frameworks of mutual trust. If this type of beneficial social embeddedness can be maintained, this actually enhances and extends cognition in ways that could never be achieved by individual isolated minds.

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The meaning of the Other in Emmanuel Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*

by Greg Henderson (1979-2003)

'As a whole, humanity doesn't lend itself to generalisations.'
— Haruki Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*

'There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.'
—— W. H. Auden, *September 1, 1939*

It is not only experience that is haunted by loneliness. Philosophy too runs up against solitude – what is technically called solipsism. But in addition to this, opposed to it, is the risk of being overcome by one's sense of belonging to society. This does not have to be a bad thing. 'There are times when I need to ride in the subway at rush hour or sit in a crowded movie house – that's what I mean by a humanity bath. As cattle must have salt to lick, I sometimes crave physical contact.'[1] However, existentially *and* philosophically, we might worry about bathing too completely in humanity. What is the status of the individual in that case? I call this problem of immersion in a whole 'anonymity': the self loses her name amongst a people.

This essay examines a key work by Emmanuel Levinas with regard to these issues. I attempt to show how Levinas traces a path between two problematic philosophical positions: on the one hand, a view of absolutely sovereign subjects, their freedoms clashing necessarily in the world of matter; on the other, a view of the totality of subjects, produced only in and through their being together. In the first section, following a discussion of Husserl and Heidegger regarding their theories of the other, we will see that Levinas's path is an empiricism that attempts to make sense of things 'on the ground', and not in the rarefied heights of theory. Levinas analyses the ways in which the subject enjoys its world, dwells in a home, and is confronted with others in discourse; this is the subject matter of section two. In section three we will see that the meaning of the Other – a concept central to Levinas's philosophy – is to give meaning to the subject: firstly, in the sense that the Other presents itself, and is not represented by the subject; secondly, in the sense that the mortal subject's striving in the world is meaningless before death. The Other gives meaning to the subject's projects by demanding the fruits of the latter's will, thus displacing that will outside the subject. However, the Other always exceeds the subject's conception of it. Intersubjectivity, a discourse about the relations of subjects, is thwarted at the very time it is posited in Levinas's writing. I consider the problems that develop from this difficulty at the end of the paper.

1. Problematic and method

This paper, a reading of *Totality and Infinity*,[2] is focused on Levinas's use of the term 'Other'.[3] I will argue that Levinas attempts to construct an account of intersubjectivity that avoids the problems associated with, on the one hand, transcendental subjectivity, and on the other, a transcendental intersubjectivity. His account traces a third way between those two alternatives. In this section I suggest that this third way requires a methodological bias towards empiricism.

Simon Lumsden writes that '[t]here is a traditional tension in social ontology between the philosophy of dialogue and transcendental conceptions of intersubjectivity.'[4] For Lumsden, the two key figures in this dichotomy are Buber and Fichte respectively. In Buber's 'dialogicalism' there is no I separate from nor prior to the intersubjective relation. For Fichte, all social ontology is premised on the insufficiency of an I that exists prior to and is fulfilled in the social relation. According to Lumsden, Levinas holds that both fail to respect the alterity of the Other: dialogicalism is unable to distinguish I from Other, and thus 'is unable to take difference seriously'; transcendental intersubjectivity posits the I as primordial, and the Other appears as an 'alien I'.[5] I want to adopt and alter this dichotomy for my own purposes. Rather than discuss Fichte and Buber, I show how the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger have difficulties in adequately accounting for intersubjectivity. And, I do not think the disrespecting of difference is the problem Levinas attempts to circumvent. The respect for difference affirmed in his philosophy is the result of, not the impetus for, his inquiry. I believe that the path Levinas takes between (what I call) transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity is that between the perils of solipsism and anonymity respectively.

Transcendental subjectivity, here associated with Husserl's phenomenology, runs the risk of solipsism.[6] Husserl attempts a rigorous transcendental phenomenological analysis of consciousness in order to ascertain the condition of possibility for experience of others. This is not a problem of knowledge of others' minds. Neither Husserl nor myself are interested in the possibility of knowing the *thoughts* of the man encountered in the street. Yet, is solipsism a problem of the *knowledge* of the existence of others? Is solipsism a *theoretical scepticism*? Not all experiential relations (relations with objects) are theoretical; that is, are knowledge-relations. If the problem of the existence of others is to be answered in terms of knowledge – that is, to overcome scepticism – then we must presuppose what kind of knowledge is to be verified.[7] That presupposition makes it uncertain as to whether or not we truly arrive at knowledge of the *other*, since it is *myself* that decides upon 1) what will be considered an other, and 2) in what way (to what extent) I can be certain of my knowledge of that other. The other is present only by analogy from myself, and in this case the argument from analogy begs the question: What is (the meaning of) the Other? For my purposes, solipsism means the other is defined as merely an alter ego. The meaning of the existence of others as *others* has first to be established before any inquiry into the knowledge of such begins. This meaning would constitute a theory of intersubjectivity: what it means for there to be separate and different subjects *in relation*.

Heidegger, inverting the terms of the problem, gives a transcendental account of intersubjectivity, that is, that inquires into the kind of being of 'Da-sein'[8] in order to correctly describe the deep ontological structures that make possible 'surface' or ontic modes of being with or without others. However, I show that Heidegger's concept of coexistence – *Mitda-sein* – does not lead to a workable theory of intersubjectivity. In the transcendental theory of subjectivity of Husserl, the Other as such disappears from view, and we are left only with an 'alter ego'. In Heidegger's position, the subject, the *myself* is absorbed in the primordial relation of beings.

These two thinkers, as well as being formative influences on Levinas's thought, provide an essential context for understanding Levinas's approach to intersubjectivity. I hope to show here what motivates Levinas's peculiar account of the identity of the I and the account of the encounter with the Other.

Phenomenology as a philosophical method has, from early on in its development, come under attack from critics who claim it is solipsistic. This criticism finds problematic the way that phenomenology, in seeking to establish the apodicticity of its claims, abstracts from experience the essential structures of consciousness that are the condition of that experience. This abstraction, or reduction, culminates in the Transcendental Ego, from which experience is 'constituted'. As such, the phenomenological method is introspective, and this could be construed in a pejorative sense such that all the phenomenologist eventually secures is his own (subjective) experience, and not the universal essences of objects, or the true conditions of possibility for all objective knowledge. Thus, the problem of others is paramount, since the others will need to be theoretically reconstructed from those essential structures of the Transcendental Ego. Husserl tried to overcome this criticism of solipsism by further elaboration of the transcendental reduction in the *Cartesian Meditations*. In that text we find the notion of a transcendental intersubjectivity, based upon the metaphysics of Leibniz, which is claimed to be the 'intrinsically first being'.[9] Still, methodologically, the ego has priority. All philosophical discourse about others, about intersubjectivity, rests upon correct analysis of the transcendental sphere of the ego.[10]

There are two problems in Husserl's account of intersubjectivity I would like to highlight, two problems that are connected by a central methodological premise. Husserl's reduction from the 'natural attitude' takes as its clue the duality of the experience of others; we experience others as both *objects* in the world, and *subjects* for whom the world is. Following this clue, Husserl wants to 'hold fast to the insight that every sense that any existent whatever has or can have for me ... is a sense *in* and *arising from* my intentional life'.[11] Yet, he decides that a mere transcendental theory of 'so-called "empathy"' (the intentionalities pertaining to other existents) will not be sufficient to secure the ultimate goal of the meditation, the apodicticity of the Objective world.[12] We are exhorted to

> disregard all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity and delimit first of all the total nexus of that actual and potential intentionality in which the ego constitutes within himself a peculiar owness.[13]

This 'owness' is an abstraction from everything 'alien' to 'retain a unitarily coherent stratum of the phenomenon world'.[14] We arrive at the 'transcendental concrete I-myself', who lives his life by constituting for himself an Objective world. We will see later how different this I is from Levinas's I who lives from ... what is other, the world. The important point here is that Husserl wants to assert both that the I lives its constitution of its experiences, such that everything is 'mine', and that there is an experiential sense of myself among others (or better, among things external to myself). There is, then, in my owness a *mixing* of difference (what is alien) and sameness (what is mine). (Levinas takes on something of this dual sense of sameness and difference – but clarifies the sense of it as a process of subjectivity – when discussing the I 'alone' in the world.)

Firstly, I want to raise a specific worry about the exclusion of 'the intentional effects produced by "empathy"' from consideration. This means that from the start, the affect[15] of the other upon me (psychologically, as it were) is not at issue since it forms no part of my essential owness. The exclusion is necessary, since (apparently) empathy would be a

structure on a higher and more contingent 'level' than the transcendental apodicticity of owness. Prior to and conditioning the sphere of affectivity is the 'universe of what is peculiarly his own, which can be covered by an original explication of his apodictic "ego sum"'.[16] But is it not possible that the problem of others is properly approached within that former sphere? That instead of disregarding those intentionalities that are orientated towards the other and beginning with what is undoubtedly my own, we should focus our analysis upon the ways in which I am affected by and in turn affect the other?[17]

Secondly, there is a more general worry I have about the presentation as such of other subjects. Put simply, for Husserl the other subject is not present(ed), and is never so. Rather, I am aware that another human body-shaped thing is a subject by 'apperceptive transfer' – the other is *ap*presented – which Husserl takes pains to assure us is not a 'thinking act'. Through the recognition of the similarity of my body and his, and the 'assimilative apperception' of that body as one like mine, I see the other mediately as an 'animate organism'; that is, a body that is inhabited by a consciousness like me.[18] Now, given that the I is the methodological starting point, it is necessary to retain the other's actual consciousness at one step remove from mine, to ensure that he is separated from my owness, my sphere of constitution. For Husserl, as said earlier, the other is never present. Presence involves the 'fulfilment' of the intention by its object; this means, that the intention be at least potentially adequate to its object. In the case of other persons, Husserl thinks that this adequation would reduce the other merely to an instance of myself. (He is not worried that perhaps the adequation of my intentions towards (for example) trees reduces them to a figment of my constituting ego).

This notion of the appresentation of others is not to be thought in terms of the perpetual absence of others, such that I would be still alone in the world even while among others. The problem is instead one of similarity and difference. Husserl's claim that the other is never truly present is meant to maintain the other's separation from my owness, from my constitutive sphere. However, the sense in which others are appresented to/for us is as similar. On the one hand, others are necessarily *different* from me as subjects in their own right. On the other hand, others are others only in so far as they are *similar* (to me). The following quote is instructive:

> The experienced animate organism of another continues to prove itself as actually an animate organism, solely in its changing but incessantly harmonious "behaviour".[19]

Not only should the other be similar to myself in order that I recognise him as a subject, but there is a norm of 'harmony' or consistency that must be maintained for that recognition to continue. It is as if I require from the other a demonstration of his subjectivity. Intersubjectivity thus envisioned means that while I may not be alone, I nevertheless demand of another human being that they are the same as I. In so far as they deviate from my standards of subjectivity, they 'become experienced as a pseudo-organism'.[20] But even if another body performs so that I appresent to myself another subject, if that is on my terms, have I really encountered another subject? I am constructing *from my own perspective* what it is like for there to be other subjects. For Husserl, to be an other means to be like me.

The I-Other relation in Husserl thus appears to be constituted in an attitude of reflection. That is, I represent the other to myself in terms of a prior presentation of myself. It is as if I take a detached perspective with regard to my intersubjective relationships, yet privilege my own knowledge. Levinas explicitly repudiates this way of construing intersubjectivity, as shown in the following passage.

> If this bond between me and the other could be entirely apprehended from the outside it would suppress, under the gaze that encompassed it, the very multiplicity bound with this bond. The individuals would appear as participants in the totality: the Other would amount to a second copy of the I – both included in the same concept. (TI 121)

Intersubjectivity is not 'visible from the outside', because from that point of view from nowhere, the multiplicity of subjects forms a totality. The proper phenomenological and indeed, for Levinas, philosophical approach is 'proceeding from myself and not through a comparison of myself with the other.' (ibid) Intersubjectivity proceeds from a first-person perspective, but the encounter with the other will be immediate, not mediated as it is in Husserl's analogising reflection.[21]

There are then two connected questions we can raise at this point. Firstly, is the threat of solipsism still operative in so far as the other is never present to me in *his* subjectivity, such that I myself assume that he is a subject according to his corporeal similarity to myself? That assumption rests on what *I* know of subjectivity, on my own being, and as such ignores the primary problem of the meaning of the existence of the other. Secondly, is this threat to be overcome by introducing phenomena or intentionalities that belong to the experience of others into the analysis of the ego? That is, in the terms I introduced above, is the affectivity that characterises the I-other relation a conceptual tool available (to phenomenology) to overcome solipsism? Husserl wants to maintain the theoretical purity of phenomenology, and does this by appealing to the transcendental sphere of owness as the starting point for a theory of intersubjectivity. The ontic account of affects – for example: ignoring, being consumed by, or being unsettled by the other – is to be derived from this transcendental theory.

I now want to discuss briefly Heidegger's re-configuration of the terms of intersubjectivity. This re-configuration attempts to overcome solipsism not by introducing additional conceptual tools – that is, by *answering* the problem – but by seeing the question differently.

The beginning of Heidegger's inquiry on intersubjectivity is the question: 'Who is it who is in the everydayness of Da-sein?'[22] Who is the everyday self? Husserl takes it as given that the methodological starting point and the content for phenomenological explication of intersubjectivity is the subject I-myself. The ontic sense of 'I' is transferred to the transcendental level of explanation. Heidegger will instead argue that this assumption leads inquiry astray, since the everyday subject of experience is not 'I' despite the ontic correctness of referring to my Da-sein as 'I'.

Heidegger, like Husserl, takes a clue from the everyday understanding of relations with others, from our understanding of 'beings'. In Heidegger's case, this ontic clue for an ontological account of intersubjectivity is the fact of a world in which things exist and are done for and with others. Just as the structure of 'being-in-the-world' 'showed that a mere subject without a world "is" not initially and is also never given ... [so] an isolated I without the others is in the end just as far from being given initially.'[23] Da-sein's relation to itself is being-there; this means that it understands itself (being) 'here' in terms of that which it is concerned with 'over there'. Further, the everyday being of Da-sein is designated ontologically (that is, as the condition of the ontic sphere) as *Mitda-sein*: 'being-there-with' others. In Husserl's theory, we saw that we begin from the owness of the ego and seek to establish intersubjectivity from there; initially, the self is separate from the others. For Heidegger, the others are not distinguished from an 'I' who is with them. The others are,

> rather, those from whom one mostly does not distinguish oneself, those among whom one is, too ... the world is always already the one that I share with the other. The world of Da-sein is a *with-world*.[24]

How does this reconfigure the terms of the problem of solipsism? The I is initially and for the most part with others not contingently – as a matter of fact – but existentially. The I exists as with others in what Heidegger calls 'the they' [*Das Man*]. The notion of the they – 'not this one and not that one, not oneself and not some and not the sum of them all'[25] – fills out the formal structure of being-with, and is the answer to Heidegger's initial question: The they is the everyday subject, Da-sein in its everydayness. There is not room here to do justice to Heidegger's thorough account of the being of the they. What is important for our purposes is the idea that, rather than beginning from an apodictic *ego sum* and 'building up' the concept of the other person, Heidegger avoids the issue of solipsism by assuming a structure of primordial togetherness and making that the condition of all modes of social being.

I said above that Husserl excludes all other-directed intentionalities – he names empathy – from the properly philosophical account of intersubjectivity. What is Heidegger's position? He claims that the 'explicit disclosure of the other', in concerned attentiveness or in 'deficient or indifferent modes' (such as being aloof) 'grows only out of primarily being-with him.'[26] Empathy, which 'none too happily' designates the phenomenon of understanding another (however this is to be cashed out), will be an ontic confirmation of the ontological structure of being-with. We can use Heidegger's thoughts here to criticise Husserl, not because of the latter's supposed privileging of *theoretical* relations with others, but for attempting to bridge a gap that yawns between subjects simply because Husserl separated those subjects in the first place. If I am a subject like the others,

> there is a relation [of similarity] of being from Da-sein to Da-sein. But ... this relation is, after all, already constitutive for one's own Da-sein ... The relation of being to others then becomes a projection of one's own being toward oneself "into an other." The other is a double of the self.[27]

The idea is that the relation of appresentation or apperceptive transfer is not sufficient to bring back together that which has already been rent apart. It only serves to make others like me. Primordially, we need to posit a being-together of subjects.

Levinas says few things explicitly about Heidegger and *Mitda-sein*. In *Totality and Infinity* he concedes that the relation with the Other in Heidegger is not that of 'objectivity cognition', but is nonetheless 'a coexistence, a we prior to the I and the other, a neutral intersubjectivity.' (*TI* 68) In *Time and the Other* Levinas claims that the preposition *mit* (with) means that sociality is 'an association of side by side, around something, around a common term and, more precisely, for Heidegger, around the truth.'[28] Also in that text Levinas writes of the dialectic of solitude and sociality found in Heidegger's analyses: 'does solitude derive its tragic character from nothingness or from the privation of the Other that death accentuates?'[29] This ambiguity results in 'ontological obscurity': the anthropological plausibility of Heidegger's assertions doesn't help us understand 'the drama of being'. Worse, notwithstanding the possibility of an authentic alliance, sociality for Heidegger is fundamentally inauthentic. Da-sein is lost in the they, has its responsibility taken from it.

