



The Potency of Art: Definitions and Speculations

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Article History

Received: 17.08.2021

Accepted: 28.09.2021

Published: 05.10.2021

Abstract: In this essay I first problematize the idea that one can define art and ask the curious question whether there can be the experience and creativity of art without the very concept as such. I conjecture that perhaps one can for language as in verbal language is distinct from the language (visuality) of art. This leads to the ubiquity of art and the experience thence of life itself as potentially a creative one that itself may be art, if only one has a certain kind of art lens if you will, through one may perceive and make of the world/universe. I then discuss the future of art given the post structural, post-modern language turn and the undoing of modernism, even the metaphysical-abstract and the correspondence thinking of mimetic resemblance in art, as well as the notion that art is sacred towards its secular transformation, into an unknown and unpredictable future trajectory.

Keywords: Aesthetics; post-modernism; abstract art; modernism.

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay I first problematize the idea that one can define art and ask the curious question whether there can be the experience and creativity of art without the very concept as such. I conjecture that perhaps one can for language as in verbal language is distinct from the language (visuality) of art. This leads to the ubiquity of art and the experience thence of life itself as potentially a creative one that itself may be art, if only one has a certain kind of art lens if you will, through one may perceive and make of the world/universe. I then discuss the future of art given the post structural, post-modern language turn and the undoing of modernism, even the metaphysical-abstract and the correspondence thinking of mimetic resemblance in art, as well as the notion that art is sacred towards its secular transformation, into an unknown and unpredictable future trajectory.

1. THE CONCEPT OF ART

I conjecture that a person who has no concept of art cannot see or experience art. Without the name or label, the language as such, there can no

conscious experience that one might be experiencing art. I am not referring to some murky aesthetic experience that may be termed “disinterested”. I am here referring to the very notion that there is something of which we call art.

This means that for there to be a concept, an idea that can be shared and spoken of – or perhaps even thought “through” – there ought to be a name for it. Language frames our concepts. Language defines our experiences. Language refers and picks out an x, even if elliptical and metaphorical, it is the nexus between thought and expression. In fact, deeper yet it attunes one’s very thinking in a particular way and if developed, one can add to the discourse and knowledge base of the “object” so defined.

Yet “art” is a complex word. It does not simply refer to a “thing” like tables and chairs and even in a simplistic form as a reference to specific kinds of things – the so-called fine arts – such that it picks out all objects that look alike in the form of sculptures or paintings or drawings and the like. Yet,

Citation: Daniel Shorkend (2021). The Potency of Art: Definitions and Speculations. *Glob Acad J Humanit Soc Sci*; Vol-3, Iss-4 pp- 161-168.

this simple referencing capacity of the word “art” is not accurate. This is so, because a) the ambit of fine arts changes over time to include many more items denoted as art – “ready-mades”; installation; performance; photography, new media and so on and so forth. Secondly b) the Institutional theory, which I think is a strong candidate for the defining of art, simply defines it as an “object” or even just an idea that is presented in a gallery context, that is situated within an art-world or cultural discourse or even more emphatically, plays the game of being art as it is canonized within the fields of art theory and art history.

So, on the one hand we are saying that art is a fixed and defined concept; while on the other hand, we are saying the definition of art changes yielding to cultural movement and individual and collective, creative innovations. The equation becomes more complicated when art theorists and philosophers often make the claim that certain objects which we define as art are not in fact art, for example when Bell defines art as concerned with “significant form” and a great many “artworks” as not conforming to this ideal and therefore not art or in Plato’s definition of what counts as art and what counts as good art, disqualifying a great many “artworks” as fulfilling such a role and function.

Nevertheless, such discussions or arguments can only be had, made and developed on the basis that there is such a concept (in the real world) that is called art. The point here is that nothing can be said of art without the word and concept of art. And not simply what can be said, but what can be thought, seen and experienced is filtered through words, in this case art. Even a person who has no background in the arts, knows something through cultural discourse as to what this animal might be or is. And one’s use of the notion of art gets more sophisticated to the extent that one becomes ofay with its “object”, its theoretical and historical depth and even in the making and creating thereof. Is there a vacuum, an ideal subject that has never come across the concept?

