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# Art, the philosophy

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ART, THE PHILOSOPHY

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Jisoo Kim

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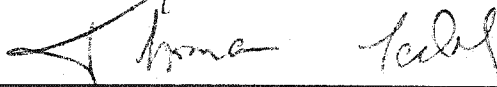
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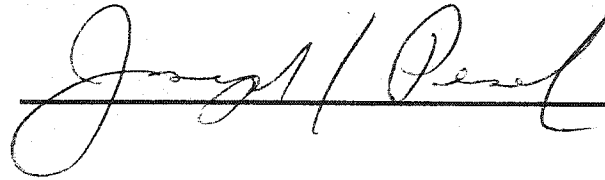
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## ABSTRACT

### ART, THE PHILOSOPHY

by Jisoo Kim

This thesis addresses the topic of aesthetics and the fine arts as discussed by Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel using the example of modern art. It examines the use of intellectual discovery of beauty and what kind of mental requirements are needed to explore the issues of the aesthetic judgment. In addition, the second part of the thesis covers the modern art of the Impressionism and post-Impressionism, specifically Picasso and Mondrian.

The example of modern art serves to reveal that the discovery of the aesthetic judgment involves a complex process that includes analytical thinking. Ultimately, the example demonstrates that art can be a semiotic process entailing a thinking process with analysis and logic. Thus, the judgment of beauty, especially involving the modern art, is a logical process.

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## Foreword

I began thinking of this thesis in 1997 after having read Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*. The title caught my eye since I was a painter. However, I found I could not agree with the conclusion. This was due to the fact that after every creative process, I found myself mentally challenged and drained. I am analytical during the painting process. I plan, devise, and design the creation, before the actual painting and even during the painting. I found that to be artistic, one also needed to be logical in the judgment of what would be beautiful. Thus, I decided to enter the program at San Jose State University and write a thesis on the philosophy of beauty and the creative process in art. The end result was my thesis.



## Introduction

Kant claims that the judgment of beauty belongs to the reflection of the free play of the imagination and understanding. On this view, the judgment of beauty is not a difficult process, for it can be immediate and instant. On the opposition is Hegel who believes the judgment to be the more analytical process of science.

The main point of this paper is not to contend that the judgment of beauty is a difficult process, for it can be immediate and instant, as Kant argues. Nor is it even to disagree with Kant that beauty belongs to the imagination. It is more to introduce these points of view, compare and contrast Kant and Hegel and determine what is required to make a judgment of beauty, i.e., whether beauty requires using only the capacity for the imagination and the understanding or whether it requires the more developed mind with analytical skills that would raise the aesthetic judgment to a science.

These comparisons will lead to the conclusion that the judgment of beauty requires a more inquiring and analytical mind. It is more than Kant's free play of the imagination and understanding in that it requires Hegelian analysis. Judgment, in the aesthetic sense, requires analysis by the trained expert, especially in the fine arts, as I will show later with examples of the modern art from Picasso and Mondrian. Using art criticism of these artists will show that deciphering beauty includes more than Kant's imagination and understanding, but also the Hegelian type of analysis. Through this demonstration, I hope to explore how the fine arts serve as an example for the analytical (the logical understanding) as well as critical (the notion of perfect) judgment of beauty.

Ultimately, by discussing the philosophers with regards to the fine arts and the concluding exploration of the arts with Elkins' text, I hope to engender an investigation as to how beauty is judged through both the eye of the critic and the eye of the artist.

## Kant's *Analytic* and Paul Guyer's Interpretation

In his *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, Paul Guyer claims

Kant's theory is this: a peculiar exercise of reflective judgment in the estimation of an object, in which no concepts are employed but in which the cognitive faculties of imagination and understanding are nevertheless involved, leads to a response to that object, a special state of mind, which may be thought of as a harmony or free play these cognitive faculties.<sup>1</sup>

This is a good summary of Kant's theory of the beautiful. The mind is involved with the particular faculties of the imagination and understanding for an immediate and instant reflective judgment. We will see later Kant's theory of the faculties and their free play may be problematic when claiming to apply to everyone.