For Levinas the relations between beings need articulation in greater detail than Heidegger provides. We might then agree with Sartre that in no way is the postulation of a

formal togetherness of subjects sufficient to account for the complex and varied relations to others that I have in the actual world. He asks 'how shall we be able to pass from [being-with] to the concrete experience of the Other in the world, as when from my window I see a man walking in the street?'[30] The ontological structure *Mitda-sein* turns out to be an empty supposition, too formal for application to experience that it is derived from, yet meant to account for such experience. Sartre calls Heidegger's theory 'the indication of the solution to be found rather than that solution itself.'[31]

However, we might suggest that being-with, as an ontological structure, does not need to account for the variety of relations that can arise between myself and another. The success of the transcendental account in refuting solipsism is all that is needed. Yet there is a further criticism that can be made. The theoretical starting point is not an ego transcendentally constituting others from itself, but the intersubjectivity itself. I am always already with others. This a priori nature of intersubjectivity, the ontological structure of being-with, is based on the possibility of recognition of others as *Mitda-sein*, and not as mere things 'at hand', not as useful things. I am not *myself* with others; I am among the others, absorbed with them just as I am absorbed in my surrounding world among objects. But in this absorption, what need have I of going to another? What sense does it make to talk of recognising an Other – a personal other – in this totality of being-with, of the they?[32] There is, in a pejorative sense, an anonymity, an impersonality that is the condition and substance of Heidegger's account of intersubjectivity. If solipsism is the disappearance of the Other, Heidegger's *Mitda-sein* is the disappearance of myself. From the point of view of the phenomenologist, is not the they a meta-subject who is so far from being an *inter*subjectivity that individual fates are lost in the progress of a people's destiny?[33]

Heidegger, like Husserl, assumes that the other is constituted a priori in some sense. On Husserl's account, the transcendental ego does the constituting; in Heidegger's case, it is the ontological structure of being-with that establishes intersubjectivity. In both cases, there are problems: for Husserl, there seems to be an unbridgeable gap between my self and the other, in so far as there is a problematic relation of difference and similarity that reduces the other to another instantiation of my owness. For Heidegger, there are not others to encounter, only others to be with, alongside, absorbed in our daily tasks. The ontological structure of being-with totalises the I-Other relation, making it a 'We'.

2. Inside

If the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger result in problematic accounts of intersubjectivity, what is Levinas's position? Methodologically, what is the difference in Levinas's work that allows us to make progress? I mentioned affectivity above, and meant by it the event of the Other's influencing the subject. If *deep* structural accounts (transcendental and ontological) leave us wondering about the relation of the self and the Other, would it be productive to investigate *superficial* (empirical or ontic) phenomena more thoroughly to elucidate the relation of myself to the other? This would be following Sartre's lead: 'We encounter the Other; we do not constitute him'.[34] Levinas formulates the problem in similar ways, for example: 'Pluralism implies a radical alterity of the other, whom I do not simply *conceive* by relation to myself, but *confront* out of my egoism.' (*TI* 121) Is this encounter an empirical, contingent fact? It is not given a priori that there are others – assuming this lets us account for the threat of solipsism. But we need to account also for the alleviation of solipsism. What are the means of this alleviation? How does one encounter the other as Other? The answer to that question, from Levinas's perspective, is to be found in his notion of the 'face to face' relation, which I discuss in section three

('Outside'). To avoid anonymity in a social whole, the Levinasian subject must exist as separated. So I must first give an account of that subjectivity as it exists primordially – that is, as the self in enjoyment – an account, as it were, of the 'inside'.

In the previous section I attempted to show how solipsism and anonymity menaced the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger (respectively), and how we could productively avoid those problems. Levinas's notion of the concretisation of formal structures, opposed to the totalising nature of ontological structures and the solipsistic transcendental structures of the ego, allowed us a way of considering the sense of experience such that we prioritise the 'superficialities' of the empirical. The encounter with the Other, and not the a priori constitution of such, is the necessary methodological starting point in any theory of intersubjectivity that wants to depart both from solipsism and avoid immersing the subject in a 'neutral intersubjectivity' where there is no sense made of I-Other.

For Levinas, enjoyment is the primordial way of being in the world, prior to representative intentionality (the structure of *noesis-noema*) and practical, evaluative existence. The happiness of the self in enjoyment is premised upon its assimilation of that which is other to it, its consumption of what it needs. This assimilation assures the identity of the subject, which is not an 'empty', 'tautological' I-am-I but an operation of maintaining itself as itself in the midst of the world. Securing for itself provisions against the menace of future impoverishment, the subject needs to dwell in a home and to work for its needs.[35] Levinas will say that this dwelling presupposes a welcome from the Other. The presence of the Other in the home is said to be a feminine presence, and in this way Levinas places intersubjectivity at the heart(h) of subjectivity.

Keeping in mind that Levinas wishes to leave the *sense* of the experience at the experiential level – the concrete – he does have a formal level of explanation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. This formal level includes the concepts of transcendence, desire, separation, and ipseity, and the explication of it comprises that section of *Totality and Infinity* entitled 'Same and Other.'

What is the motivation behind Levinas's formal philosophy? In one sense, we could think that the formal level of explanation lends a certain philosophical dignity to a theory that otherwise might merely be an abstract and bizarre anthropology. Or, if not dignity, at least it gives philosophically trained readers an orientation to the text through Levinas's readings of Descartes, Plato, and others. More profitably, we can see the first section of *Totality and Infinity* more or less as a synopsis of the entire text viewed from a particular perspective; that is, the formal perspective, with occasional gestures towards future developments. The later sections approach the same issues 'from the ground', that is, at the concrete level of experience while drawing on the formal principles laid down in the first section. Importantly, the concretisation of formal structures is a *real development* of subjectivity in the world. Llewelyn suggests that the notion of a condition for... (i.e. a transcendental condition for the possibility of..., a '*sine qua non*') be read also as a condition in the sense of 'human condition'.[36] This means that the complete account of being-in-the-world necessarily relies upon the actual condition of the subject in the world facing others, and not merely upon the (logical?) conditions of possibility for a subject as such. Agreeing with Llewelyn, we can say that Levinas practices an 'absolute empiricism'[37] – taking not the ontological difference as the beginning of ontological inquiry, but the fact of experience starting from oneself – and this is consonant with the methodological claims made in section one.

Separation is the necessary condition for a relation of true transcendence. For Levinas, metaphysics is a going beyond that does not seek to return. In order to retain the

otherness, or *alterity*, of the Other, the two terms of the metaphysical relation cannot form a totality; in other words, there is no reciprocity, nor any asymmetry between those terms since those kinds of relation presupposes a similarity to be compared. There is no similarity, no contiguity that could be produced between the terms Levinas posits as being in a metaphysical relation. If we name the terms 'same' and 'other', we can say that the same will necessarily be absolutely exterior to the other.

Transposing these concepts to a discussion of intersubjectivity, we can say that subjects cannot reciprocally determine one another; they must in some sense be complete prior to the social relation. For Levinas, the completion of the subject, prior to its dealings with others, is 'accomplished' by enjoyment. That is, the separation of the subject is 'deformalized' in the experiential notions of life: living from..., enjoyment, dwelling. 'Separation in the strictest sense is solitude, and enjoyment ... is isolation itself.' (*TI* 117) Subjectivity as separated would suffice to preclude the transcendental subsumption of the self in a structure such as *Mitda-sein*. But what then motivates the journey outside oneself toward another? Or: what refers the happy, solitary subject to the Other? We will see that in the concretisation of the formal notion of subjectivity the Other is always already implicated. For now, I am concerned to explicate this formal notion of the subject as separated.

We are better off talking of the subject in terms of 'ipseity', or 'unicity', rather than tautological identity. 'The identification of the same in the I is not produced as a monotonous tautology: "I am I".' (*TI* 37) For Levinas, the subject exists without being an instance of a genus or a concept. Ipseity is the name for the ontological event of being a subject, the formal signification of subjectivity which is not to be obscured by a mere logical identity which would link the subject to a concept under which it is subsumed as an instance. The interiority of the subject, 'psychism', is solitude in the strongest sense, absolute being-oneself.[38] Levinas admits that this idea, of being without a concept, is logically absurd, but this doesn't deter him, since he repudiates the idea of reflecting abstractly on the relation of self to self, and privileges the 'concrete relationship between an I and a world.' (*TI* 37) The subject as separated ipseity is the necessary way of considering subjectivity given the formal account of intersubjectivity as transcendence and desire, but this formal account only means something given the mode of enjoyment in which the subject has its being in the world.[39]

Levinas gives us a visual impression of the ipseity of the self: 'the I is the very contraction of sentiment, the pole of a spiral whose coiling and involution is drawn by enjoyment ... It is precisely as a coiling, as a movement toward oneself, that enjoyment comes into play.' (*TI* 118) As existence for-itself (without this being a representation of itself) the subject closes up upon itself, as 'capable of killing for a crust of bread'. 'Enjoyment is a withdrawal into oneself, an involution.' (*ibid*) This involution produces the solitude of ipseity. In being in a world that is other to the I, there is not – as in 'good logic' – an alteration of the I by that other. Instead, the I *maintains* its ipseity, remains identical in its alterations. Ipseity is work.

The way in which I may be other for myself is, for Levinas, merely a play of the same. This is because, being able to distinguish myself-as-same from myself-as-other, I am immediately aware that this opposition expresses merely the universality of myself. Again, this formal identification of the subject is not demonstrated in empirical, concrete structures but is *produced* as those structures.

This reversion of the alterity of the world to self-identification must be taken seriously;

> the "moments" of this identification – the body, the home, labour, possession, economy – are not to figure as empirical and contingent data, laid over the formal identification of the same; they are the articulation of this structure. (*TI* 38)

The concrete ontological events of self-identification – the modes of being-in-the-world of the subject – are the *production* of the formal structure of ipseity.

3. Outside

For Levinas, the position of the subject in the world is that of an interface; embedded, 'enworlded', etc. The interiority of the subject is conditioned by its position in the world; the exteriority of things is based upon the subject's maintaining his / her self in the world. Simultaneously within and without, the Levinasian subject transacts with its world across its interface, whether this is understood in terms of the body, the dwelling, or the plasticity of its facial expression. It is these transactions, along with Levinas's conception of death, that I now want to consider. Firstly, I discuss Levinas's formal account of transcendence, with reference to the idea of infinity in Cartesian metaphysics. Levinas describes for us the situations in which the Other is implied or presented in experience – dwelling (the welcome), fear of death, commercial exchange of things, and material generosity. We will see that despite the importance of first person experience for Levinas, the exterior Other in his or her being is that which always escapes the subject. Nevertheless, the meaning of the Other is given – as the giving of meaning.

Transcendence, formally speaking, is the metaphysical relation. The distance between the metaphysician and the metaphysical is not like the interval between two entities, which would be able to be traversed. Instead, that distance 'enters into the way of existing of the exterior being ... The metaphysician is absolutely separated.' (*TI* 35) For our purposes, the subject is analogous to the metaphysician, though this relation (is it an analogy?) is not clear in Levinas's text. Separation, the mode of existing of the subject, is necessary for transcendence. But we have seen that separation does not necessarily mean that what is other remains other for the subject, since in the assimilative logic of enjoyment and possession the alterity of the element is acquired and subsumed by the subject. However, Levinas claims that 'the "intentionality" of transcendence is unique in its kind; the difference between objectivity and transcendence will serve as a general guideline for all the analyses of [*Totality and Infinity*].' (*TI* 49) The subject-object relation or 'objectivity' reduces the distance between terms so that the subject comprehends the object, is adequate to what is given. There is no distance between subject and object. The metaphysical relation is one in which what is other remains absolutely other, absolving itself from the relation. The distance spoken of just above is infinite.

Levinas finds in Descartes' third meditation an exemplar of the metaphysical relation: the idea of Infinity. Unique among all relations the *cogito* has with things, the metaphysical relation with the Infinite is transcendence, meaning here that what is thought exceeds the thought that thinks it. For Descartes, the existence in me of the idea of the Infinite requires it to be placed there by the Infinite. Likewise, for Levinas the idea of the Other exceeding my ability to comprehend him or her presupposes having that idea placed in me by the Other.

The formal structure of the idea of infinity is concretised in social relationships. In the majority of its relations with things, the Levinasian subject labours to make itself adequate to them, to appropriate them for its own needs. The social relation is that one in which the subject cannot assimilate alterity. If need is the impetus for enjoyment, or perhaps the vehicle of enjoyment, desire is the impetus for the social relation.

A thing grasped in labour cannot contest its possession, but other possessors can. 'The possession of things issues in a discourse.' (*TI* 162) The first action over and above labour is communication through language. (*TI* 174) Things as possessions are phenomenal, are not *in themselves* but *for myself or another*. In order that representation is possible – 'in order that I be able to see things in themselves' – the subject must free itself from possession. For Levinas, this means being able to give what one possesses. Commerce – the exchange of fungible goods in a market – would not suffice for the subject to learn generosity, since the exchange remains within the subject's economy. In a similar way, the indiscretion of the interlocutory Other encountered in the face-to-face relation is necessary for giving, as a calling into question of my possession of things: both those gained in labour and things in terms of the way I interpret the world.

> The "objective" is not simply the object of an impassive contemplation. Or rather impassive contemplation is defined by gift, by the abolition of inalienable property. The presence of the Other is equivalent to this calling into question of my joyous possession of the world. (*TI* 75-6)

This relation, this calling into question, is (produced as) language that is transcendence – 'contact across a distance'. The face of the Other, then, does not refer to the Other's visage, but to the orientation of myself facing the Other – the Interlocutor – in conversation.[40] This orientation is opposed to Heidegger's use of the preposition *mit* (with). However, it's not clear why Levinas makes the face-to-face relation essentially a discursive relation. In fact, in *Totality and Infinity* the sexual relation is given as a paradigmatic example of the face-to-face relation, as is teaching, but in the former it is strange to think of language being the means of relating. (*TI* 121) Further, the face-to-face relation is primarily a material relation of donation, before it is one of discussion. For Levinas, the Other approaches me in discourse not 'from the outside but from above.' This height is designated 'with the term teaching.' In fact, teaching is the production of 'the whole infinity of exteriority', and the first teaching teaches height, 'the ethical'. (*TI* 171)

To understand this notion of language, we must consider what Levinas says about phenomena and expression. There is a difference between asking 'who?' and asking 'what?' For Levinas, the latter question always asks for a substantive and an adjective, such that the answer takes the form: a *as* b. This quiddity (i.e. 'as what') of things and people pertains to phenomenality. According to Levinas, however, a question is addressed *to someone*, who is essentially not a what. The one questioned is present as the 'correlative of what is prior to every question.' (*TI* 177) What is presupposed by every question is desire, which seeks not answers to questions of quiddity but the who behind the exchange of question and answer.

Yet (and Levinas recognises this) most of the time the who *is* a what. The person with whom I engage in conversation is contextualised. In so far as this is the case, that person is not present, is not expressed in the conversation. Not only can things be phenomenal, but so too are I and the Other when approached through the symbolism of works (which call for interpretation, taking *this* as *that*). (*TI* 178) While things are *disclosed* in conversation, the Other is *revealed* in expression.[41] 'The face is a living presence; it is expression.' (*TI* 66) The existence of meaning presupposes the production of meaning, just as the system of signs that is a language presupposes that which signifies, the signifier. But not only the signifier – language is always already contextual, *between* subjects. 'Meaning is the face of the Other, and all recourse to words takes place already within the primordial *face to face* of language.' (TI 206)[42] For Levinas, the signifier par excellence is not just another sign, but

the face of the Other. This means an overturning of Husserlian doctrine: 'Signification precedes *Sinngebung*, and rather than justifying idealism, marks its limit.' (*TI* 207) The meaning bestowed by the transcendental ego upon the objects of its experiences is contested and founded by the encounter with the Other.

We must note here that properly speaking the Other is without context, a pure expression. The central question for us, given the dual threat of solipsism and anonymity, is how Levinas secures for us this revelation of the Other as Other, and not merely as a phenomenal thing to be taken and used, treated just as another sign. Earlier, when discussing the subject, I said that it does not belong to a concept or a genus as an instance or species. The difference between the subject and the Other is thus not specific difference, a numerical difference between two instances of the same concept. It is absolute difference, difference as such, or (a word more common in French than in English) alterity [*altérité*]. The face of the Other 'breaks with the world that can be common to us'; it is infinitely foreign and transcendent. 'Speech proceeds from absolute difference.' (*TI* 194) Actually, language accomplishes or establishes absolute difference in the first place. 'Language accomplishes a relation between terms that breaks up the unity of a genus.' (*TI* 195) The relation between the subject and the Other that gives the Other as Other (and not as a thing) is discourse, the social relation. This is despite the fact (acknowledged by Levinas) that in language all that are given are signs, themes, representations; conditioning the operation of language as a totality of differentially related signs is the presence of the interlocutor, the source of meaning. The Other as such remains outside of that totality of language, absolutely exterior. Are there two languages, one a system and the other the vehicle of transcendence? This paradox of the concept of language in *Totality and Infinity* is not resolved by Levinas. Despite language being in a sense economical (function of the totality) it also is the condition for the possibility of transcendence. We cannot make sense of the experience of the face, the constantly changing plasticity of the Other's expression, without thinking of language as both producing that absolutely surprising experience *and* being the totalising condition for understanding it at all.

If knowledge is a self-satisfied comprehension of the world (including others), discourse breaks with knowledge in that the Other can argue with me, contesting my interpretation of the world. Teaching is not maieutics, the bringing out of knowledge latent in the mind. But not only my knowledge of the world is questioned; for Levinas the Other puts 'the I in question'. (*TI* 195) The social relation is not essentially epistemological (teaching knowledge and correcting error), but *ethical*.[43]

What does it mean to say the Other is absolutely different from the subject, overflows the subject facing him or her? The production of meaning by the Other is the concrete, deformalized production of infinity, and this production must primarily be that of the meaning of the Other. That I have the idea of the Other (ephemeral as it is) in me presupposes that it has been put there by the Other. In discourse, the Other's presence is incommensurable with my ability to respond, since it stands in relation to me as the idea of infinity stands in relation to the thought that thinks it. Infinity, produced in the concrete, seems to be the resistance the Other puts up against any attempt to encompass him or her in a theme – to have comprehended the Other. If the subject comprehended the Other, there would no longer be a being facing but a thing, insubstantial in its phenomenality – taken as a *what* and not a *who*. Murder, the ultimate attempt to grasp the Other, to stop the production of meaning in expression, fails, since the corpse that results means the Other has already fled. The will to violence and also to hate remains unsatisfied just as it is satisfied.[44] Alterity as exteriority (not that of the element) cannot be appropriated in any sense by the subject. Thus, the resistance that the Other opposes to the subject is not that

of a complementary power. The Other 'can oppose ... to the force that strikes him not a force of resistance, but the very unforeseeableness of his reaction.' It is a 'resistance of what has no resistance – the ethical resistance.' (*TI* 199)

The epiphany of the face does not reveal information hidden in the Other's interiority. Exteriority is not correlative to interiority. There is not a truth of the Other that is communicated to me in discourse – if there were, then that truth would be merely another theme, and would not exhaust the infinity of the Other. 'To speak to me is at each moment to surmount what is necessarily plastic in manifestation.' (*TI* 200) Discourse evinces an incessant exceeding of what is phenomenally given in experience.[45]

The materiality of the face-to-face relation is important, despite the privileging of discourse and language. As noted above, the stakes of discourse are not primarily epistemological. Instead, the Other implores me, imposes itself, appeals to me in hunger.[46] (This appeal is indiscrete, but can it force the subject to be generous? But the Other has no power over the subject. The normative status of Levinas's philosophy is neutral, but perhaps attests to some normative force of the actual experience of the Other.) Levinas says that 'no human or interhuman relationship can be enacted outside of economy; no face can be approached with empty hands and closed home,' (*TI* 172) and this means that the Other contests first not the theme in which I present the world, but my possession of things. Thus, 'the face opens the primordial discourse whose first word is obligation, which no "interiority" permits avoiding.' (*TI* 201) The Other calls me to responsibility, to be responsible for his material existence.[47] The first ethical response is generosity.