Did our prehistoric forebears first create something on the cave wall and then begin to reproduce such images without first having the language, the concept of art? I would surmise, yes this is indeed so. Does this undermine my argument, namely that to create and discourse on the subject, one first needs the word “art” which houses the concept? (obviously “art” is in English and would have to be interchanged with other sounds and words that connote the equivalent in any number of languages). Perhaps then even cultures who have no concept of art were still involved in art?

In fact, the way we use the word “art” today is only of recent origin, perhaps around the High Renaissance when art started to become a separate and secular domain, no longer tied to religious worship and belief, no longer tied to craft; no longer a collective effort – but rather in the sense we mean it today – as individual expression; as the kinds of objects we think are art (oil on canvas; marble sculptures on a pedestal; individual quirks and innovations such as the early twentieth century was marked by massive upheavals as to the definition of art with the advent of the abstract; of Dadaist anti-art; of the death knoll of the traditions of representation or of the nude, landscape and still-life and so on...).

So, if art is not a fixed concept and if the way we use it today is different from yesteryear and in fact changes radically the further back in time we go, perhaps the word “art” does not house an immutable concept. Perhaps the atom is divisible after all.

So, to return to our question: Was the caveperson making art even though there had not been a descriptive term or conscious awareness that motivated the act, that rendered it a conscious experience?

I would hypothesize that “yes” such behavior is art. Consider a child that joins some sort of playful activity. He knows not the concept of game, nor the rules, nor the objective, nor whether it has a name or not. He wishes merely to run and jump and throw and so on. Later he may learn that he is playing cricket and his exuberance is channeled in accordance with a set of objectives as defined within a game. Now I would not claim that art is as rigid as say a sports game, but it bears a similarity. In any event, there are parameters and later methods, techniques, specific art-forms and still later a history and theory and discourse around it. Only that initial impulse of sticking gey-colour on a hard surface is the same impulse to run and jump for no reason other than play and for human expression – neither to perform a magical rite nor to catch some prey. It is first step in what we call culture. It is perhaps an act of freedom.

This sounds so noble and fine, but is it true? Culture as we now call it is often simply an arm of nationalistic sentiment; it is often simply a battle-cry; “muscular aesthetics” outmuscling competing ideas; individual egos; economic power-mongering and so on. Where then is the “purity” of a single notion we call “art”? And in its “purity” a further elitism is established; in addition, a problematic formalist polemic, as well as a cultural hegemony may ensue. So perhaps we were better off as cave-

artists without the word, the concept, the very thought that is art?.

2. SEEING ART EVERYWHERE/MAKING ART

Perhaps there is a solution to this impasse, that is to say, that defining the word "art" is slippery and yet not defining it, renders the possibility of art inconceivable. Could one elide this problem by maintaining that art is everywhere (not only confined to or as specific objects; not housed simply in museums and galleries) if only one retained this logical proposition: A and not A, or rather B. The meaning of this is that the identity of A is also not the identity of A and can therefore come to be/mean/stand for/refer to B. In simpler terms: art is what happens when upon experiencing something and/or making something a certain material (one must concede a material is a given, even when speaking of conceptual art, even with examples such as Cage's 4 minutes and 11 seconds "silence") can come to mean something else. This is akin to the metaphorical. The statement: "He is courageous like a lion" for example "equates a person (A) with a lion (B) and in that "instability", in that poetry therein lies the art. A sculpture in its aesthetic facticity may be say Laocoon battling the snakes, but it is also the symbol of human struggle pitted against the onslaught of "outrageous fortune", a universal symbol of struggle and strength.

One might then develop the following theoretical model: on the one hand there is sensory experience. This is the immediate aesthetic force of the object as it meets the gaze as it were. One might miss this as the "left brain" is quick to define – that "table", that person; this sunset and so on and so forth. To the extent one can slow down the process and revel in the sensory presence and experience without categorizing, one can be said to have an aesthetic experience. One might bypass the naming stage and then discern what is the extra-aesthetic – such a table, chair, person says something more than that or this table, chair or person... such objects/subjects could refer to a certain depth as opposed to a surface. This then leads to the plethora of meaning and the various branches of knowledge from philosophy to psychology to that of physics, chemistry, biology and so on. And then deeper is the metaphorical stage. This table, chair or person, call it "A" actually is a sign for "B", call it the idea, the realm of metaphor is pierced and the aesthetic gives way to the world or realm of meanings that might go in all directions. In this sense the aesthetic and extra-aesthetic are inversely related as in $y = 1$ over x , just as one might have in mind Wittgenstein's duck/rabbit image: to the extent that one sees one polarity (the duck/the aesthetic), one cannot see the other (the rabbit/the extra-aesthetic), yet both

obtain though one can only but focus on one aspect at a given time.