Let us review what has brought us to this point. In experience, we are aware that we represent the world and things to ourselves. For Levinas, this contemplative attitude requires a distance from the work of labour and possession, a distance that is learned by giving to the Other what is acquired in labour. But the stakes of the face-to-face relation are not just the development of the cognitive ability of the subject, but concern the meaning of the Other and the meaning of the existence of the subject in the face of its mortality. The demand the interlocutor addresses to me must reveal to me first of all the Other as such; the encounter with the Other is the event of the putting-in-me of the idea of the Other.

4. Conclusion

In section one I drew up a dichotomy between a solipsistic philosophy of the subject and an anonymous philosophy of society. I suggested that Levinas traces a path between those two alternatives, privileging the sense of the encounter with the Other. In chapter two I explored Levinas's notion of subjectivity as separated, which notion serves to prevent the subsumption of the subject in a social totality. In section three I attempted to come to terms with the relation with the Interlocutor, discussing the face-to-face relation to the Other in terms of discourse and expression. These latter concepts are meant to serve to overcome the threat of solipsism, allowing the subject a way out from its lonely sojourning in the world. The meaning of the Other is put in the subject by the Other, but in doing so always exceeds the capacity of the subject to comprehend that meaning.

Does *Totality and Infinity* relieve philosophical anxieties about solipsism and/or about the loss of the subject in an anonymous We? The answer to this question is twofold. Firstly, a philosophical answer to that question relies upon the concepts of separation and infinity. To avoid anonymity in an intersubjectivity that subsumes all individuals under the rubric of a people, Levinas emphasises the solitude of a subject in its ipseity. The recourse to Descartes' argument regarding the idea of infinity is given in order to circumvent solipsism: I can only have the idea of the Other in me if it is put there by the Other in the first place.

However, these are merely formal indications of the solution to be found, and not the rich account we should expect given Levinas's emphasis on concrete experience. Thus, a complete account of intersubjectivity relies upon the appeal to experience. Yet the meaning of the Other escapes the phenomenologist in so far as s/he attempts to write down and fix that meaning. The meaning of the Other for Levinas is to continually exceed its given meaning, precisely because it is only the Other that can give that meaning. Any philosophical discussion of the Other in Levinas must end with comments no less obscure than this.

If we affirm the privilege of the concrete we have two consequences. One, solipsism or anonymity is lived by the subject, and not confirmed or denied by a philosophical demonstration. Two, the specificity of the relations with the Other (and indeed with the world) stand to be continually revised by empirical investigation. This means that the analyses undertaken by Levinas in *Totality and Infinity*, precisely because of the strength of his position on solipsism and anonymity, stand to be criticised rightfully for cultural, gender, and historical bias.

Even if we affirm those two consequences, there still remains the problematic issue of transcendence. The key opposition at work in *Totality and Infinity* is not that between inside and outside. The liminal subject is always at the same time inside and outside, within the elemental other but recuperating, recollecting itself; it is a body simultaneously subject to and sovereign over the world; and it transcends itself toward the Other but only from within economic existence, always within a context. Does the fact of liminality mean that there is never any true transcendence? The way in which I have read *Totality and Infinity* makes it difficult to see how Levinas can maintain two 'levels' of exteriority: one, the elemental, that cannot resist the assimilative strivings of the subject in the world, and another – the Other – which remains always exterior. Put differently, the critical difference for Levinas is that between the other (*autre*) and the Other (*Autrui*).

From the point of view of first person experience, which is the point of departure for all of Levinas's analyses, there seems to be no real transcendence. If as I claimed in the first chapter Levinas is to be understood as developing formal concepts in actual experience, how can the transcendent reveal itself in the world without thereby losing its transcendence? In earlier writings the impossibility of leaving oneself behind marks Levinas's texts with despair.[48] But the hard question regards not how we are to respond to this impossibility, but whether it poses a real problem at a conceptual level. Is the dual sense of language (as totality and as transcendence) a barrier to establishing a respectable theory of intersubjectivity, once we confirm the always contextual, always economical state of discourse? This is not only a problem for the exteriority of the Other, but also for the separation of the subject: 'Can I speak my mind or am I dumb inside a borrowed language, captive of bastard thoughts? What of me is mine?'[49]

Notes

1 Saul Bellow, *Ravelstein* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000), 9

2 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, Trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Dusqesne University Press, 1969). All references to this text are denoted by '*TI* x', where 'x' is the page number.

3 In discussions of Levinas's phenomenology, I follow Alphonso Lingis' practice of using 'other' to refer to whatever is different to the ego, and 'Other' to refer to the personal other, another subject.

4 Lumsden, "Absolute Difference and Social Ontology: Levinas face to face with Buber and Fichte," *Human Studies* 23, No. 3 (2000): 227.

5 Lumsden, 227.

6 Solipsism is a term that has various senses. In its most radical form, solipsism is the doctrine that nothing but the self exists. I doubt that any philosophers hold this view. If premised on the fact of the limit of my subjective knowledge, the denial of the existence of things outside my experience is 'perfectly unjustified and gratuitous.' (I owe a substantial debt to Sartre's discussion of solipsism.) More moderately, a solipsist will insist that only my subjective knowledge is veridical. The privilege of my own 'mental contents', or bodily sensations consists in their immanence to my experience. The actual existence of external or transcendent objects remains purely conjectural, neither denied nor affirmed. Everything that I know has its justification merely by what I can see, touch, intuit, and so on. The existence of others especially might be thought a supposition of my own, by analogy or otherwise from myself. What is most veridical is what originates from and what pertains to my own subjectivity, my own status as subject of experience, and the idea that there may be other such subjects finds no justification starting from me.

7 This point – posed in this particular way – I owe to a conversation with Nick Smith.

8 I do not want to rigidly define this term further, but we can assume – for the purposes of discussion – that Da-sein refers to a human being, much in the same way as consciousness means human consciousness in Husserl's work.

9 Edmund Husserl, "Fifth Meditation", in *Cartesian Meditations*, ed. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 156.

10 Husserl, 155. It is notable that Husserl ends the Meditations with the following words of Augustine: 'Do not wish to go out; go back into yourself. Truth dwells in the inner man.' (157)

11 Husserl. 91.

12 The fifth meditation takes a 'grave objection' as its departure point: that Husserl's method is solipsistic, an objection which concerns 'nothing less than the claim of transcendental phenomenology to be itself transcendental philosophy and therefore its claim that ... it can solve the transcendental problems pertaining to the *Objective world*.' (89)

13 Husserl, 93

14 Husserl, 96

15 To think of the encounter of the Other as a cause-effect relation might explain the mechanism or operation that takes place, but not the meaning of that relation in the first place. The word 'affect', left intentionally undefined, means to avoid those mechanical connotations of 'effect'.

16 Husserl, 104

17 To 'effect' the other seems to suggest that one constitutes the other.

18 Husserl, 110-11

19 Husserl, 114

20 Husserl, 114

21 Levinas also argues that Husserl's 'celebrated analysis' of the Fifth Meditation takes the intersubjective relation to be a cognitive one. This analysis 'dissimulates ... mutations of object constitution into a relation with the Other'. (*TI* 67) This means, the other is determined as such on the basis of the constitution of the other's body as a 'living body', and is only thus determined within the 'primordial sphere' of owness – what Levinas calls 'the same'.

22 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 114

23 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 118

24 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 118

25 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 126
26 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 124
27 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 124
28 Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, Trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duqesne University Press, 1987) 41.
29 Levinas, *Time and the Other*, 40
30 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 247
31 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 247
32 The development of this idea I owe partly to conversations with Jess Cadwallader.
33 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 384-385: 'But if fateful Da-sein essentially exists as being-in-the-world in being-with others, its occurrence is an occurrence-with and is determined as *destiny*. With this term, we designate the occurrence of the community, of a people. ... In communication and in battle the power of destiny first becomes free. The fateful destiny of Da-sein in and with its "generation" constitutes the complete, authentic occurrence of Da-sein.'
34 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 250
35 The concrete phenomenological descriptions that Levinas relies upon to assert the meaning of the Other can be objected to, since they might seem to take for granted some sort of fantastical pre-social state of the subject. I intend to show in this chapter and the next that there is no such state, since the subject is always already embedded in social relations. More worryingly, however, the analyses undertaken by Levinas admit of cultural specificity, perhaps to the extent that the universality aspired to by his philosophy is compromised. This latter issue is too big to be dealt with in this essay.
36 John Llewelyn, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Genealogy of Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1995) 108.
37 Llewelyn, 108
38 *TI* 118: 'The I ... is solitude par excellence.'
39 This is not quite true. If we assume the continuing relevance for Levinas's project of his early book *Existence and Existents*, then we can give a more complete picture of the subject at the point of absolute solitude, taking over its existence in the instant of its beginning. That is, there is a meaning to ipseity prior to the concrete analysis of (existential) enjoyment, a meaning brought out in the analyses of indolence and fatigue. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, Trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duqesne University Press, 2001) especially the first section, 'The relationship with existence and the instant', 7-18.
40 Here we have the modality of the Other intimated in the previous chapter, the Interlocutor, who is distinguished from the discrete Feminine modality that 'withdraws' by his or her indiscretion and 'absolute presence'. (See Emmanuel Levinas, "The Trace of the Other", in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986): 345-59, 358.)
41 The correlative nouns disclosure and revelation are important. I think that the distinction turns on the implication of inner truths being unveiled in disclosure. A revelation then must be (and this is consonant with the rest of my reading) a pure expression out of a nothing. It is not the interiority of the Other that is 'communicated' or 'disclosed' in discourse. Rather, the relation is all there is, all that is revealed is the revelation.
42 My emphasis. Tina Chanter notes this by saying that 'language does not refer to a prior meaning or to the contents of consciousness; it is what makes sincerity possible.' 'Levinas and Impossible Possibility', 94
43 This notion of knowledge is Levinas's own, and probably needs to be criticised. The way in which knowledge is conceived, as Nick Smith has pointed out to me, necessitates Levinas's emphasis upon the contestation of my view of the world by the Other. However, the very subjectivity of the subject is under question, its essence, and not just the contingent moments of its knowledge; Levinas's concerns go beyond worries about knowledge and epistemological justification.
44 See *TI* 239: 'To inflict suffering is not to reduce the Other to the rank of object, but on the contrary is to maintain him superbly in his subjectivity. In suffering the subject must know his reification, but in order to do so he must precisely remain a subject. Hatred wills both things.'

Levinas says that it is ontologically possible, but ethically impossible to murder the Other. I am not sure what the distinction between ontological and ethical possibility comes to. It could mean simply that it is never right to kill an Other, but if so we should say that the Other presents a certain normative force by his or her expression, not an impossibility. Also, is not the impossibility of killing a being *with a face* (because when dead the Other has no face) an ontological impossibility? That is, the always already effaced nature of a corpse relies upon ontological statements, and not ethical ones (from which, again, we expect normative force and not degrees of possibility).

45 This way of conceiving of exteriority as a 'purity' entails immense problems for the philosophical writing of the Other.

46 The epistemological consequences of Levinas's theory of intersubjectivity should not be downplayed. Truth requires that there be the risk of illusion and error; only a separate being risks those things. Thus, the seeking of truth by the subject is a movement beyond itself, and in fact, truth is sought in the Other by way of acts of language: calling upon, commanding, obeying, justifying, and so on. See *TI* 60-4

47 'The only way to express the impact made by the other in positive terms is to use ethical language ... Using traditional language, we must say that the answer to the question "what is the other?" can only be "the other obliges me". Adriaan Peperzak, "Levinas' Method," *Research in Phenomenology* 28 (1998): 110-25, 115. We might still wonder whether the materiality of the donation clashes with Levinas's emphasis on discourse, whether this means that Levinas's notion of language needs to be reworked to account for the sensuous and material conditions of sociality that seem so important in some sections of *Totality and Infinity*.

48 'Being me involves a bond with oneself, an impossibility of undoing oneself. To be sure, a subject creates a distance from itself, but this stepping back is not a liberation. It is as though one had given more slack rope to a prisoner without untying him.' Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, 89

49 Jeanette Winterson, *Art and Lies* (London: Vintage, 1995) 22-3

Just a moment!

by Gerry Nolan

What do you mean when you say the words 'in a moment'? Do you mean *in* a very short time, or right now, *at* this moment? Or, when you say the words 'in an instant', do you mean *in* a very short time, or right now, *at* this instant?

Many conversations and texts that refer to *instants* and *moments* not only use these two words interchangeably as though they were synonymous, they also use both to mean *a short interval of time* and *a point in time* as though there were no differences in these two meanings. So the questions arise, do both the words *instant* and *moment* mean *a short interval of time* or *a point in time* or both? Is *a point in time* the same thing as *a short interval of time*? If it is, it makes the words synonymous. Is this the case or is ambiguity possible? If ambiguity is possible, does it matter, or are the two meanings of the words close enough that, if there is some possibility of ambiguity, the context in which the words are used will immediately clarify their meaning? Through an analysis of a discussion on Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow, I show that ambiguity *is* possible and when it does occur, confusion does result.

The fact that in both the *Oxford English Dictionary* [1] and *Roget's Thesaurus* [2] the words are listed as synonyms of each other and a *short interval of time* and a *point in time* are taken to mean the same thing, makes a strong case for regarding the words and their meanings as completely synonymous and, therefore, immune to ambiguity. I will show that this is far from being the case, that the difference in the meanings of these phrases is not just a matter of degree, but that they mean entirely different things. The first obviously refers to *an interval of time*, which has a duration no matter how short an interval it is, and the latter to *a point in time*, which is durationless. That is the two meanings of the words refer to *different categories* of object, one of duration and the other not duration. As may be seen in the shortened list of definitions I have given below, both the words *instant* and *moment* have several meanings besides those that relate directly to time. I will deal only with the meanings as they relate to *intervals of time*, and *points in time*.

As far as possible I will not venture into discussions about the different concepts of time, including in relation to whether or not time is comprised of discrete intervals or whether or not time exists as a continuum. In addition, I will not be concerned here whether or not time is a fundamental characteristic of the universe or is just a convenient way of describing change. This is not meant to denigrate the importance of either of these issues. They are of profound importance. However, there is considerable continuing debate on both issues that is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, I will attempt to present clearly the manner in which the issues impact on the subject of this paper.

My analysis of a discussion about Zeno's arrow paradox will be my main vehicle for pointing out the ambiguities that I believe have arisen and to demonstrate the resulting confusion. I will also investigate whether the use of the different meanings of moments and instants may cause ambiguity in mathematics and physics. Later in this paper I will suggest how the problem might be remedied through identifying more sharply the definitions of the words *moment* and *instant*.

In the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Roget's Thesaurus*, there are two meanings for each of the words *moment* and *instant* given and, since these definitions are the root cause

of the problem, I will present them in some detail here (copied, with some deletions, from OED 2nd Ed):

moment

1. a. A portion of time too brief for its duration to be taken into account; a point of time, an instant.

b. ***the moment:*** *occas*. In pregnant sense, the moment, the momentary conjunction of circumstances that affords an opportunity.

c. Phrases. ***at a moment***: at a moment's notice; ***(at this) moment in time***: now, the present instant; ***for a moment***: (*a*) predicatively, destined to last but a moment; (*b*) adv., during a moment; ***not for a moment***: emphatically not; ***for the moment***: so far as the immediate future is concerned; also, temporarily during the brief space referred to; ***to have one's*** (or ***its***) moments: to be impressive, etc., on occasions; ***to live for*** (or ***in***) ***the moment***: to live without concern for the future; ***of the moment:*** of importance at the time in question; esp. ***man of the moment; never a dull moment:*** a catch-phrase designating constant variety; ***one moment:*** elliptically for 'wait one moment', 'listen for one moment'; ***on the spur of the moment: on, upon the moment*** (now rare): immediately, instantly; ***the moment:*** elliptically for 'the moment when' or 'that', as soon as ever; ***this moment:*** used advb. for (*a*) without a moment's delay, immediately; (*b*) just now, hardly a moment ago; ***to the moment:*** with exact punctuality; also, for the exact time required.

2. As the name of a definite measure of time.

3. **a.** A small particle. ***to the moment:*** to the smallest detail.
b. *Math.* An infinitesimal increment *or* decrement of a varying quantity.[3]

instant

1. The point of time now present, or regarded as present with reference to some action or event; hence, point of time, moment.

2. An infinitely short space of time; a point of time; a moment.

3. Phrases (from 1 and 2), ***at (in) one (an) instant***: at one and the same moment, concurrently. ***at one (an) instant***: in a moment, forthwith, immediately. ***in an instant, on (upon, in) the instant:*** etc. ***the instant***: elliptically = 'the very instant' or 'moment that', 'as soon as ever'.[4]

The first thing to notice is that the second part of the definition for *moment* in example **1**. a. is '. . . a point of time, an *instant*', while in example **1**., *instant* is defined as 'The point of time now present, or regarded as present with reference to some action or event; hence, point of time, *moment*. In other words *instant* and *moment* are defined in terms of each other as points in time which, I suppose, is proper for synonyms, but this is not where the problem lies. If the definitions of both words stopped at the words 'point in time', there would be no problem, however, in the same example **1**. a. of the definition for *moment*, the words 'A portion of time too brief for its duration to be taken into account . . .', also appear. In example **2**. for *instant*, appear the words 'An infinitely short space of time', which obviously has a very similar meaning to 'A portion of time too brief for its duration to be taken into account' and both mean 'a short interval of time'.

According to the above definitions, both the words *instant* and *moment* can mean either *a short interval of time* or *a point in time* or both. As a start, I will try to explain more clearly the differences between *a short interval of time* and *a point in time*. A *short interval of time* signifies duration, no matter how short the interval, whether 'infinitely'

short or simply ‘a portion of time too brief for its duration to be taken into account’. A *point in time* is a specific reference to a durationless mark at a particular point in time. By this I mean that *a point in time* is analogous to a graduation mark on a ruler which indicates a distance without itself having the dimension of length (see Illustration 1).

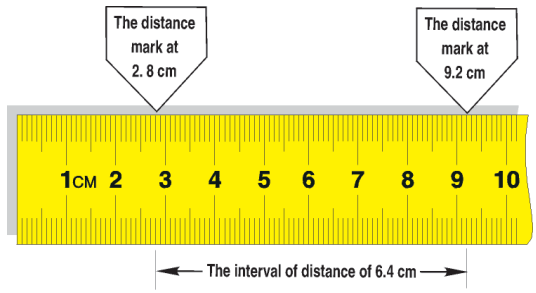

Illustration 1: *The analogy of a ruler shows the difference between a mark at a distance, what I have defined as* a point in time*—and an interval of distance, what I have defined as* an interval of time.

Although the graduation marks on the ruler must have a finite width to be visible, it is generally understood that while the mark is taken to signify the distance measured, the actual, true distance is a point of zero dimension somewhere within the width of the mark. If a more accurate measurement is required, ways of reducing the width of the mark become necessary, such as is achieved in vernier callipers and micrometers. In the same way the point in time occurring at the *instant* of 3.33’12”, shown in Illustration 2 below, can be taken as meaning that the *point in time* being referred to lies somewhere within the second that occurs at 3.33’12”. If we wanted to define the position of this particular *point in time* more accurately, as in, for example, sporting events, we will need to find a way of more finely representing the graduation marks on the clock face, such as a full sweep of 360 degrees for one second, as in some stop watches, or use a digital representation.

Another matter to be considered is that there may be a limit to how finely the second can be divided to make a the measurement. This limit may occur for at least two reasons; first, because time is discrete, being at its most fundamental level comprised of indivisible units. If this is the case we can still say they are points in time because they are, by definition, durationless—if they had duration, they would be divisible. The second reason that there may be a limit is because there is a limit to how small an interval of time can possibly be measured—say the Planck time of 10^{-43}seconds.[5] If there is such a limit, it obviously has connotations for the concept of a durationless *point in time*. Nevertheless, our durationless *point in time* can be taken to be located somewhere within the interval that lasts 10^{-43}seconds even though its exact location cannot be found. Therefore, even if there is a limit to how finely time may be divided or measured, it does no alter my point, which is, in both the clock and the analogy of the ruler, the reference mark is taken to signify the actual *point in time* or the *distance*. In the case of the clock it is a durationless point that lies within the interval of the reference mark specified and in the case of the ruler it is a dimensionless point that lies somewhere within the width of the mark. That being said, throughout this paper I will use the words *a point in time* to signify a point that is durationless and the words *a short interval of time* to signify a portion of time, a very short period of time, or any other short interval of time of undefined duration, including an infinitely short period of time. I will also use the word *instant* to signify a durationless *point*

in time and the word *moment* to signify *a short interval of time* of undefined duration.

A further matter requires clearing up before I go on with the ambiguities created by confusion between *a point in time* and *a short interval of time*. If points in time are durationless and either of the words *instant* or *moment* is defined as *a point in time*, saying that time is comprised of instants or moments would be the same as saying that distance is comprised of dimensionless points on a ruler. Complete *lack of duration* is the main characteristic by which *a point in time* differs from *a short interval of time*. Illustration 2, may make this distinction clearer. As I said, the most important way in which they differ is that *a short interval of time* has duration and *a point in time* does not, it is just a durationless reference point in time like a distance mark on a ruler or a kilometre post at the roadside, where the true distance lies somewhere within the width of the mark.

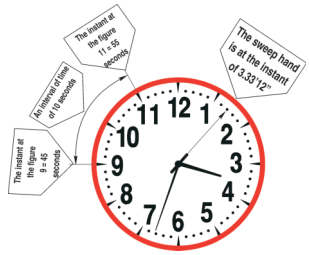

Illustration 2: *Showing the difference between instants as I have defined them to be—points in time—and an interval of time, that is 10 seconds between the two instants. An instant as I have defined it is just a durationless mark, a reference point in time. The interval of time shown is the period between the two instants, in this case, 10 seconds.*

Is there a problem?

Despite this burdening of two words, each with two distinctly different meanings, the human race seems to have survived quite well and the studies of philosophy and science have progressed considerably over the centuries. Certainly it is not a unique circumstance in the English language—the existence of multiple synonyms for so many words indicates this—but it does appear that when these words are loaded with two such totally different meanings, the potential for ambiguity arises. It seems to me, because the dictionary provides us with two perfectly good words, rather than going to all the trouble of inventing a new word, or words, and trying to get them accepted, all that is necessary is to do as I have done and make one word have one meaning and the other the other. That is, I have taken *moment* to have the meaning *a short interval of time*, and *instant* to mean exclusively *a point in time*. I will return to this suggestion after I have shown why such a move is necessary to avoid ambiguity and confusion.

My first inkling that there might be a problem with the definitions of *moment* and *instant* arose while reading Alfred North Whitehead's 'Critique of Scientific Materialism',[6] where he says, 'Here an instant of time is conceived as in itself without transition, since the temporal transition is the succession of instants.' This sentence seems to me to contain a contradiction in that it leads to a temporal transition from a succession of instants, each without transition. No matter how many instants without transition succeed the preceding ones, they could not add up to a passage of time. Richard Gale[7] says as much:

> Time is not made up of now-moments any more than a line is made up of mathematical points. Rather it is the case that time, like a line, is made up of parts, each of which has a finite length and is therefore divisible *ad infinitum*.

Whitehead could have meant, while the instants themselves are without transition, they are separated by intervals and it is these that give the accumulating succession of instants its temporality, but he does not say this. It is hard to know what the intervals would be if they were not time. In his next paragraph, Whitehead goes on to say,

> The answer, therefore, which the seventeenth century gave to the Ancient question of the Ionian thinkers, "What is the world made of?" was that the world is a succession of instantaneous configurations of matter—or of material, if you wish to include stuff more subtle than ordinary matter, the ether for example.

Now this 'succession of instantaneous configurations of matter'—that is, change—without the necessity for intervals between the successive instants, may be what gives matter its temporality, although Whitehead does not say this either. I will not delve further into this issue now, my point is that there is ambiguity and room for confusion as to what Whitehead means. This is not to hold Whitehead's use of the word *instant* responsible for the confusion, he does define it clearly as being the instant that has no transition—*the point in time* instant—but he places a heavy load on it when he says 'the temporal transition is the succession of *instants*' and 'the world is a succession of *instantaneous* configurations of matter,' (my emphasis) without indicating where the sensation of temporality comes from.

To illustrate the problem further I will analyse a discussion about Zeno's arrow paradox to point out the ambiguities and demonstrate the resulting confusion when the words *instant* and *moment* are used imprecisely and without defining the meaning intended.

Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow

As shown below, Zeno's arrow paradox is particularly susceptible to confusion arising from the 'equivocal use of terms'[8] (*Aristotle* page 176). Aristotle maintains, 'Zeno's contention that ". . . the flying arrow is not moving" depends on the assumption that the time of its flight is made up of indivisible instants in each of which it is at rest. This assumption has been shown to be false'.[9] Earlier in the *Physics*, Aristotle is very clear about which definition of an instant he is using to refute Zeno, '. . . but an indivisible instant, as we have seen, is not a period of time, and neither rest nor motion can occur except during a period of time.'[10]

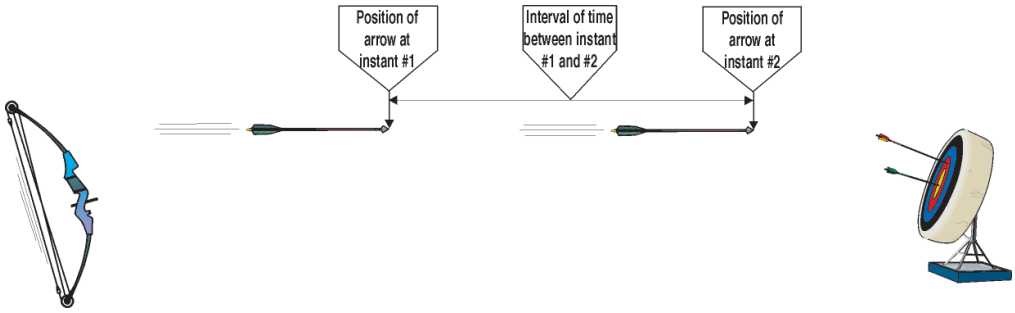

Illustration 3: *Zeno's arrow, showing the difference between positions at one instant and a later instant and the interval of time between them. Once again, this meaning of an instant as I have defined it is that it is just a mark, a reference point in time like a distance mark—a kilometre post—at the roadside.*

To demonstrate the confusion arising from the ambiguity, which itself arises from the 'equivocal use of terms', I have re-interpreted the following discussion (3.3 The Arrow) from Nick Huggett's, 'Zeno's Paradoxes'.[11] First (Case 1), I have quoted it as it appears in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* so that readers may form their own opinion as to whether or not there is ambiguity. Secondly (Case 2), my comments are inserted in [. . .] in the discussion where I think Huggett's use of the words *instant* and *moment* is ambiguous. In the third case I closely analyse the discussion and attempt to remove the ambiguity by using *instant* to mean *a point in time* and *moment* to mean *a short interval of time*. What effect these different uses will have on the resolution or otherwise of Zeno's arrow paradox, will be revealed as we go along.

Case 1:

Huggett's discussion about Zeno's arrow paradox is repeated here as it appears in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:[12]

3.3 The Arrow

The third [paradox] is . . . that the flying arrow is at rest, which result follows from the assumption that time is composed of moments . . . he says that if everything when it occupies an equal space is at rest, and if that which is in locomotion is always in a now, the flying arrow is therefore motionless. (Aristotle *Physics*, 239 b30).

Zeno abolishes motion, saying "What is in motion moves neither in the place it is nor in one in which it is not". (Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Famous Philosophers*, ix.72)

This argument against motion explicitly turns on a particular kind of assumption of plurality: that time is composed of moments (or 'nows') *and nothing else*. Consider an arrow, apparently in motion, at any instant. First, Zeno assumes that it travels no distance during that moment—'it occupies an equal space' for the whole instant. But the entire period of its motion contains only instants, all of which contain an arrow at rest, and so, Zeno concludes, the arrow cannot be moving.

An immediate concern is why Zeno is justified in assuming that the arrow is at rest during any instant. It follows immediately if one assumes that an instant lasts 0 s: whatever speed the arrow has, it will get nowhere if it has no time at all. But what if one held that the smallest parts of time are finite—if tiny—so that a moving arrow might actually move some distance during an instant? One way of supporting the assumption—which requires reading quite a lot into the text we have—is to assume that instants are indivisible. Then suppose that an arrow actually moved during an instant. It would be at different locations at the start and end of the instant, which implies that the instant has a 'start' and an 'end', which in turn implies that it has at least two parts, and so is divisible, and so is not an indivisible moment at all. (Note that this argument only establishes that nothing can move during an instant, not that instants cannot be finite.)

So then, nothing moves during any instant, but time is entirely composed of instants, so nothing ever moves. A first response is to point out that determining the velocity of the arrow means dividing the distance travelled in some time by the length of that time. But—assuming from now on that instants have zero duration—this formula makes no sense in the case of an instant: the arrow travels 0 m in the 0 s the instant lasts, but 0/0 m/s is not any number at all. Thus it is fallacious to conclude from the fact that the arrow doesn't travel any distance in an instant that it is at rest; whether it is in motion

at an instant or not depends on whether it travels any distance in a finite interval that includes the instant in question.

The answer is correct, but it carries the counter-intuitive implication that motion is not something that happens at any instant, but rather only over finite periods of time. Think about it this way: time, as we said, is composed only of instants. No distance is travelled during any instant. So when does the arrow actually move? How does it get from one place to another at a later moment? There's only one answer: the arrow gets from point X at time 1 to point Y at time 2 simply in virtue of being at successive intermediate points at successive intermediate times—the arrow never changes its position during an instant but only over intervals composed of instants, by the occupation of different positions at different times.

Are you confused? I believe the ambiguities are obvious and prolific, but let us go on and see if we can demonstrate conclusively where the problems lie and perhaps resolve the arrow paradox as well.

Case 2:

Huggett's discussion is presented here with my comments inserted in [. . .] where I think Huggett's use of the words *instant* and *moment* is ambiguous. I have not commented on the first two paragraphs.

3.3 The Arrow

The third [paradox] is … that the flying arrow is at rest, which result follows from the assumption that time is composed of moments . . . he says that if everything when it occupies an equal space is at rest, and if that which is in locomotion is always in a now, the flying arrow is therefore motionless (Aristotle, *Physics*, 239 b30).

Zeno abolishes motion, saying "What is in motion moves neither in the place it is nor in one in which it is not". (Diogenes Laertius Lives of Famous Philosophers, ix.72)

This argument against motion explicitly turns on a particular kind of assumption of plurality: that time is composed of moments (or 'nows') *and nothing else*. Consider an arrow, apparently in motion, at any instant

[Huggett seems to mean any 'now', as defined by Aristotle, to be an 'indivisible instant'].

First, Zeno assumes that it travels no distance during that moment—

[Huggett has suddenly switched to 'moment' but he obviously still intends it to mean a 'now' and that it means the same as 'instant'. But his use of the word 'during' requires that, if something is occurring 'during' that moment, the moment, whatever he takes it to mean, must have duration]

—'it occupies an equal space' for the whole instant

[Huggett has switched back to 'instant' again but still seems to imply duration, one does not talk about a 'whole' *point* in time].

But the entire period of its motion contains only instants,

[For a 'period' to contain only instants, the instants must have duration. If they

> are durationless ‘nows’, as Aristotle seems to mean, they do not add up to a period of time.]

all of which contain an arrow at rest, and so, Zeno concludes, the arrow cannot be moving.

An immediate concern is why Zeno is justified in assuming that the arrow is at rest during any instant.

> [Again, if something is occurring ‘during’ any instant, that instant must have *duration.*]

It follows immediately if one assumes that an instant lasts 0 s:

> [Which we cannot do if something is occurring ‘during’ it, that is, it has duration.]

whatever speed the arrow has, it will get nowhere if it has no time at all.

> [This is correct only if the instant he is using means a durationless *point in time.*]

But what if one held that the smallest parts of time are finite—if tiny—so that a moving arrow might actually move some distance during an instant?

> [Here, Huggett is using the definition of instant as *a short interval of time.*]

One way of supporting the assumption—which requires reading quite a lot into the text we have—is to assume that instants are indivisible.

> [If instants have any duration at all, that is they are *short intervals of time,* they cannot be indivisible.]

Then suppose that an arrow actually moved during an instant.

> [Which it can do only if the instant has duration.]

It would be at different locations at the start and end of the instant, which implies that the instant has a ‘start’ and an ‘end’, which in turn implies that it has at least two parts, and so is divisible, and so is not an indivisible moment at all.

> [Notice the switch to ‘moment’. Does Huggett mean that instants are durationless and moments have duration?]

(Note that this argument only establishes that nothing can move during an instant, not that instants cannot be finite.)

> [Again, as Huggett says ‘*during* an instant’ it must have *duration* and cannot be *a point in time*. If an instant is *finite*, and, therefore, has *duration*, it is hard to see why nothing can move *during* that instant. Also, if ‘nothing can move during an instant’, it must surely mean that that instant is not finite. Other instants may be finite, but this assumption is part of the problem I am analysing.]

So then, nothing moves *during* any instant, but time is entirely composed of instants so nothing ever moves.

> [My italics, see the previous paragraph. If instants have *duration*, time *can* be

composed of instants, if instants have *no duration*, time *cannot* be composed of instants.]

A first response is to point out that determining the velocity of the arrow means dividing the distance travelled in some time by the length of that time. But—assuming from now on that instants have zero duration—

[This is a clearer definition but zero duration still allows the possibility of some duration at another time. *Durationless* means that instants are not in the category of objects that have duration.]

this formula makes no sense in the case of an instant: the arrow travels 0 m in the 0 s the instant lasts, but 0/0 m/s is not any number at all. Thus it is fallacious to conclude from the fact that the arrow doesn't travel any distance in an instant that it is at rest; whether it is in motion at an instant or not depends on whether it travels any distance in a finite interval that includes the instant in question.

[It is incorrect to say '*in* an instant' if he defines the instant as having no duration, but it is correct to say '*at* an instant' if the instant has no duration. Of course, the arrow is on motion if it travels any distance in a finite interval that includes the instant in question.]

The answer is correct, but it carries the counter-intuitive implication that motion is not something that happens at any instant, but rather only over finite periods of time.

[It seems to me to only be 'counter-intuitive' because Huggett has made the mistake of confusing *a point in time* with *a short interval of time*.]

Think about it this way: time, as we said, is composed only of instants. No distance is travelled during any instant.

[Again, time cannot composed of instants if the instants have zero duration, if they do have duration, as Huggett's use of 'during' implies, distance is travelled].

So when does the arrow actually move? How does it get from one place to another at a later moment?

[Does he mean 'moment' to have duration or is it the point in time version?]

There's only one answer: the arrow gets from point X at time 1 to point Y at time 2 simply in virtue of being at successive intermediate points at successive intermediate times—the arrow never changes its position *during* an instant but only over intervals composed of instants, by the occupation of different positions at different times.

[My emphasis—if it was in flight it *would* change its position if the instant had duration, as Huggett is implying it has by the use of the word *during*. See above for the inability of intervals of time to be composed of durationless instants.]

Case 3:

Finally, by using *instant* to mean *a point in time* and *moment* to mean *a short interval of time* in an attempt to remove the ambiguity, I will write each sentence with what I think is the appropriate meaning and then comment on it immediately. I have not altered the wording of the first two paragraphs.

3.3 The Arrow

The third [paradox] is … that the flying arrow is at rest, which result follows from the assumption that time is composed of moments … . he says that if everything when it occupies an equal space is at rest, and if that which is in locomotion is always in a now, the flying arrow is therefore motionless (Aristotle *Physics*, 239 b30).