The consequence of this model is that there is no quintessential object of art. There is no quintessential meaning to art. There is no ultimate representation and expression of art. There is even no definition of art. Why? Because the oscillation from aesthetic to extra-aesthetic is everywhere both present and absent as the world dematerializes into idea and idea regains its reality and materializes as object/subject. Another way of putting this is to say that the sensory and abstract (or abstracting or abstraction) dance. The world appears at once real and as an illusion. The world is pierced in greater depth through study (abstraction), through making and reshaping and disappears through idea/s only to reappear as idea takes shape and dimension. Importantly, this is not a dualistic conception of say form and content – for it is form that reveals content while content can have infinite interpretive dimensions just as form seems to go on forever. In that sense, they are one and the same and yet not one and the same which is to say they become something else. "A" is "A" and "not A", but "B". "B" itself then is "B" and "not B", but "C" and so on. He is like a lion and a lion is like a tree. Sense and nonsense are not diametrically opposed, just as order and chaos "need" one another for there to be sense in the first place.

If this is not clear, perhaps a better way of putting forward this proposed model is to say that art does not exist as a specific something or as a definite concept, but as a "Way of life" that might include "right living". Art is not only instantiated in making say a painting or writing about say Romantic art or visiting a gallery. It might include simply going to the toilet; taking a bath; playing soccer; awareness of one's breathing; a system of moral codes and so on and so forth. The Tao which can be spoken is not the Tao. It is a life of conscious being, where creativity in the now is art truly spoken.

3. ABSTRACTION AND ABSTRACT ART

When art was no longer tied to religion and separated itself as a separate activity, it took an interest in the observed world and divined means whereby to render such a world as accurately as possible. This changed with a) the advent of the photograph and b) dissecting and analyzing the world according to deeper structures, ones that were not necessarily amenable to the senses, such as the psychological state of the artist and abstracting the empirical world in terms of basic structures and components to the point of "losing" what is immediately observed. This began arguably in the West with Turner and then the Impressionists' and finally "reality" became unrecognizable in abstract

art informed as it was by fauvism, cubism, and futurism amongst other important early twentieth century movements in art. The latter perhaps drew from the findings of the scientific revolution and modern physics charting a road of subservience to religious ideologies and then the subsequent secularization of the arts.

One might characterize abstract art as the reduction of everything to elementals both in terms of the empirical world and the focus itself on the very basic elements of art, the formal properties of line, colour, scale, form and so on. Art need no longer be the illusion of the material world faithfully rendered to appear as that world, that is to say the representational, naturalism or realism or as some idealized realm, but rather as a new dimension. Pollock took this to the extreme with his “drip paintings”, just as sculpture became abstract in say the configurations of Moore. Yet some recognizable element is there, if only hinted.

The point really in getting away from the world is paradoxically to then reinvest oneself in that world with new vigor. Art was thus never meant to be sacred, since its subject is the world of sense and through the abstract, one might approach this world with renewed vigor, for the substrate of all things is the same: the quadrilateral; the geometric field of vision; the psychological state of line and colour and the flatness of perceptual reality. The artwork tells us about all things, but power is not vested in the thing. Ironically, this may lead to finding nature again.

Thus, art has gone full circle: pictographic abstraction; religious idealism; the tricks of art that could render a natural scene and likeness; back to abstraction only now the ideal need not be considered religious but rather secular and metaphysical. All too often, however the abstract is just reduced to design, bereft of metaphysical import. In my estimation, art is somewhere between the abstract and the sign system of writing. The abstract is perhaps the end of art – pure white; pure colour field and thence difficult to interpret but as the field of possibility or simply an aesthetic modality, while writing is fixed to verbal language and loses its artistic interest, even such script as the inherently pictographic and artistic such as Chinese. Somewhere between the inchoate and the literal referring of writing, a good work of art seems to be saying something, of which as Kant (1956) said one can simply make “kindred associations”, associations that allow for the free play of the imagination and ideas.