Zeno abolishes motion, saying "What is in motion moves neither in the place it is nor in one in which it is not". (Diogenes Laertius Lives of Famous Philosophers, ix.72)

This argument against motion explicitly turns on a particular kind of assumption of plurality: that time is composed of *instants* (or 'nows') *and nothing else*.

> [Time cannot be 'composed of instants' as they are simply durationless marks in time and are not in the same category as intervals of time. If Zeno's argument does turn on the fallacious assumption that time is composed of instants, it fails. But let us go on to see if this assumption is necessary. Note: I have also taken 'nows' to mean *points in time* (instants), if the 'nows' are considered to have any duration whatsoever it will introduce an ambiguity.]

Consider an arrow, apparently in motion, at any instant. [unchanged]

First, Zeno assumes that it travels no distance during that moment—'it occupies an equal space' at that *instant*.

> [If Zeno means the *short interval of time* moment in the first part of the sentence, he is incorrect. Changing 'for the whole instant' to 'at that instant', removes the ambiguity in the second part of the sentence, which now reads correctly. However, now it only tells us that the arrow occupies a space equal to its length at that instant, which is true but not very informative.]

But the entire period of its motion contains only *instants*, all of which contain an arrow at rest, and so, Zeno concludes, the arrow cannot be moving.

> [This premise is false for the reason given above, it is a category error to assume that an interval of time can be comprised of points in time. If we use *moments*—short intervals of time—in place of *instants* to make up the 'entire period of its motion' in the above sentence, the arrow does have time to move and Zeno's argument is refuted.]

An immediate concern is why Zeno is justified in assuming that the arrow is at rest at an *instant*.

> [If we accept the definition of instant as *a point in time*, Zeno is not justified in assuming this. As I have said, an instant is analogous to a distance marker alongside a roadway and our vehicle does not stop each time we go past such a marker. See Illustration 4.]

It follows immediately if one assumes that an *instant* lasts 0 s: whatever speed the arrow has, it will get nowhere if it has no time at all.

> [The ambiguity is creeping back! To even say 'that an instant lasts 0 s' is a category error, because it is simply a durationless reference point.]

But what if one held that the smallest parts of time are finite—if tiny—so that a moving

arrow might actually move some distance during a *moment*? One way of supporting the assumption—which requires reading quite a lot into the text we have—is to assume that *moments* are indivisible.

> [If we assume *moments* have any duration at all, they cannot be indivisible, as Huggett goes on to conclude below.]

Then suppose that an arrow actually moved during a *moment*. It would be at different locations at the start and end of the *moment*, which implies that the *moment* has a 'start' and an 'end', which in turn implies that it has at least two parts, and so is divisible, and so is not an indivisible *moment* at all.

> [With the word 'moment' substituted for 'instant', this is straightforward.]

(Note that this argument only establishes that nothing can move at an *instant*, not that *instants* cannot be finite.)

> [Substituting 'at an instant' for '*during* an instant' makes this sentence unambiguously incorrect. As it was with '*during* an instant' the instant must have *duration* and cannot be *a point in time*. If an instant is *finite*, and therefore has *duration*, it is hard to see why 'nothing can move *during* [that particular] instant'. Also, if 'nothing can move during an instant', it must surely mean that that particular instant is not finite. Other instants may be finite, but this confusion is part of the problem I am analysing.]

So then, nothing moves during any *instant*, but time is entirely composed of *instants*, so nothing ever moves.

> [This sentence clearly illustrates the ambiguity on which Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow is based. Since we have defined instants as *points in time* and moments as *short intervals of time,* there is no way to rewrite the sentence so that it is correct or without ambiguity. As I have said, it is category error to say 'during any instant' as it is to say 'time is entirely composed of instants'. If we say 'during a moment' then there is time for the arrow to move. If we are consistent and say 'time is entirely composed of moments', it is acceptable, but then to say 'nothing ever moves' is incorrect.]

A first response is to point out that determining the velocity of the arrow means dividing the distance travelled in some time by the length of that time. But—assuming from now on that *instants* have zero duration—this formula makes no sense in the case of an *instant*: the arrow travels 0 m in the 0 s at the *instant*, but 0/0 m/s is not any number at all.

> [This passage comes closer to the definition of instant as a dimensionless point in time in that it defines an instant as having zero duration, but in the terms of our definition it is still a category error because an instant is an object to which the word duration does not apply.]

Thus it is fallacious to conclude from the fact that the arrow doesn't travel any distance in an *instant* that it is at rest; whether it is in motion at an *instant* or not depends on whether it travels any distance in a finite interval that includes the *instant* in question.

> [In terms of our definition of instant the first part of the sentence makes the category error again by saying 'in an instant' but the second part of the sentence, after the semi-colon, is correct, as Huggett says below.]

The answer is correct, but it carries the counter-intuitive implication that motion is not something that happens at any *instant*, but rather only over finite periods of time.

> [It seems to me to only be 'counter-intuitive' because Huggett has made the mistake of confusing *a point in time* with *a short interval of time*. As I have said above, an instant is analogous to a distance marker alongside a roadway and our vehicle does not stop each time we go past such a marker.]

Think about it this way: time, as we said, is composed only of *moments* and distance is travelled during any *moment*. So when does the arrow actually move? How does it get from one place to another at a later *instant*?

> [With the unambiguous wording, finding the answer (below) is trivial.]

There's only one answer: the arrow gets from point X at time 1 to point Y at time 2 simply in virtue of being at successive different positions at successive *instants*—the arrow only changes its position during *moments* over intervals composed of *moments*, by the occupation of different positions at different *instants*, in succession.

The short version

I will summarise the discussion so far by reducing Zeno's argument to Aristotle's interpretation of it and repeating the exercises of Case 3 as *Case 3a.*

Zeno's argument

> 'That it is impossible for a thing to be moving during a period of time, because it is impossible for it to be moving at an indivisible instant.'[13]

Case 3a

Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow depends on the assumption that a period of time is comprised of indivisible instants and that the arrow does not move at an indivisible instant. To make 'indivisible instants' add up to a period of time, they must have duration, so we would have to use the definition of an indivisible instant that means *a short interval of time*. If we assume this, the premise of Zeno's argument; 'it is impossible for it to be moving *at* an indivisible instant', must now read 'it is impossible for it to be moving *during* an indivisible instant'. This statement is false for two reasons; first, for the reason that an instant that has duration, which it must have if 'instants add up to a period of time', it cannot be indivisible and, secondly, because the instant has duration, there is time for the arrow to move.

Summary of the discussion about Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow

In my analysis of Huggett's discussion about Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow[14] I have gone into such detail for three main reasons: first, to point out the ambiguities and consequent confusion arising from the undefined and interchanging use of *instant* and *moment* in discussing Zeno's argument and in trying to resolve the paradox. The second reason was to demonstrate that both the definitions of *a point in time* and *short interval of time* are essential. Finally, I have tried to show that Zeno's paradox simply fails to exist when *instant* and *moment* are specifically defined and used consistently. The question remains as to how

the allocation of these two contradictory meanings to separate words, without ambiguity, is to be achieved. However, before I approach this task, I will analyse whether the use of the different meanings of moment and instant may cause ambiguity in mathematics and physics.

A moment's ambiguity in mathematics and physics

Neither my dictionary of mathematics or my dictionary of physics has a definition for *instant*. The *Collins Dictionary of Mathematics* defines *instantaneous* as '. . . **1**. (of any property of a function of time) occurring at or associated with a given instant, or as a limit as a time interval approaches zero. For example, instantaneous velocity is the derivative of displacement of a position with respect to time.'[15]

The Penguin *Dictionary of Physics* defines *instantaneous value* as 'The value of any varying quantity at a particular instant of time, or (strictly) the average value over an infinitesimal period of time.'[16] The first part of this definition presents no difficulty if the definition of *instant* used is that it is *a point in time* as defined earlier. The second part of the definition seems to mean that the *instantaneous value* is found by averaging the value, say speed, over the duration of a very short (infinitesimal) interval of time. In the absence of being able to determine the exact value at a particular instant, due to limitations in measuring, this would be a useful approximation—the shorter the period of time, the more accurate the approximation. Of course it is not necessary that the instantaneous value *at* any particular instant will be the same as the instantaneous value obtained by averaging in this way. The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd Edition, defines instantaneously as:

instantaneously

1. In an instant, in a moment; without any perceptible interval between beginning and completion.

2. In or at the particular instant.[17]

All three definitions use both the durationless meaning of *a point in time* and the meaning of *a short period of time* as being of an indeterminate duration. They refer to *at* an instant ('*at* or associated with a given instant' and '*at* a particular instant of time') and all refer to *very short periods of time* ('time interval approaches zero' and 'infinitesimal period of time' and 'without any perceptible interval between beginning and completion'). A simple example might help clarify what is meant by an *instantaneous value* and, in the process distinguish more clearly between the two meanings.

Let's say you are riding the motorbike in Illustration 4 (below) at an average speed of 200 kilometres per hour (kph) between the instant at 11.30.50 am (thirty minutes and 50 seconds past eleven am) and the instant at 11.30.52 am (thirty minutes and 52 seconds past eleven am). If you only know that your average speed is 200 kph between the instant at 11.30.50 am and the instant at 11.30.52 am, unless you are actually looking at the speedometer at the instant at 11.30.51 am, you will not know what you exact speed is at that instant. However, knowing that your average speed is 200 kph is reasonable evidence that the *instantaneous value* of your speed at the instant at 11.30.51 am will be 200 kph.

Now, if the interval over which your speed is averaged is reduced to between 11.30.50.9 am and 11.30.51.1 am, that is, over a period of two tenths of a second (0.2 seconds), the *instantaneous value* will obviously be closer to the actual value. If you take the 'average value over an *infinitesimal* period of time' or 'as a time interval approaches zero', as stated in the definitions above, the value will be very close to the actual value at a particular instant, in our case, at the instant of 11.30.51 am. This is one way of explaining the

derivation of an instantaneous speed as it would be done using differential calculus, where the infinitesimal period used approaches zero. In other words, the definition of instant being used is that of a *very* short interval of time, in this case, an interval that approaches a duration of zero. To make it perfectly clear, we have used the *point of time* definition of instant to say *at* which instant you want to know your speed, and the *short interval of time* definition of instant to calculate the *instantaneous value* of your speed.

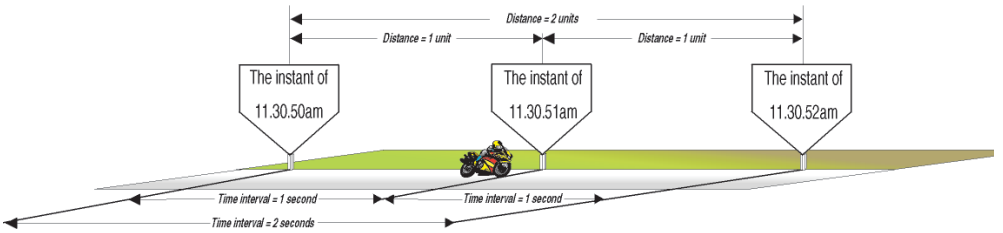

Illustration 4: *This illustration shows clearly how instants—as I have defined them—are like distance markers except that they are markers in time.*

It should be clear now that the definitions of *instantaneously* given use both the meaning of *a point in time* and *an interval of time* as the definition of *instant* in defining *instantaneous*. It is obvious that the potential ambiguity has not impeded the application of either the definition of *instant* or *instantaneously* in either mathematics or physics, however, no matter how short the interval of time, one should be careful not to construe that the 'infinitesimal period of time that approaches zero' definition is the same as the definition of instant as 'a point in time'. The two definitions refer to objects in different categories. Perhaps the reason the potential ambiguity has not been a problem is because a durationless *point in time*, for practical purposes in mathematics and physics, can be taken to mean the same as *zero time*, even though it is a category error to do so. Further discussion on the human ability to discriminate short intervals of time may be found in James 1890, Chapter 15.[18]

Further clarification

It may help to clarify the difference between *moment* and *instant* by analysing another form of ambiguity which occurs when a sentence refers to a *moment* occurring *at* a particular *instant*. Obviously, on the basis of my definition of a moment being a short interval of time, the whole moment cannot occur at an instant. While the perpetrators of this sort of ambiguity seem to have an inkling that there is a difference between the two words and even that a moment is a short interval of time while an instant is a point in time, the ambiguity still arises because of the lack of appreciation that there is a category difference between the two meanings. It is correct to say that a moment begins at one instant and ends at a subsequent instant. It is also correct to say that any number of instants occur during a moment and to designate particular instants.

I could go on giving examples but more than a cursory perusal of many texts dealing with time, where instants and moments are concerned, will reveal ambiguities in the meanings used, when they are used and how they are used.

Summary and conclusion

My analysis of the use of the words *instant* and *moment* demonstrates how their use may be ambiguous if the definitions of both *moment* and *instant* are used to mean *a short interval of time* and the definition of both *instant* and *moment* are used to mean *a point in time*. The ambiguity is caused by the undefined, and sometimes interchangeable use of *instant* to mean *a point in time* or *a short interval of time* and *moment* to mean *a short interval of time* or *a point in time*, and may creep in even when writers are very careful to define their terms clearly.

I have analysed the discussions in considerable detail for two main reasons; first, to demonstrate that *points in time*, which totally lack duration, and *short intervals of time*, which do have duration, belong to different categories, and to show that failing to acknowledge this category difference leads to ambiguities and confusion—that is, a problem does exist. Secondly, I have demonstrated that, when the words *instant* and *moment* are specifically defined and used consistently, these ambiguities are eliminated and, in the case of Zeno's Paradox of the Arrow, the paradox simply dissolves.

It is clear from all of the above analyses and demonstrations that two words are essential, one with the meaning *a point in time* and one with the meaning a *short interval of time*. It is also clear that, if both these meanings are allocated to the same word, ambiguity will arise, so the question is as to how the allocation of these meanings may be achieved without creating the potential for ambiguity?

Resolving the problem

As stated earlier in this paper, it seems to me that we already have two perfectly good words and, rather than go to all the trouble of inventing a new word, or words, and trying to get them accepted, one word could be made to have one meaning and the other the other. For example, *moment* could be designated to have the meaning 'a portion of time too brief for its duration to be taken into account', while *instant* could be designated to mean exclusively, 'a durationless point in time'. I appreciate that these designations are arbitrary but I suggest this particular meaning for each word because it seems more natural. For example, we usually say 'Just a moment!' to mean, 'I'll be with you in a short time,' and it is unlikely that we would say, 'Just an instant!' to mean the same thing. In a similar way it is more usual to say 'at an instant' than to say 'at a moment'.

I hope this paper has raised the awareness of the potential for ambiguity when using the words 'instant' and 'moment'.

Thanks to Dr James Franklin, Associate Professor of Pure Mathematics at UNSW, who asked some challenging questions and made valuable suggestions, and to Miss Holly Hou (BCS Hons) who provided very useful insights into improving my presentation of the subject.

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Deconstruction and the politics of Kantian aestheticism

by Emma Simone

In 1790, Immanuel Kant published the *Critique of Judgement,* a work that continues to maintain a strong and controversial influence on theories of art and literature through its notion of *aestheticism.* Significantly, for most of the last century, "aesthetics and political ideologies" have been seen by many to be two totally unrelated spheres (Beech 99). It is this thesis that I wish to concentrate on in this paper, with particular emphasis on the way in which the treatment of both *the subject* and *language* within Kantian aesthetics reflect political intents. My critique of Kantian aestheticism will be positioned from the perspective of the theory of deconstruction, concentrating principally on the work of Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man, as well as Martin Heidegger. The philosophy of Nietzsche will also be included to demonstrate what could be termed a `bridge of thought' that exists between the movements of Kantian aestheticism and deconstruction. As will be explained in detail, this paper will be structured around the notion of the *supplement* or *parergon,* as the principal means of analysing, from a deconstructive perspective, the political implications of Kantian aesthetics. The relationship between the *supplement* or *parergon*, and the *metaphysics of presence* within the *Critique of Judgement,* will be explored in order to emphasise the ways in which Kant's work affirms, or alternatively deconstructs, logocentric tendencies that are based on politically or ideologically motivated hierarchical configurations and demarcations. Regarding the treatment of *the subject* within Kantian aesthetics, the political implications of the notion of the *centred-subject* will be discussed. In terms of the issue of Kant's treatment of *language*, I will concentrate primarily on the classical notion of the *trivium,* that is, grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Before beginning a deconstructive analysis of the treatment of *the subject* and *language* within Kantian aesthetics, I wish to detail some of the principal characteristics of deconstruction itself, with particular emphasis on deconstruction's relationship to the *metaphysics of presence.* I will then focus on the terms *supplement* and *parergon,* and discuss the ways in which, from a political perspective, both are fundamentally tied to deconstruction's treatment of *presence* and *absence.* Of great significance to this understanding will be a discussion of why the metaphysical binary opposition of *centre* and *margin* can be equated to that of *presence* and *absence.*

Deconstruction is a theory that principally seeks to interrogate notions of *logocentrism*, that is, the belief in a *central* fixed meaning, one that most significantly "attempts to repress difference" (Baldick 125). Logocentrism is based principally on what is known as the *metaphysics of presence*, which is, "the orientation of philosophy toward an order of meaning – thought, truth, reason, logic, the Word – conceived as existing in itself, as foundation" (Culler 92). The ultimate intent of logocentrism is the creation of belief-systems that reflect binary oppositions based on a centre – *presence* – and a margin – *absence*. The connection between the terms *centre* and *presence* are an essential component of deconstruction's interrogation of the metaphysical "desire for a centre or original guarantee of all meaning" (Baldick 233). Indeed, Derrida writes in *L'Ecriture et la*

Diffërance that "all names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the *centre* have always designated the constant of a *presence"*(Culler 92 – my emphasis). Derrida further emphasises this point in *Of Grammatology* when he states that logocentrism is "bound up in the determination of the being of the existent as *presence*" (Culler 93 – my emphasis).

Within deconstruction, notions of the *margin* and *absence* are connected in a number of ways. First, if the metaphysical perspective is based on binary oppositions, then if the *centre* equates to *presence*, then by rights the *margin* should equal *absence.* Indeed, if the margin is in a sphere demarcated from the centre, then it is *absent* from that centre. Deconstruction's treatment of the *margin* as *supplement* is most important within this explanation. Derrida describes the marginal, in *The Truth in Painting,* as that which "is not internal or intrinsic, as an integral part, to the total representation of the object…but which belongs to it only in an extrinsic way as…a *supplement*" (1987: 57 – my emphasis). Within his paper 'Speech and Phenomena', Derrida defines the *supplement* as that which "comes to make up for a deficiency, it comes to compensate for an originary *nonself-presence"* (1991: 28), that is, the *margin* represents that which is *absent* from the *centre* – a *lack.* And, as will be continually emphasised in this paper, it is the metaphysical binary opposition of *presence and absence/ centre and margin* that deconstruction interrogates. From a political perspective, as Pheby states, deconstruction "reaches out to the exteriority of the *absent*, the other that the dominant culture relegates to the abyss of 'non-being'" (9).

The *centre* can be seen to reflect the dominant or hegemonic voice – that which is ideologically or politically approved – while the *margin* is that which is "the repressed, the absent" (Pheby 4). The position of *centre* is therefore dependant on the position of the *margin* as the "legitimation of the centrality of a particular term is effected by means of the marginalisation of the inessential one" (Pheby 4). Derrida said in *Positions* that such a binary opposition is in fact a "violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand" (2002: 41). Indeed, as Mary Douglas writes, "it is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created", that is, the *hegemonic* order (4).

For the purpose of this paper, I will be concentrate principally on two concepts that have been *centred* or granted *presence* within Western metaphysics. The first deals with the logocentric privileging of *the subject*, which Derrida defines as the belief in the "self-presence of the *cogito*, consciousness, subjectivity, co-presence of the self and the other" (Culler 92–93). The second logocentric concept concerns *language*, and the emphasis on the "presence in speech of logical and grammatical structures" (Culler 94).

Significantly, what will be stressed within this paper is the way in which it is the *temporal* foundation of the metaphysical privileging of *presence* that affects constructions and understandings of *the subject* and *language.* Understandings of the *present* have their origins in the work of Aristotle who "sees the essence of time in the *vuv*" (Derrida 1970: 60) or *`now'*. This leads to an understanding of time as being comprised of discrete, homogenous units – "a series of 'nows' that emerge from the future, present themselves to the individual, and disappear into the past" (Mulhall 182). This notion carries through to Enlightenment modernity where the Newtonian understanding of time is of a *homogenous* rather than fragmented *present*, which is "`objective', self-same and simply a surrounding 'ether' to events" (Schleifer 6). Significantly, from this perspective, time is therefore *portrayed* by metaphysics as *apolitical*.

As will be expanded upon, this metaphysical privileging of the *present* has an obvious bearing on conceptions of the Cartesian *subject* who is treated as *atemporal* (Schleifer 1), that is, autonomous and unified in its relation to time. Such an understanding of *the subject*

means that the way in which ideologies of the past – rather than nature – have influenced the place and treatment of the individual within society is disregarded or concealed. Indeed, according to Pheby, within the metaphysical tradition, *the subject* "must be construed as self-contained, self-identical – it must be fully *present*…[and] particularly since the hegemony of the Cartesian *cogito*, is conceived as that self-identical centre of certainty, the locus of truth" (6).

The metaphysical temporal privileging of the *present* also has an effect on language. Significantly, for Roland Barthes, such an understanding leads to the notion of *language* as stable and univocal, and therefore has ideological and political implications. In *S/Z,* he argues that such a treatment of language represents "the closure of Western discourse (scientific, critical, or philosophical), to its centralised organisation" (1974: 7). From this perspective, language becomes the monological voice of ideology. This echoes the views of Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin in his 1935 essay, 'Discourse in the Novel' when he writes that, "a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralisation, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralisation" (1198).

Indeed, what ultimately makes the metaphysical understanding of time so politically powerful is the fact that a supposedly autonomous *present* excludes the influence that the past has on the present and future, and as such seeks to invalidate any challenge to the "supposedly self-evident certainties of unquestioned existence" (Goldman 20). In other words, such a metaphysical approach seeks to naturalise that which is actually an ideological construct.

As stated, the principal aim of deconstruction is to question and undermine the validity of logocentric binary oppositions. This enterprise is carried out primarily through the emphasis that the *presence* granted to any centred belief-system comes to be defined by what it is *not*, that is, by that which is *absent* or *marginal*. In other words, the decentred term or absence defines the boundaries of that which is central or *present*. Again, this is reflected within the foundational metaphysical understanding of *temporality*. Heidegger highlights this within a footnote located in his introduction to *Being and Time*. He explains that, for Aristotle, the *moment* or *present* is seen as a *boundary* (Derrida: 1970, 60), that is, a division between what *is* (presence) and what *is not* (absence). As such, the 'boundaries' of the *present/presence* located within the centre are defined by that which is *absent* and located on the margins.

From this perspective, the "lack [or absence][is] constitutive of the very unity of the *ergon* [the work itself]" (Derrida 1987: 59). In this way, as Derrida claims, "nothing is, anywhere, simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces" (Smith 119). This can be understood by the term used in deconstruction, *mise en abyme* – the endless reflections of two mirrors facing each other with images defined, deferred and surrounded by what they *are* and *are not*, by the infinite play of *absence* and *presence* – the *abyss*. Derrida's phrase "there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*" (`Of Grammatology'*:* 1825*)*, encompasses this idea through an understanding that that which forms the frame or exterior of a text as the *supplement* of the *centre*, is in turn supplemented itself in an infinite process of deferral.

Indeed, this concept is reflected in what is arguably one of the defining terms of deconstruction, *différance*, which sees meaning within language as neither wholly *present* nor entirely *absent*, nor consisting of a homogeneous unity. Significantly, the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin expresses the political intent of a metaphysical understanding that sees language as "a homogeneous unit bridging an origin (referent) and an end (meaning)" (Pheby 49) – where meaning is univocal or *present*. He writes that, "a unitary language

gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralisation which develop in vital connection with the processes of socio-political and cultural centralisation" (1198).

Deconstruction views language as being comprised of a system of differences and deferrals, whereas, based on Ferdinand de Saussure's model of linguistics, structuralism sees a corresponding relationship between the signifier and the signified within each sign, thereby producing "a sealed unit whose closure arrests meaning, prevents it from trembling or becoming double, or wandering" (Barthes 1981: 33). However, post-structuralism and deconstruction highlight Saussure's own acknowledgment that "each sign in the system has meaning only by virtue of its difference from the other" (Eagleton 2002: 84), thereby reflecting the instability of language where meaning is continually *deferred* because it can only be located through a process that acknowledges each sign's *differences* from all other signs through the trace of the signifier. Tied to the concept of the *supplement*, *différance* is "an endless linked series, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing that they defer: the impression of the thing itself, or immediate presence" (Derrida's *Of Grammatology* quoted in Culler, 105).

Derrida's use of the term *supplementary mediations* is in itself significant because it reflects that the concept of the *supplement,* as a representation of *absence,* has the potential to create a relationship between what logocentrism sees as the opposing spheres of the *central* and *marginal*. Indeed, Culler writes that within deconstruction, "concentration on the apparently marginal puts the logic of supplementarity to work as an interpretive strategy" (140). Significantly, as Derrida claims in *The Truth in Painting*, "philosophical discourse…have been *against"* the *supplement* (54) precisely because of this potential to *decentre*.

The subversive properties contained within this *supplement* – or threshold – located between *presence* and *absence* – *centre* and *margin* – are reflected by Derrida in his text *Dissemination,* through his use of the term *pharmakon.* What is most significant about this term is that it is defined as, "medicine and /or poison" (Dissemination 1835). It is the 'and/or' that challenges the notion of the validity of a strict or easily defined binary opposition. Within *Dissemination*, Derrida analyses Plato's *Phaedrus,* and in particular, Plato's representation of the written text as having the effect of a drug – or *pharmakon* – on Socrates. This is of some importance, most obviously because within the logocentric perspective of phonocentrism, spoken language is privileged over the written. This is principally due to the metaphysical belief that the immediate *presence* of the speaker leads to a 'truer' conveyance and interpretation of meaning. In this way, within the phonocentric tradition, writing has been considered simply to be a *supplement* to speech due to its *lack* of *presence,* or "an authenticating voice" (Baldick 52). Derrida emphasises that within Plato's text, the written text, as *pharmakon,* is that which for the first time draws Socrates out of the town centre, "onto a path that is properly an *exodus*" (Dissemination 1835). In other words, within this text it is that which is considered by metaphysics to be *marginal* that disrupts and deconstructs the borders that define a demarcated *centre*, leading to what Derrida describes as the "dangerous supplement" (Of Grammatology 1825). In this way, the role of the *supplement* can be understood as a "*delimitation of the centre*" (Derrida, 1987: 57 – my emphasis).

This notion of the *delimitation of the centre* will be used repeatedly throughout the remainder of this paper as a key theoretical motif for deconstruction and its political impetus. Significantly, Derrida states in *Positions* that, "if there were a definition of *différance*, it would be precisely the limit, the interruption, the destruction of the Hegelian releve wherever it operates" (2002: 40). Put simply, the Hegelian dialectic consists of the

coming-together of binary oppositions – a thesis and antithesis – to form a synthesis, which reflects, from the perspective of deconstruction, a logocentric, "will to overcome all signs of difference, of disruption or heterogeneous sense, and thus restore…an order of self-present meaning and truth" (Norris 40). Moreover, it is this denial of difference and emphasis on homogeneous unity that deconstruction finds politically problematic as it leads to an erasure of the Other – the *marginal*. As Bauman writes, "resistance to difference sets the limits to sovereignty, to power, to the transparency of the world, to its control, to its order" (9). What this paper will emphasise is that through the *delimitation of the centre*, deconstruction does not seek to deny meaning or unity, rather it creates a new understanding of *presence,* one that is heterogeneous – where differences coexist without hierarchy. Indeed, as will be discussed, a significant element of this heterogeneity is in fact a unity where *presence and absence* coexist. As Derrida comments in *Acts of Literature*, "nothing is ever homogeneous" (1992: 53).

Before commencing a deconstructive analysis of Kantian aesthetics, I would like to emphasise that, from the theoretical perspective of deconstruction, concepts such as the *supplement* are not elements that are *added* to a text through the process of analysis. Rather, deconstruction aims to reveal what is *always already present* in the text. Within deconstruction, the *supplement* represents the "points at which the strains of an attempt to sustain or impose logocentric conclusions make themselves felt in a text" (Culler 213). In other words, the *supplement* represents the moment in which texts can be seen to "*deconstruct themselves*" (Baldick 52 – my emphasis). Indeed, through his analysis of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Derrida finds such a moment in paragraph fourteen, through the term *parergon,* which significantly means *supplement,* or frame, in Greek.

Within his text, *The Truth in Painting,* Derrida describes Kant's use of the term *parergon* as being like that of a frame around a painting, that is, as the part of the artwork that is deemed to be *marginal* or *supplementary.* As such, what the frame or *parergon* surrounds becomes *central.* Again, for Derrida, what is most significant about the *parergon* is the way in which that which surrounds the *centre* or *ergon* can actually be interpreted as that which makes the *centre* possible – it defines the boundaries of the centre. This realisation results in a "dislocation, which makes the frame in general crack, undoes it at the corners in its quoins and joints, turns its internal limits into an external limit" (Derrida 1987: 74). In other words, the *parergon* disrupts the binary opposition of *centre* and *margin*. In this way, the notion of the *parergon* reflects deconstruction's political aim of showing the "provisionality of 'the powers that be'" and "forces the dominant culture to confront the play of that which is exterior to it, forces it to recognise the marginal" (Pheby 95). For Derrida, this *parergon* is "neither simply internal nor simply external…it is called up and gathered together as a supplement from the lack or *absence* – a certain `internal' indetermination – in the very thing that it comes to frame" (Derrida 1987: 71). Again, *presence, absence,* and *the delimitation of the centre*. Indeed, it will be from this perspective of the notion of the *parergon* as *supplement* or lack that I will begin a deconstructive analysis of Kantian aesthetics. Within this analysis, I will concentrate on `Book I – Analytic of the Beautiful' of the *Critique of Judgement*.

Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790) has been interpreted by many to be the foundation of a definition of *aestheticism* that emphasises "the separation of artistic concerns and values into their own sphere" (Leitch 499). Hence, the long-held belief that art is a realm that is separate from politics and ideology. It is, however, important to acknowledge that it is Kant's intent that the *Critique of Judgement* be read in relation to his other two *Critiques*, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) – which deals primarily with the "physical (sensible)…world" – and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1785) – which deals with the

"nonphysical (supersensible) world" (Leitch 500). Indeed, Kant sees the purpose of his third Critique as one that provides a "bridge over the *abyss* of the other two critiques" (Derrida 1987: 43 – my emphasis) – thereby creating a reconciliation between "pure understanding" and "sensuous experience" (Norris 55). In this way, the *Critique of Judgement* becomes the *parergon* – the representation of *lack* – within the other two Critiques. Significantly, however, this implies that the *Critique of Judgement* itself must also possess a *lack,* thereby making it dependent on the other two *Critiques* as *supplements* or frames. Indeed, as both Derrida and Norris acknowledge, the distinctive features that define, or *frame* the judgment of pure taste within the *Critique of Judgement* - that is, the notion of *quality* as disinterestedness; *quantity* as universality without concepts; *relation of the ends* being purposiveness without purpose; and *modality,* as the object of pleasure that is without concept (Derrida, 1987: 68) – all come from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As a result, the *Critique of Judgement* becomes a "place that is *neither* theoretical *nor* practical or else *both* theoretical *and* practical…this place is announced as a place deprived of place" (Derrida 1987: 38). P*resence* and *absence – delimitation of the centre.*

What I intend to explore from this point is the way in which the notion of the *parergon* influences the treatment of both *subjectivity* and *language* within Kantian aesthetics, with an emphasis on the political implications this involves.

From the perspective of deconstruction, the very notion of *subjectivity* is considered to be "historically and ideologically determined" (Bennett & Royle 125), and thereby fluid. Of interest here is the shift that occurred during Kant's time in the late eighteenth century where "knowledge…withdrew from the space of ordered correspondences, analogies, and representations, and attempted to ground itself in the very nature of human *a priori* cognitive powers" (Norris 91). This notion of *the subject* reflects what has generally been considered the stance of Kantian aesthetics. Here *the subject* becomes *transcendental* – an *origin* of knowledge, reflecting the notion of logocentrism. Significantly, Eagleton sees this shift as purely political. However, he emphasises that this political agenda in itself is far from one-sided. On the one hand, the *centred-subject* certainly becomes a model of the `consumer' within hegemonic "bourgeois ideology" (1990: 9), as well as a means by which "racial otherness" can be defined against the dominant "racially homogenous" (Bennett & Royle 201) axiological notion of *subjective universality*, as defined by Kant. The political implications of such a metaphysical binary opposition of *self* and *other* are that "the privileging of the 'I' forces the other into the dependent and inessential" (Pheby 4). However, the *centred-subject* has also been seen to represent the "self-determining nature of human powers and capacities" which thinkers such as Marx saw as an "anthropological foundation of a revolutionary opposition to bourgeois utility" (Eagleton 1990: 9).

The connection between the notion of the *centred-subject* and that of the metaphysics of presence is illustrated by Culler when he states that "to claim…that the `I' resists radical doubt because it is present to itself in the act of thinking or doubting is one sort of appeal to presence" (94). Again, it is clear that it is the metaphysical understanding of temporality that privileges the *present* that determines the representation of *the subject.* Indeed, Heidegger comments in his 'Introduction to *Being and Time'* that the view of metaphysics has been that "beings are grasped in their Being as 'presence'; that is to say, they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time, the *present"* (2000: 70). Deconstruction, however, understands *the subject* as *temporal* (Schlieifer 7), and therefore susceptible to the fragmentation that results from the interpenetrating, rather than successive (Schliefer 6) and homogeneous, nature of time and history. This deconstructionist understanding of time is reflected in Henri Bergson's 1910 text *Time and Free Will*. Bergson describes a concept called *durée* which is based on the idea that time is

not comprised of a series of discrete, spatial, linear, successive, homogeneous states, but rather, flows due to an "interpenetration of past, present, and future" (Banfield 480). Significantly, this is not unlike Heidegger's notion of *care.*

The term *care* is seen by Heidegger to be synonymous with temporality where temporality is made up of past, present and future time. This reflects *the subject's* existence as "thrown projection, living a moment that is grounded in previous moments and that in turn grounds moments to come" (Mulhall 146) – these are otherwise known as *ecstases*. The term *ecstases* comes into play through the understanding of *ecstasy* as the ability to 'be outside itself', and in the case of time, to transcend (Mulhall 146) the *present.* As such, for *the subject*, the "unity of the ecstases" (Heidegger 1962: 377) is reflected in their ability to be "at once ahead, behind and alongside" (Mulhall 146) themselves. Again, like Bergson, the result is a treatment of time that disrupts the metaphysical notion of the *centred-subject* through a denial of linearity while affirming a unity that is comprised of heterogeneity rather than homogeneity.

This challenge to the understanding of *the subject* is indeed political as to concentrate solely on the *present* means that *the logocentric subject* "remains absorbed by and dispersed in its environment" (Mulhall 150). In his analysis of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Mulhall writes, "there can be no authentic appropriation of the future without an authentic appropriation of the past as determinative of the present" (180). Indeed, from the perspective of deconstruction, *presence* always exists in relation to an *absence* or *lack* that *delimits the centre.* What is significant is not only that metaphysics' homogeneous *present* is shattered, or fragmented by this understanding, but that it is fragmented by what is *non-present, absent* or *marginal* within metaphysics of presence*,* that is, the past and the future. As will be shown, within Kantian aesthetics, that lack is inscribed in the *parergon.*

Within the *Critique of Judgment* Kant writes that, "a judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment and so is not a logical judgment but an aesthetic one, by which we mean a judgment whose determining basis *cannot be other* than *subjective"* (Kant 505). However, despite this claim, Kant also includes within parentheses the proviso that "in judgments of taste there is still always a relation to the understanding" (Derrida 1987: 70). It is here that we can see that the *parergon* or frame – the *Critique of Pure Reason* – which surrounds aesthetic judgment, represents a *lack* or *absence* within the *Critique of Judgement.* Most significantly, it also represents the point in which the text deconstructs the logocentric position of the "*a priori* cognitive powers" (Bennett & Royle 91) of the *centred-subject*. This *lack* within the judgment of the Kantian subject consists of empirical knowledge or *reason*. This is significant as, within the Enlightenment understanding within which Kant is situated, the belief is that "a combination of abstract reason and empirical science will lead to knowledge and eventually to political and social progress" (Bennett & Royle 233). As Derrida argues, such a juxtaposition of *the subject* and reason "*gathers together* without-concept and concept, universality *without* concept and universality *with* concept, the *without* and the *with"* (Derrida 1987: 76). *Presence* and *absence. Delimitation of the centre* through a heterogeneous unity. Significantly, it is from this perspective that Smith highlights the underlying political implications of Kantian aestheticism that acts as a "kind of prosthesis to reason, extending a reified Enlightenment rationality into vital regions which are otherwise beyond its reach" (16).