The abstract is like a set that holds objects, and at the same time the set itself has character.

That is there is a perceptual, aesthetic component to art and an abstract, content. For example, Ad Reinhardt’s purity of abstract design was a kind of search for the ineffable through negating all objecthood and subservience to the world of sense and yet his method and the product itself becomes a new sort of object, a kind 2001 monolith. Or Ryman’s “white paintings” reaches a sense of infinity by repetition and expunging all trace of sense perception, yet itself referring to itself as an object with the qualities of weight, scale, dimension, and materiality. Such preoccupation with straddling the worlds of sense datum and deep, metaphysical content swallows up all things while yet becoming a something. This paradox is at the heart of metaphysics and the psychology of being, namely that one is both purveyor of all and contextualized as a something within the All. Let us look at a few more examples:

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) eloquently describes his exploration of the metaphysical by means of abstract art: “speaking of the hidden by means of the hidden. Is this not content?” (in Thomas 1976:34). In order to achieve this, Kandinsky worked both with the element of chance, the unexpected and the attempt to clarify a symbolic colour notation that would mirror laws of the cosmic dimension. The cosmic dimension is an assertion of both the subjective and the objective, which one might argue reflects the concern of modern science, where the observer is said to act upon that which is observed and thus becomes part of the experimental context. His paintings therefore reflect a holism of personality, the direction of will to thematize, to use Wollheim’s terminology, in order to tap into a higher dimension. This can be described as the visual analogue to music and thus a kind of mimesis from one area of expression in terms of the language of another, namely the visual. When Kandinsky saw in his upside-down painting a certain formal coherence and meaning, it was probably not just aesthetics and more specifically formalism that interested him. He had altered perception and thus, conception. Gombrich (1959:303) expresses it in these terms: ...in turning away from the visible world, art may really have found an uncharted region which lies to be discovered and articulated...this inner world, as we may call it so, can no more be transcribed than can the world of sight.

To the artist the image in the unconscious is a mythical and useless an idea as was the image on the retina. There is no short cut to articulation. Wherever the artist turns his gaze he can only make and match, and out of a developed language select the nearest equivalence. It appears then that painting approximates what one wishes to “say” concerning the inner world. We might say that the

language of art is miraculous not because it enables the artist to create the illusion of reality but in that "it teaches us to look at the visible world afresh; it gives us the illusion of looking into the invisible realms of the mind" (Gombrich 1959:329).

In a sense, abstract art and abstraction is not new, for mimesis is an abstract process. Even Constable, a quintessential realist spoke of the scientific "breaking up of nature" and reassembling it (Hughes 1991), in order to reconstruct a semblance of the form of nature on a flat plane. Thus, there is – at what level is uncertain – the intervention of the human mind, interpretation and filtering in all art. The modernist "order" is merely a consciousness of those constituent elements, and in some forms of abstraction a reemployment of those formal aesthetic devices to elicit meaningful content and claims to truly reflect "reality". Pre-twentieth century painting from the Renaissance onwards is based on the empirical world or uses images recognizable from the world in order to express an idea, a story. Painting of the early to mid-twentieth century, however, in particular epitomized by abstract expressionism, begins with a form that reflects consciousness, precluding direct references to nature, in order to access profound truths or the collective unconscious in Jungian terms. Jung (1983) developed the idea that there is a common template of universal archetypes that form the basis of the collective unconscious impinging in various ways on the individual's consciousness. Such artistic interventions thus seeks to go beyond narrative, image, and the object and access the truths of an inner dimension.

In a brief overview of select "abstract" artists I will argue for the mimesis (read: visual-aesthetic correlate) of these truths. Piet Mondrian's (1874–1944) paintings reveal a philosophy where simplicity becomes the ultimate state, evolution a natural and mystical phenomenon, that is, the concern with pictorial reality or logic. The search for simplicity, that there is no one dominant force, that there ought to be balance and equilibrium, destroys the distinction between figure and ground of a painting, and by extension, in philosophy, that between matter and nonmatter. The water, pier, sea, and sky behind the configurations dissolve as the relationship between the lines assume importance. Mondrian saw abstract art as liberating the old forms of oppression, a religion of sorts. He was trying to search for something beyond nature, a metaphysical substrate, as he reveals in the statement: "we need to look past nature, but in a sense see through it" (Thomas 1976:13). Here the mimetic function is thus to provide a kind of structural scaffolding behind the visible in terms of visual form, an underlying structure that the

tangible world of objects shares. In other words, he provides a picture of the unity of the external world.

Mark Rothko (1903–1970) asserts "painting is a means of philosophic thought" (in Polkain 1991:59). His paintings are an arena where unity and wholeness are expressed through large canvases of close-valued hues whose feathery edges are almost connected with the boundaries of the canvas. There is a sense of the loss of the individual in the "all" through colour and the negating of form and line. The flat form destroys illusion and reveals truth, the being of the painting-object. An exhibition in 1947 organized by Barnett Newman called the "ideographic image" reveals the common project of many abstract painters of the time, namely a concern for pictorial truth, a presence within the canvas surface. Rothko even referred to his shapes of colour as organisms, entities that have volition. Others, such as Reinhardt, achieved this presence of being in his paintings by eliminating elements for abstract painting. In his philosophy outlined in his essay *12 rules for an academy* (1962), it becomes clear that through negation he attempts to arrive at the absolute, the empty, a kind of meditation and silence, and painting as an end in itself.

Thus, one can describe the works of Rothko, Newman and Reinhardt as the attempt to mirror, as in mimetic resemblance in visual terms concepts such as "silence" and "meditation" or the gestalt of colour itself, such as the red of red. Jackson Pollock's (1912–1956) paintings of 1947 to 1952 reveal a network of lines and inscribe the visceral aspects of the artist's energy at the moment of each works creation. There is a flow of the artist's being at the moment of each works creation. There is a flow of the artist's psychic energy and physical movement, as complex webs of poured and strewn lines, splattered puddles, and coalesced pools of paint, develop. The influence of surrealism is important, though it can be said that they merely illustrated a magical world, rather than created it. Pollock saw his role as a kind of creative shaman. "I am nature", he exclaimed, not merely inspired by nature, but being a conduit of nature itself. This is not necessarily a stance of anti-intellectualism, rather it is an attempt to reconcile secondary (logic) and primary processes (poetic license) in a unity of unmatched intensity. His primal "drips" is a kind of mimesis of himself, that is, a record of his own movements reflecting that he is part of nature, not simply copying nature at a removed distance. The innovations of the abstractionists of the twentieth century shattered preconceived notions of painting, painters and the painting-object and opened the area of painting to an individual form of expression that explored the deep consciousness of the mind, creating new icons. One might be so bold as to claim

that they were then monuments of a new faith – again all such statements are a presentation of modernist rhetoric presented uncritically. Both formally (aesthetically) and conceptually (extra-aesthetic references), the notion of mimesis was no longer a subservience to a likeness that could be observed or derived from the biblical source, or observed reality, but assumed a more abstract reality. The term “abstract” does not imply “without form”, but rather without dependence on the forms historically incorporated in art. There is a new system of reference as Newman (Pohribny 1971:65) was quoted saying: “... there is no good painting about nothing”. So that in a certain sense it is still “painting as a window into...” transporting the viewer (in) to another dimension.

In such terms, one can describe Pollock’s work as wild, but intelligent; Rothko’s work often cries, but is meditative; Newman’s work is mystical, but classic (rational); Reinhardt’s work is solid, but light; Kandinsky’s work is metaphysical, but full of the colours of the material world. In groping for descriptive words for these ineffable works we find that such art is, after all, referential and thus alludes to that which is beyond itself. Or in other terms: such abstract art aimed to be a mimesis of an ontological, pre-given aesthetic, a “depth” – an “inner world”.

4. THE FUTURE OF ART

Many theorists such as Lyotard (1984) and others believe we have entered a new “phase” that is after modernism. This is the post structural, deconstructive, and postmodern “phase”. At this point, however, it is useful to analyze its relation to mimesis and the other modernist “order” hitherto mentioned, with a view to replacing “truth as correspondence” with that of the lack of a “truth”, and yet maintain artistic meaning, a point that Plato did not foresee.