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger takes this decentring of the *a priori* intuition of *the subject* even further. In his 1950 paper 'Language', Heidegger completely rejects the logocentric concept of the transcendental *subject*, replacing it instead with the notion that it is in fact *language* that "brings man and his world into conscious existence" (Leitch 1120). Heidegger's treatment of language has been highly influential within the

theory of deconstruction. Indeed, in 'Language', Heidegger locates *language* in the mediating role of *supplement* – the place of "dif-ference" (2001: 1129) – that exists between 'thing' and 'world'. Significantly, through the 'bidding' that calls thing and world to come together, language can only ever bring the "presence of what was previously uncalled into a *nearness"* (2001: 1127 – my emphasis). As such language can only ever represent a notion of "here and there – here into *presence*, there into *absence*" (Heidegger 2001: 1127 – my emphasis). In this way *language* becomes a heterogeneous site, one that encompasses both a revealing and concealing of meaning. In other words, it is not unlike Derrida's notion of *différance.* Indeed, *différance* has been described as always leading "back to the ontological difference. Being is never simply presence, but the movement from absence to presence" (Pheby 63). Significantly, Pheby (7) makes the important link between the two philosophers' treatment of *language* by drawing parallels between Derrida's term *différance* and Heidegger's idea of *Ereignis.*

Thomas Sheehan writes that *Ereignis* is "the opening of the clearing" ('Kehre & Ereignis' 2001: 10)*,* and that this "differential openness must be *a priori* appropriated by presence-bestowing absence" (`Geschichtlichkeit' 2001: 251). A key term in Sheehan's definition of *Ereignis* is *clearing,* which for Heidegger encompasses the coming-together of what he terms *world* and *earth,* two words that have meaning unique to Heidegger's philosophy. Collins and Selina liken *world* to "society or culture", whilst *earth* relates to soil, plants, animals, and "whose happenings are not those of human history or relations" (129). What is most significant about these two terms is that for Heidegger, "world and earth are always intrinsically and essentially in conflict" (2000: 180). This conflict results in what Heidegger calls *strife,* that is, a sphere of "clearing and concealing" (2000: 180).

This combination of unconcealment and concealment – *absence* and *presence* – is for Heidegger what he understands as *aletheia* or a new understanding of truth, because it is "unconcealment that produces this concealment" (Watts 65). To illustrate this idea, Watts gives the example of the wavelengths on a radio, where to tune to one station means that other stations are blocked out or concealed (65). Significantly, this notion of both *presence* and *absence* within the concept of truth could be arguably described as a new type of metaphysics. Here meaning and truth are not denied, however the *delimitation of a centre* or *presence* which was always homogeneous, allows for "alterity, otherness, a multiplicity and dispersal of centres, origins, presences" (Bennett and Royle 240).

Significantly, although the *parergon* and the *clearing* come into existence through what might appear to be a Hegelian dialectic comprised of a thesis (the *centre/presence*) and an antithesis (*margin/absence*), the result for Derrida and Heidegger is far from a homogeneous synthesis. What these philosophers stress is a heterogeneous unity – a delimited space – rather than the disappearance of difference. Derrida writes that the *parergon* is a "composite of inside and outside, but a composite which is not an amalgam of half and half " (1987: 63); while Heidegger describes the *clearing* as that in which "the two modes of bidding [world and thing] are different but not separated. But neither are they merely coupled together…They penetrate each other. Thus the two traverse a middle. In it, they are at one", however, "the intimacy of world and thing is not a fusion" (2001: 1129). This is particularly significant within aesthetics, as for Heidegger, "the artwork itself belongs to both earth and world" (Collins & Selina 135), and as such becomes the "happening of truth at work" (Collins & Selina 137). Importantly, it is *linguistic* art in particular that Heidegger privileges with regard to being a site of *aletheia* (Collins & Selina 138). As Heidegger states in 'Language', "language speaks in that the command of the dif-ference calls world and things into the simple onefold of their intimacy" (2001: 1132).

Heidegger's use of the analogy of the *clearing* as threshold – which has obvious

parallels with Derrida's *parergon* – to describe this heterogeneous space created by and understanding of *language* that deconstructs the logocentric demarcation of *centre* and *margin,* has obvious parallels with Derrida's use of the *parergon.* Indeed, Heidegger describes the 'threshold' as that which "sustains the middle in which the two, the outside and the inside, penetrate the between. The threshold bears the between" (2001: 1130). Derrida echoes this concept in 1967 in *Of Grammatology* where he too sees language as the "supplement that occupies the middle point between total *absence* and total *presence*" (2001: 1824 – my emphasis) as a result of *différance*. For both philosophers, *language* is the *parergon* or *clearing,* and it is from this perspective of the *parergon* and *clearing* that a deconstructive analysis of Kantian aesthetics takes place.

For de Man, the principal question is whether "aesthetic values can be compatible with the linguistic structures that make up the entities from which these values are derived" (Norris xiii). In other words, does language have the ability to act as the essential *supplement* that allows for the passage of "sensuous intuitions" into "concepts of pure understanding" (Norris xiii) thereby creating the *presence* of meaning. Kant's belief in the possibility of such a passage is evident when he writes that if "an abyss stretching out of sight is established between the domain of the concept of nature, that is, the sensible, and the domain of the concept of freedom, that is, the suprasensible…the second *must* yet have an influence on the former...Consequently it must be that there is a foundation of *unity*" (Derrida, 1987: 35-36). Yet, as this paper has emphasised, "deconstruction leads to the identification of unity as a problematic figure" (Culler 200), and therefore, it is the type of unity – homogeneous or heterogeneous – that Kant's *Critique of Judgement* leads to, that is of significance.

Through his deconstructive reading of Kantian aestheticism, de Man turns to the classical notion of the *trivium,* which deals with the relationship between grammar, logic, and rhetoric whereby grammar, rather than rhetoric, is linked to logic. Within this model, the logocentric assumption is made that through grammar, meaning is *present* in language. Grammar is assumed to provide "a reliable link between language and the way that we conceptualise reality or bring it under the concepts and categories of reason" (Norris 78). Kant himself adheres to this model through his belief that "there can be no guarantee that our concepts correspond to the order of phenomenal experience unless we can also be certain that language articulates the logic of thought and thus `stands in the service' of epistemological reason" (Norris 78–79). Indeed, de Man makes the point that it is this understanding of grammar that has allowed for "the possibility of the universal truth of meaning" (de Man 1518) – an essential political component of Kant's axiological aesthetic enterprise.

However, this raises the question of how this correspondence can be possible in the case of the art of literature – notably a sphere of art that, as we have seen, Heidegger privileged as a site of *aletheia* – which has been conventionally tied to the 'illogical' realm of rhetoric. As Norris comments, "metaphor becomes the very touchstone of aesthetic value, that which distinguishes the language of poetry from other, straightforwardly referential or cognitive use" (29). This notion of rhetoric is highly significant, primarily because it has the potential to undermine the very union required by Kantian aesthetics between *a priori* and empirical forms of knowledge – it can therefore be seen as a 'dangerous supplement'. Indeed, examples of rhetoric such as the *metaphor* require that we "attend to those creative substitutions of figural for literal meanings, rather than looking for a certain degree of correspondence between language and the world of everyday perceptual experience" (Norris 82). As a result of this, de Man sees within aesthetic ideology a propensity for what he calls the "grammatisation of rhetoric" (de Man 1524), that is, the

desire to bring all language under the concept of grammar so as to provide the "link between logic and language" (Norris 82). This is reflected by analogy through the *parergon* that is the *Critique of Pure Reason* – which frames the *Critique of Pure Judgement* – whereby the "*logical* frame is transposed and forced in to be imposed on a *nonlogical* structure" (Derrida 1987: 69).

Significantly, de Man makes the point that all *language*, including that of philosophy, consists of rhetoric. As such, the notion that *any* form of *language* can act as a *centred* origin of logic or metaphysical truth is questionable. This view is also reflected in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche in his paper, 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense'. Here Nietzsche stresses that *subjects* are intentionally made to be unaware of the rhetorical nature of all *language* because of a political and ideological propensity to "sublimate sensuous metaphors into a schema…to dissolve an image into a concept" (878). Nietzsche sees this as a reflection of an ideology that privileges grammar as a means by which to construct "a pyramidal order based on castes and degrees, the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, definitions of borders, which confronts the other, sensuously perceived world…as something regulatory and imperative" (878).

Therefore, a deconstructive reading that highlights the *rhetorical* nature of language as being the *supplement* or bridge between *a priori* and empirical knowledge, illustrates the way in which "language holds out *against* the drive to reduce it to the order of phenomenal cognition" (Norris 87). This concentration on rhetoric, which is defined under both Kant and the classical *trivium* as *marginal* and *supplementary,* leads to a disruption of the logocentric notion of the inherent *presence* of univocal meaning in *language*. Significantly, de Man's analysis of rhetoric as the *dangerous supplement* within Kantian aesthetics disturbs the "order of epistemological assurance that extends from grammar to logic to a general science of man and of the phenomenal world" (Norris 88). In this way, de Man deconstructs the very concepts of rhetoric and grammar that are contained within the classical notion of the *trivium.* As such, rhetoric is no longer seen as a "marginal, or aberrant form of language", rather "figurative language characterises all language as such" (Bennett & Royle 82). However, most significantly, de Man does not simply aim to overturn this binary opposition, rather, he acknowledges the "epistemological thrust of the rhetorical dimension of discourse" (Norris 89), one that leads to a new epistemological understanding that "breaks with routine, stereotyped habits or thought" (Norris 29). Indeed, what de Man stresses is that rhetoric "can exert this deconstructive leverage only in so far as it remains an activity of thought closely in touch with epistemology and critical reason" (Norris 94). In this way, de Man disrupts the metaphysical notion that "holds logic and grammar securely in control over rhetoric, and thus ensures the stability of language as a representational medium" (Norris 85). Indeed, language – through rhetoric – becomes a heterogeneous rather than homogeneous site of unity. In this way, the *Critique of Judgement* reflects the "aesthetic as a bridge between orders of knowledge and experience that would otherwise exist in isolation" (Norris 86). As Lloyd comments, "metaphor consists in a carrying of meaning from one sphere to another" (167). From a political perspective, de Man's critique of grammar and rhetoric represents a disruption of the way in which the metaphysical understanding of language as a univocal representation of ideology "strives to sustain the order and deny or suppress randomness and contingency" (Bauman 1).

The subject, language, and *aesthetics* have each been considered within metaphysical thinking to be self-contained, homogeneous spheres that are separate from the political and ideological world in which they are located. However, through notions such as the *parergon, supplement, clearing, pharmakon, Ereignis, rhetoric,* theorists such as Derrida,

Heidegger and de Man have challenged this metaphysical understanding of *presence* and truth, and replaced it with a new notion of unity, one that embraces, without hierarchy, the heterogeneity of *presence, absence* and *the delimitation of the centre.* Through the perspective of deconstruction, *the subject, language,* and *art* all become the sites of this heterogeneous unity where the co-existence of difference and diversity is acknowledged and encouraged rather than denied or synthesised. As Derrida states, "the analogy of the abyss and of the bridge over the abyss is an analogy which says that there must surely be an analogy between two absolutely heterogeneous worlds, a third term to cross the abyss, to heal over the gaping wound and think the gap" (1987: 36). As demonstrated through the deconstructive analysis of Kant's *Critique of Judgement,* deconstruction reveals the way in which the binary oppositions that govern metaphysics can always already be dismantled through the understanding that "one term of an antithesis secretly adheres within the other" (Eagleton 2002: 115). Most significantly, the deconstruction of hierarchical logocentric binary oppositions acts as a critique and interrogation of the centripetal, political, and ideological content of meaning. Moreover, this has obvious implications not only for our understanding of aesthetics, but for the political and ideological constructs that surround us today.

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The fine line between art and advertising: with reference to the work of Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin

by Des Wagner

There are many differences between art and advertising. A billboard image of a person sitting on a beach employs colour, line, composition, and perspectival distortion, as does Gustav Klimt's mural showing a scene at the Globe theatre. Barbara Kruger used actual billboards as the ground for her works, the images of which, for instance a close up of two children, look as though they were straight out of an advertisement.[1] Andy Warhol showed that the content of an advertisement, such as the design on the Brillo box, which advertises Brillo, could be transformed into art. Aspiring artists hone their skills in the advertising industry where the artistic characteristics of creativity and imagination[2] are highly sought after. Furthermore, both art and advertising may seek to influence their audience in various ways. The domains of art and advertising are so closely related, sharing form, content, practitioners, and characteristics, that the notion of a distinction between the two has become a pressing topic for artists, aestheticians, philosophers, and cultural theorists. This essay will examine the relationship between art and advertising in light of the work of three philosophers. On the one hand are Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who argue pessimistically that art, when appropriated by the culture industry, becomes synonymous with advertising. On the other hand is Walter Benjamin, who argues that art has changed fundamentally since it has been able to be reproduced by mechanical means. He sees in mechanically reproducible art great equality and is optimistic, despite current fashions being dictated from above, in his thesis on the dissolution of the aura of artworks.

Autonomous art

To understand the differences between advertising and art, first we must seek a definition of art. Adorno writes that, "the concept of art is a historically changing constellation of moments"[3], which makes art difficult to define since at any point in history it includes many disparate elements, and those elements undergo constant change. For instance, art was formerly a part of ritual.[4] In magical rituals, the artwork was an amulet, wand, talisman, costume, or mask, with magical significance. The ritual artefacts were constructed of materials such as polished stone, pieces of leather, wood, or gemstones, and they incorporated a unique symbolism. Later, in religious rituals, the artwork came to represent the divine by the use of different elements. The materials and symbolism that evoked arcane powers were replaced with elements that evoked the divine: stained glass, ornate items of gold, statuettes, and later murals and paintings. A new symbolism of religious iconography replaced magical symbolism, but the association with ritual remained.[5] During the Renaissance, the religious ritual value of art was superseded by a value derived from a non-religious worship of beauty. In modern art, argue both Benjamin and Adorno, art is free from dependence on ritual, even that surrounding beauty – and becomes autonomous.

This tendency in art to create and abide by its own laws is, according to Adorno, an ongoing process that only becomes possible in capitalist society. "Autonomy, art's growing

independence from society, is a function of the bourgeois consciousness of freedom, which in turn is tied up with a specific social structure. Before that, art may have been in conflict with the forces and mores dominating that society, but it was never 'for itself'."[6] Being 'for-itself' is not an issue for art until capitalist times when the 'for-itself' is increasingly at risk of being assimilated into a totalising system. This aspect of Adorno's theory of art can only be understood in the context of his critique of modern capitalist society, which he claims attempts to seamlessly integrate workers into a productive society, thereby maximising productivity. This creates pressures such as the pressure to work longer hours, or for less renumeration, which limit human freedom.

Art does not completely escape the demands of society, it remains a product of social labour, produced by members of society who themselves must face economic pressures. The works themselves sometimes enter the economic realm when commodified by the high-art market. Nevertheless, all this makes up only one half of what Adorno calls the dual essence of art.[7] The second, defining half of art is its autonomy.

Autonomy makes art fundamentally different to society and Adorno defines art on the basis of that difference.[8] It is a concrete definition since art opposes society in concrete ways; it places itself in opposition to certain aspects of society at particular times.[9] For instance, Brett Whiteley's *Somewhere in Summer* opposes the positivistic desire to dominate the land through modern agriculture by presenting an abstract landscape whose abstract forms resist identification, whose content of bulldust and brown dirt, shows an Australia which itself resists modern agriculture through drought and rising salinity. In this way, it is a projection of social problems, "unresolved antagonisms", which are evident as tension between artistic form and content,[10] rather than through a content that deliberately addresses social concerns.

Art's autonomy sets it in conflict with society. "Absolute freedom in art, which is a particular, contradicts the abiding unfreedom of the social whole."[11] Art contradicts the society that it is a part of because it is autonomous while society as a whole tends to prevent autonomy by demanding cohesion, conformity, and integration. In doing so, art transcends both the artist and the world. In the nexus where they come together they produce something that is beyond both.[12] Adorno describes the condition by which art transcends reality:

> The moment in the work of art by which it transcends reality cannot, indeed, be severed from style; that moment, however, does not consist in achieved harmony, in the questionable unity of form and content, inner and outer, individual and society, but in those traits in which the discrepancy emerges, in the necessary failure of the passionate striving for identity.[13]

Art transcends reality through its style, which sets it apart from society because it does not rely on perfect harmony with itself or with society, but, in aiming for it, inevitably fails. In that failure and the acclaim that follows the heteronomous unity demanded by society is challenged. Art is thus propelled beyond that social reality, even though it remains a product of social labour. Art itself opposes society by its resistance to being rationalised and assimilated as a useful part of the social whole. "What [art] contributes to society is not some directly communicable content but something more mediate, i.e. resistance."[14]

Consequently, Adorno sees art as "a plenipotentiary of a type of praxis that is better than the prevailing praxis of society, dominated as it is by brutal self-interest".[15] In the creation of art there resides different ways of engaging with the world, alternatives to the self-interested approach which leads to a brutal domination of society and nature. For

instance, a playwright will observe human interaction primarily to distil its essence onto a stage, instead of to devise manipulative sales techniques. A painter will gaze at a scene and learn about the geology of a landscape to gather a motif which to paint[16] as opposed to calculating potential rental income. And this is not simply a matter of different occupations, since a playwright might also be a sales executive, or a painter a landlord, but of different approaches to the world. When creating art artists approach the world in a different fashion, they have "a sense of being under the sway of the work"[17] which is to say that they become somewhat selfless. Les Murray writes of "working always beyond your own intelligence"[18], which implies a diminished role for an egoistic, dominating rationality. This is the alternative praxis, which is better than the prevailing praxis of brutal self-interest. It need not be considered a mysterious gift bestowed only upon a few, indeed "when the idea of genius was launched in the late eighteenth century… everybody was considered a potential genius… Genius was a posture, almost a frame of mind."[19]

Destruction of the aura

Art has always been reproducible, manual copies could be made of any work, for practice or profit. That did not change the nature of art, it occurred within the bounds of art as it stood. In contrast, argues Walter Benjamin, the development of mechanical reproductive techniques have had a substantial impact on the nature of art, since the artwork able to be reproduced by mechanical means lacks one important element: its aura, "its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."[20] A work that can be reproduced infinitely many times can appear in infinitely many places at once. The viewer no longer views the one and only original *Blue Poles*, instead they view an artwork that could simultaneously be viewed on the other side of the planet, or even just down the street.