I shall define postmodernism and its discarding the “truth” function by contrasting it with the “order” or modernism. The modernist demarcates a specific place for painting in contradistinction to other forms of art. It entrenches itself further within painting itself in the sense that abstract art can, for example, be considered a separate domain from other styles. Moreover, it assumes the mimetic transparency of language and its capacity to represent an “inner” reality, a “higher” realm and assert the presence of the painting-object. In such terms, art is a separate activity from functional life. Postmodernism, by contrast, recognizes the “impurity” of the medium, its lack of transparency, that is, its mimetic function, and thus the spilling over of mediums, styles, techniques, and categories into each other. Moreover, it critiques artists as original and that their style merely serving

to express the smooth line from internal states reliably mirroring external form. In terms of such a critique, art is not easily parceled off as a second-order reflexive activity. The boundaries between everyday life and art are not necessarily strictly defined.

An image may be useful here to problematize and illustrate the complexity and the lack of transparency of the postmodern, and the impossibility of mimesis as a recording of one aspect of reality through another, that is, art as a second-order reflexive and mimetic activity. In short, I will problematize mediation (perceptual aesthesis), referred to in the preceding chapter as “framing devices”. The image I refer to is that of a Spiral (see Figure 1). The “point” at the beginning of the spiral sequence represents the dimension preceding thought or it can represent a physical object or at least the reality of appearance. This is the given starting point, which is then “clothed” and described via sensory impressions and finally described at the “edge” of the spiral, by language. And yet, language potentially also links back to the realm preceding thought, or the “thing” and the spiraling sequence is repeated. Art is somewhere between the senses and language. The point here is that each “recording” device (degree of mediation), from the reality of appearance or a reality preceding thought (one could associate the “level preceding thought” with will. It is thus not surprising that both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche regard will as primary); to thought itself; to the senses; to the arts and verbal language, both reveals and conceals the level preceding it, thus distorting, and attenuating that which one order of experience, for example, sight, expresses via another order of experience, for example painting. And to the extent that there is concealment, the mimetic function, construed as correspondence, fails.

What I have been arguing for is that mimesis functions like a mask, and that while the modernist (“order”) took the “mask” to be real, a revelation of an essential underlying unity and principle, the postmodern (“order”) seems to recognize the “mask” for what it is, namely that the “mask” is deceptive, with no origin or mimetic imprint. Is this not what concerned Plato, namely in the rendering of the shadow reality, the appearances, there would be no recall of an original, his world of forms? The difference being that the postmodern embraces this uncertainty and considers it to be creative rather than halting the process with stable, metaphysical postulates!

This creativity can be couched in terms of Baudrillard’s (1988) concept of the “Simulacra” and “simulation”. With these terms he wants to argue that we have no access to an “original”, and more to

the point, we cannot trace an artwork, for example “back” to an “original”. The way we perceive or rather how we conceptualize what we perceive is already mediated via an endless array of surfaces and “copies”. This may be one way to read Baudrillard. Alternatively, his ideas could rather be seen as a critique of consumption and superficiality. Baudrillard (1988:55) puts it in these terms: “the simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth ... it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true”. In other words, reality is replaced by symbols and signs that mediate “reality”. These “copies” cannot be said to be based on a reality, nor yet hide a reality, and they are infinitely mutable, changing and transforming, even as we attempt to grasp it. In terms of this theory, we can say that historically, the premodern construes representation as a kind of artificial substitute for the real item, so that the uniqueness of objects and situations are real and signification gropes towards this reality. The modern, with the onset of the industrial revolution, began to blur the distinction between representation and reality when commodities became mass-reproducible, threatening to replace the “original”, and modernist artists, taking (their) cue from the romantic, sought to find a place for art as a means of delivering back that “original”. With postmodernism of late capitalism, however, simulacrum precedes the “original” and thus the distinction between “reality” and representation vanishes.

The result of this lack of a foundation, a “reality”, is that rather than seek correspondence between art and life and life and an In-Itself, postmodern philosophy enjoins one to celebrate these surfaces, that is, the lack of a “deep” structure predicated on a unified theory, a clear aesthetic/extra-aesthetic correspondence. This reveling, as it were, in the “surface” can be

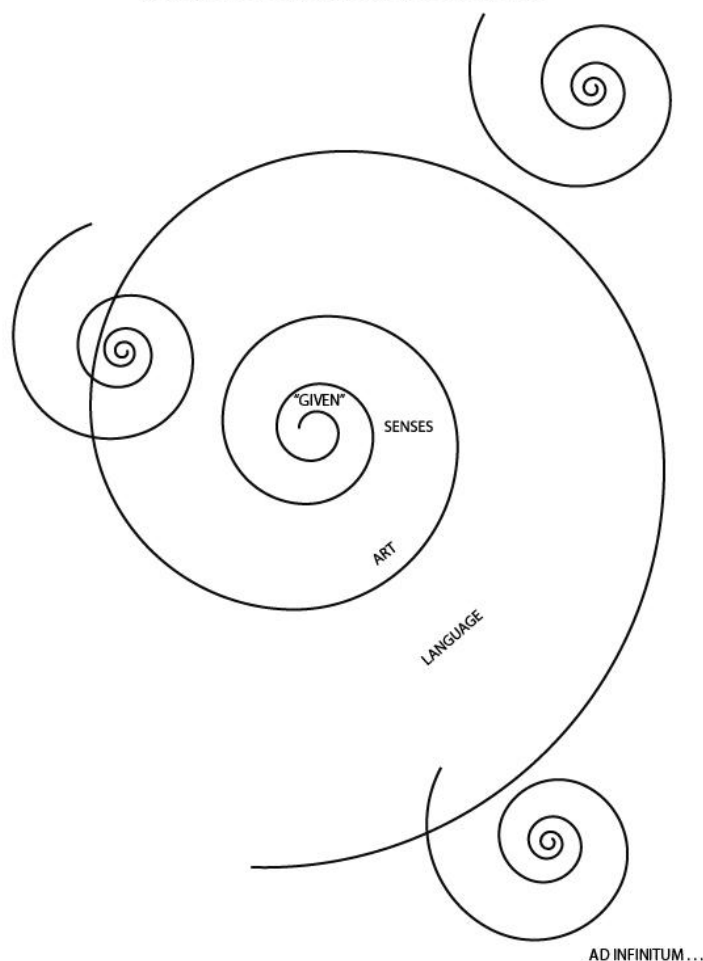
understood as a playful and joyful way of theorizing the meaning of art and leads one towards a reconstructionist aesthetics in favor of one that is more inclusive. It sets in motion the possibility of expansive interpretation and “play”.

Art theory has collapsed in on itself proclaiming that “it” does not and cannot extract “truth” or mimetically correspond to “reality”, and in that collapse a space for “other” things is made available. This would explain why, for example, art museums and history museums may not always be clearly separated, and why a hybrid exists between art (both fine and popular) and other domains of human expression in the form of an “opening ceremony” at certain major sports events. In these terms, the embrace of aesthetics is much wider. Moreover, a creative space can now be said to exist. Another example is the Pavarotti: the duets (Decca Music group LTD, 2002) where the operatic Pavarotti sang with popular artists such as Bon Jovi, Bryan Adams, Celene Dion and others. Or consider the exhibition at the Metropolitan in New York (March 2013-December 2013) entitled “legends of the dead ball era (1900-1919) in the collection of Jefferson R. Burlock” which is an exhibit of old baseball cards. Conceived thus we might describe art as not distinct and differentiated from other cultural pursuits and furthermore that art may assist in our understanding and interpretation of such pursuits.

Basically, the very fact that art cannot be easily defined, does not mean it does not exist and furthermore, it does not mean it resides only in a narrow field such as the fine arts and the theory that surrounds it. In this sense, the art life schism is a mirage, and one cannot predict the art (and life) that the future has in store. Therein lies its beauty and power and magic.

Figure :The Spiral

The complex and intertwined relationship and struggle between different 'Levels' of reality or mediation structures



CONCLUSION

If all language is somewhat mediated, then there is no transparent knowledge of the pristine reality of anything. Consequently, there is no essence to a word or concept. This is not the death knoll for art and a rigorous defining thereof but plays into the very heart of art itself. That is, in its lack of clear definition, where A is both not A and B, there is an opening up of the constant play of signs like an equation at once illogical and chaotic and then unpredictably bringing forth superb order and beauty. In this maelstrom, life itself can be experienced as art and the usual narrow definition of what constitutes an art object, or an art world is but a very limited vision and minor game in the full bounty of the concept of art. One should be excited, even though one can have little discursive clarity.

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