Advertising typically is non-auratic. Pamphlets, magazine spreads, leaflets, television and radio spots, images on billboards, logos on coffee cups, sportsgrounds, team uniforms and welcoming signs for regional towns, are all mechanically reproducible. Even personal endorsements on radio and television are broadcast from thousands of devices simultaneously. However, some forms of advertising, such as skywriting and sponsored events, are not mechanically reproducible.

In mechanically reproduced works of art, the question of original and copy is irrelevant because the first print of a photograph is identical with the thousandth print. They all share the same status as they can be recreated identically. Nor can the items used to create the copies be called the original, such as the photographic negative. It is so far removed from the finished product that it looks nothing like it. The negative is merely an element of the productive process that allows the creation of mechanically reproducible works of art. Similarly with the film reel for a movie, or the wooden block used to print woodcuts. They could easily be made into works of art in their own right yet they share only a productive relation to the works they are used to produce. They do not relate to those works in the way that a Cezanne painting relates to its forgery, as original and copy. All art that is mechanically reproduced is a copy, yet it may not be devalued against the original for there is no original to compare it to. This undermines the distinction between original and copy.

The loss of the unique presence of an artwork also undermines its authenticity.[21] Benjamin describes the authenticity of the artwork as:

> the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced.[22]

In the age of infinitely reproducible works of art, the duration for which the work exists or has existed is unimportant, since a brand new copy can be made relatively easily. In addition, the individual history of the life of the work is rendered unimportant. Whereas a painting or sculpture, a one of a kind work of art, might be placed in danger of destruction at points within its life, thus threatening to deprive the world of a unique artwork, there is no such threat for infinitely reproducible works of art. Along with the loss of historical testimony, the artwork loses its authority, which was gained from that historical testimony.[23] So, the mechanically reproducible work of art has no claim to authenticity, authority, or unique presence. It is these things that comprise the aura of an artwork, and it is precisely that aura that is lost.[24]

The auratic artwork gained its value through its cult function; first as an element within magical rituals, then through its religious significance, and, since the Renaissance, from the 'profane cult of beauty'.[25] For Benjamin it is mechanical reproduction that emancipates art from this dependence on ritual for its value. Instead, artworks become valued for their capacity to be exhibited.[26] The nature of art is transformed.

The prime example of this new-natured art is film. Being infinitely reproducible means that it is not restricted to the enjoyment of a few, but it also embodies another type of equality. The way that editing techniques are used extensively within film to reconstruct 'reality' within the editing room shows that "art has left the realm of the beautiful semblance which, so far, had been taken to be the only sphere where art could thrive."[27] Film (and mechanically reproduced art in general) has a profoundly different nature to earlier art forms. Benjamin sees in this new form of art a revolutionary potential which he expresses in the following passage:

> To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction.[28]

The awareness of the universal equality of all things has penetrated to the level of perception. The uniqueness of an exotic landscape or street-scene is being made ordinary by the gaze of the camera. Far from being nostalgic for the lost uniqueness, Benjamin sees it as a result of a perception that senses that all things are equal. This suggests that emancipation proceeds despite the obvious inequalities that continue to exist in the world. Employing this emancipatory perception gives non-auratic art revolutionary potential. It exercises the viewer's sense of universal equality and opens up the possibility of a radical transformation of our perception and our historical experience. Benjamin seems to hope that this will form a ground from which inequality could be challenged.

The culture industry

Further blurring the line between art and advertising is the increasing influence of advertising style on art via the culture industry. Art is increasingly subject to economic pressure, so much so that some artistic realms are completely dominated by non-artistic concerns. The clearest examples of this domination can be found where industries are directly involved in the production of art, such as in film, recorded music, television, and radio. But it also extends to opera, classical music, painting, sculpture, theatre, and other art forms. No domain of art is completely free from economic influence; yet those that involve personal creation, such as painting, playwrighting, literature, poetry, and sculpture, where an artist can persevere in their own way, are more resistant than those that involve industries in production or distribution, since those industries are dominated by economic

and commercial concerns in a way that a private artist can to some extent avoid. Economic concerns are most strongly felt in those arts where large numbers of people are required for production and distribution, making it an expensive exercise, and those that are dependant on large industrial and technological apparatuses. These are often the art forms enabled by mechanical reproduction, such as film and recorded music.

The influence of industry brings art under social control, because the industries that produce cultural products are dependant upon and integrated with the industries that dominate society. Adorno notes that

> the dependence of the most powerful broadcasting company on the electrical industry, or of film on the banks, characterises the whole sphere, the individual sectors of which are themselves economically intertwined.[29]

Broadcasting depends on provision of electricity to homes; professional film production requires large amounts of finance, which is controlled by banks. The dependence of culture industries on other firmly established industries influences the products produced by the culture industry, as it is pressured to accept the social and economic structures that directly make it possible.

Adorno elaborates on a second level of integration with industry, "everything is so tightly clustered that the concentration of intellect [*Geist*] reaches a level where it overflows the demarcations between company names and technical sectors."[30] This can be observed in the executive and non-executive directors of large companies. Each frequently holds directorship positions in a range of companies in a range of industries, mirroring the economic intertwining of these industries with an intellectual intertwining that occurs due to the same person having influence in several companies. The executives running the companies of the culture industry are the same executives who run other arms of industry. And their influence extends to cultural products similarly to the way it extends to products manufactured in any other industry. Like in any other industry, the executives are concerned foremost, if not solely, with commercial success and their products are shaped accordingly.

Cultural products are produced according to a schema aimed at commercial success. This inevitably causes their standardisation. For example, Hollywood films with clichéd, predictable characters, and plots. The homogeneity of cultural products is directed by the "common determination of the executive powers to produce or let pass nothing which does not conform to their tables, to their concept of the consumer, or, above all, to themselves."[31] Therefore, the products produced, while remarkably similar amongst themselves, are different to artworks, which are not shaped according to commercial and economic criteria.

Through the culture industry, art is rationalised, identified, catalogued, and classified.[32] It is thoroughly organised by industry and commercially successful products are endlessly emulated and analysed into their successful elements so that they can be added to the industry formula for success. Art becomes a model of the economic machinery that dominates the world,[33] it becomes as well organised as the rest of the world under economic processes. Art is produced according to a schema, where ready-made clichés are inserted into ready-made slots.[34]

In autonomous art, the tension between form and content reflects the tensions within the world; but in the products of the culture industry, that tension is dissipated. It is replaced by harmony between form and content, guaranteed in advance by the formula that directs the production of the cultural product.[35] The harmony does not come as the result of artistic endeavour but is imposed. However, it cannot be labelled artificial, since it obliterates the distinction between genuine style and artificial style:

> A style might be called artificial if it had been imposed from outside against the resistance of the intrinsic tendencies of form. But in the culture industry the subject matter itself, down to its smallest elements, springs from the same apparatus as the jargon into which it is absorbed.[36]

The culture industry dictates both content and the form of its delivery. There is no resistance to the style the culture industry employs from the material that it works upon, since the culture industry provides the material itself, according to the same dictates that determine the form of what, ultimately, is produced. Harmony is dictated between form and content, and between the cultural product and the culture that spawned the industry that produced it. Thus, the cultural products are identical with reality, they are simply products of social labour without the autonomous tendency of art, so they do not transcend society, they are identical with it.

Art becomes a tool of society through the culture industry and it does so in three ways, as a commodity, as a device to recharge workers, and as a vehicle for ideology. Even autonomous art is treated as a commodity by the high-art market, but the products of the culture industry become a commodity to such an extent that poor cultural products are excused with the claim that they are merely business and not art.[37] Cultural products become a way to gather and sell audiences to advertising companies and something to profit from. Finally, profit is interpreted as a sign of 'artistic' success. Though art has long had to contend with being a useful thing, a dialectic that Adorno wrote of,[38] when it is appropriated by the culture industry the contest is over and it declares itself useful. Its worth is then determined according to its usefulness; measured in profit, influence and increased productivity.

John Docker claims that this analysis of the culture industry involves "a vast reduction of the complexity and diversity of mass culture to a single ideological meaning".[39] Not only does it ignore sociological divisions within audiences but also the potential aesthetic merits of the genres developed through the culture industry, in film, music, television, and radio. Docker's argument is congruent with a notion developed by Roland Barthes that the enjoyment that we take from cultural works is not due to the works themselves but to the breaks that we make with them. "What I enjoy in a narrative," writes Barthes, "is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface: I read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again."[40] It is precisely the way that we interpret texts and let our thoughts drift about them that make them enjoyable. So even if the products of the culture industry are formed according to the same economic imperatives that restrict freedom by pushing wages down and hours up, it does not mean that the audience accepts this ideology, since they enjoy the products according to their own lights.

However, the demands of modern, alienated labour mean that in their free time workers desire mainly to 'switch off' and recover through leisure and entertainment. Hence, workers turn to art primarily for relaxation and entertainment,[41] anything else requires an effort that will not be expended without the promise of a worthwhile return. The thing that requires the least effort is that which we are already conditioned to accept and so art, in order to be entertainment, takes on the nature of the work process.

> Entertainment is the prolongation of work under late capitalism. It is sought by those who want to escape the mechanised labour process so that they can cope with it again. At the same time, however, mechanisation has such power over leisure and its happiness, determines so thoroughly the fabrication of entertainment commodities, that the off-duty worker can experience nothing but after-images of the work process itself.

> The ostensible content is merely a faded foreground; what is imprinted is the automated sequence of standardised tasks. The only escape from the work process in factory and office is through adaptation to it in leisure time.[42]

Furthermore, as a tool of industry, art is made to express the ideology that underpins industry and its relations of production. It impresses the omnipotence of capital[43] and the futility of resistance to it.[44]

The culture industry oversees the transformation of art into advertising. Advertising styles invade the style of the culture industry "through their ubiquitous use under pressure".[45] Cultural products like films, radio, and television become advertisements for products as deals are made for finance. Thus, the content is made into an advertisement through product placement, cross marketing, and so on. At the same time, the techniques developed by advertisers are imported into the cultural products and they begin to take on the style of advertisements.

The culture industry produces works that are promissory, but that never live up to their promise. The glossy names and images that inflame desire are never able to satisfy that desire.[46] The promise of escape from reality ends in being led right back to it. "Advertising and the culture industry are merging technically no less than economically… everything is directed at overpowering a customer conceived as distracted or resistant."[47] And as the culture industry becomes advertising, its functional character deprives it of its artistic character.[48]

Art and advertising

Benjamin and Adorno agree that art is now free from its dependence on ritual. Its value is no longer attached to significance as a ritual object. Both thinkers place hope in art, Adorno in the avant-garde and Benjamin in non-auratic art. Their different hopes explain their conflicting attitudes. Adorno's pessimism comes about because the realm of the avant-garde is increasingly narrow compared with the expansion of the culture industry to become ubiquitous. The ability of the avant-garde to successfully resist the culture industry seems restricted to, at best, an ability to preserve itself, and within itself ideas of alternative ways of living in the world. Benjamin's optimism comes, conversely, with the expansion of the culture industry and his theory that the form of art that makes it possible, non-auratic art, is founded upon a kernel of profound universal equality. So, despite the message of the culture industry that masks, ignores, or naturalises social antagonisms the vehicle itself reveals the underlying truth of the equality of all things.

Adorno's culture industry thesis is an economic one that tells of the expansion of economic concerns into the realm of art. The current mode of economic relations demands that art be useful, and art's immense power is set to work for commercial purposes. It becomes a commodity, it advertises, and it delivers ideology. Government support for the arts can sometimes redouble these demands when government is closely integrated with industry, but government support for the arts need not imply a demand for them to be useful, nor a belief that they are useful. For instance, it could be inspired by a vague desire that the arts remain with us. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes, even "political regimes which denounce 'degenerate' painting rarely destroy paintings. They hide them, and one senses here an element of 'one never knows' amounting almost to a recognition."[49] By contrast to Adorno's economic thesis, Benjamin's thesis on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction is a technological one. Art changes profoundly when it can be reproduced infinitely. This makes art available to all, providing equality. Yet it also embodies

a way of looking at the world that assumes a far-reaching equality between all things. This provides a solid basis from which to criticise inequality in the world, which exists within nations and between them. In addition, he sees non-auratic art as a powerful medium for disseminating propaganda, an ambivalent trait that can be put to revolutionary ends or used to reinforce the existing system.

Both Benjamin and Adorno raise the notion of a distracted audience. Benjamin dismisses as a commonplace the criticism that art demands contemplation or concentration while popular art provides only distraction[50], but investigates its usefulness as a platform for analysis of film. The distinction between distraction and contemplation is also a useful tool to analyse art and advertising.

In advertising, the intent of the work is always something outside the work. It is a message that points outside of the work, so that in contemplating it you are immediately directed elsewhere, outside of the work, to the product, or company, or ideology that it praises. The advertisement is instrumental; it is not its own end. Art contradicts this purposefulness with a purposive purposelessness[51] that resists being assigned a purely instrumental value. Yet this distinction already begins to be broken down when art is made to serve a social purpose, or to fill a need. Art suffers both as a vehicle for disseminating the dominant ideology (including the advertising of commodity and company that currently entails) and as a political protest to that dominance – the two paths that Adorno identified for art when every aspect of society is rationalised.[52]

Art is important on many levels, it is a realm to be enjoyed, an arena for political and ideological contest and for social criticism. It also provides space for spirit to reveal itself.[53] As society is rationalised further and further the open space for spirit is diminishing. Religion provided a space for spirit, rigidly shaped by dogma, and thereby protected from rationalisation as much as it prevented further development of spirit. Art, in becoming free and allowing the possibility of free development of spirit, has no barrier of dogma to protect itself from being overwhelmed by economic pressures.

Muriel Rukeyser is only half right when she says “there is art and there is non-art; they are two universes (in the algebraic sense) which are exclusive”.[54] Art is a product of social labour and faces the same pressures that are at work throughout the breadth of society, but it also resists those pressures, and thus propels itself beyond that reality, and as it were, into another universe. But since art has this dual essence, art and advertising are not universes apart. They are joined rather than divided by the line that runs between them, they are connected as though they lie on a continuum. At the advertising end, the work is dominated by rational, commercial, and economic concerns in which commodity, brand, and system are the focus. Protest art consciously opposes society and is thus firmly focused on it. At the far end of the continuum, art is unconcerned with commerce, ideology, or politics. It resists these pressures and in doing so points beyond the reality of modern capitalist society.

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Notes

1 Kruger, B., *The Trips of Power*, G. Alexander (text), (Sydney: Australian Centre of Photography, 1988).
2 Williams, R., *Keywords*, (UK: Fontana, 1976), p. 33.
3 Adorno, T. *Aesthetic Theory*, G. Adorno and R. Tiedemann (eds.), (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 3.
4 That ritual artefacts were not recognised as art at the time that they were made is irrelevant, since their status as art objects is constituted by contemporary art theory. See Danto, A., "The Artworld" in *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 61, no. 19, 15 October 1964, p. 581.
5 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 2.
6 ibid., p. 320.
7 ibid., p. 322.
8 ibid., p. 4.
9 ibid., p. 7.
10 ibid., p. 8.
11 ibid., p. 1.
12 ibid., p. 13.
13 Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, G. Noerr (ed), E. Jephcott (trans.), (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 103.
14 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 321.
15 ibid., p. 17.

16 Merleau-Ponty, M., "Cezanne's Doubt" in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, T. Baldwin (ed.), (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 281.
17 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 243.
18 Murray, L. "The Instrument" in *Learning Human*, (Sydney: Duffy and Snellgrove, 2003), p. 156.
19 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 245.
20 ibid., p. 214.
21 ibid., p. 215.
22 ibid.
23 ibid.
24 Adorno objects in one of the many letters that passed between him and Benjamin that, "if anything can be said to possess an auratic character now, it is precisely the film which does so, and to an extreme and highly suspect degree." Adorno, T. and W. Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence, 1928 – 1940*, N. Walker (trans.), H. Lonitz (ed.), (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 130.
25 Benjamin, W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, (London: Fontana, 1992), p. 217.
26 ibid., p. 218.
27 ibid., p. 224.
28 ibid., p. 217.
29 Adorno and Horkheimer, *The Culture Industry*, p. 96.
30 ibid.
31 ibid.
32 ibid., p. 104.
33 ibid., p. 101.
34 ibid., p. 98.
35 ibid., p. 99.
36 ibid., p. 102.
37 ibid., p. 95.
38 Adorno and Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence*, pp. 129 – 130.
39 Docker, J., *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 43.
40 Barthes, R., *The Pleasure of the Text*, R. Miller (trans.), (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), pp. 11 – 12.
41 Adorno and Horkheimer, *The Culture Industry*, p. 129.
42 ibid., p. 109.
43 ibid., p. 98.
44 ibid., p. 110.
45 ibid., p. 132.
46 ibid., p. 111.
47 ibid., p. 132.
48 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 324.
49 Merleau-Ponty, M., "Eye and Mind" in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, T. Baldwin (ed.), (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 293.
50 Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p. 232.
51 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 84.
52 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 332.
53 The term 'spirit' need not imply a religious or idealist notion, as Adorno writes "spiritual content is ultimately nothing else but material or stuff consumed by the work of art, regardless of any ideas the author may have about the centrality of the content." The material consumed by the work of art is transformed within the work and transcends our social and economic reality, and though the process by which this occurs is little understood it need not be mystical. ibid., p. 349.
54 Winterson, J., *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, (London: Jonathon Cape, 1995), p. 17.

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