Guyer continues to state that

Kant . . . introduces the concept of the harmony of the faculties into his exposition, maintaining that the "cognitive powers brought into play" by a representation which occasions a disinterested but universal delight "are here engaged in a free play, since no definite concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition."<sup>2</sup>

The free play is the interaction of the cognitive powers. The cognitive powers are the abilities available to all human beings to use of imagination and understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Guyer, *Claims of Taste*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pg. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Guyer, pg. 126.

The agent (the judge or perceiver of beauty) is also one who perceives the object with disinterest. The object must be perceived disinterestedly since as such it serves no further purpose than as a mere thing of an aesthetic judgment. So no other value such as moral purpose or utilitarian value should be placed upon it to corrupt its aesthetic evaluation.

Finally, there is an emphasis on the conceptual nature of the judgment. As Guyer reiterates, Kant, "no definite concept restricts [us]. . . to a particular rule of cognition." I will argue that there is a problem with Kant's theory. Kant's theory is problematic because it does not fully elaborate upon the free play of the cognitive powers. There is also ambiguity in the difference between concept and the cognitive powers.

Of course, in deciphering the concept of the beautiful, Kant does differentiate between "free beauty" and "dependent beauty," the difference primarily between *what is* and "what sort of a thing it is to be." Basically, there should be no concept prior to the judgment, because the main idea of Kant's theory is that the judgment is made by the subject, the viewer, the perceiver, or the agent upon the object. Thus, the difference between "free" and "dependent" is crucial. "Free" means there is no prior concept of the thing. On the other hand, "dependent" suggests a prior understanding or notion of the perfect thing of that kind, thus allowing for a conceptualization of the beauty rather than the play of the human cognitive powers upon the object.

Now, in Guyer's analysis, we turn to the judgment itself as a "simple reflection." Guyer states that "the theory of reflective judgment led to Kant's thesis that the pleasure we take in beautiful objects is a product of the contingent harmony between imagination

and understanding which results from 'simple reflection' on such objects."<sup>3</sup> This simple reflection is to be merely *that*. Even though it encompasses the cognitive faculty of the imagination and understanding, Kant does not appear to offer more than the basic thought process of instant and immediate thinking. Thus, the term "simple" alludes to something not conceptual, not analytical, and especially not logical. The judgment is not a prediction based on induction or deduction (by which I mean simply some sort of logical form of resolution like a proof in logic, or a scientific analysis.) So, according to Guyer, Kant negates the "logical" aspect of aesthetic judgment. However, Guyer finds problematic that in this simple reflective judgment, Kant supposes that there is a universal understanding of beauty. In other words, the disagreement among the agents or perceivers does not hinder his theory of the ability of all humans to use their cognitive powers in the judgment of beauty. Simply, Guyer claims, Kant "expects confirmation (of beauty) from the accession of others, but is not defeated (in the universal judgment) by evidence that others do not in fact agree."<sup>4</sup>

Since the judgment is subject-based, it is not of a "complex" reflection of logic and analysis. This also means that all humans have the capacity for the understanding and imagination through simple reflection to lead to a conclusion concerning beauty. As a consequence, the unanimity of humankind is the necessary requirement for such simple resolution to the question of beauty. Then, the beautiful must be apparent for everyone since everyone is capable of the cognitive powers for such "simple reflection." Yet, this notion of simple reflection is problematic since it does not resolve the issues of when

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Guyer, pg. 120.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Guyer, pg. 143.

judgment should be unanimous and how much thinking or reflection of the cognitive powers is involved in the judgment.

This is made even more complicated when we consider that although aesthetic judgment, according to Kant, is not induction, deduction, or postulation, it still involves the cognitive powers of the understanding and the imagination. Moreover, Kant believes there is an imaginative idea of beauty even if its validity is indeterminate. Kant never fully elaborates upon the notion of the “simple reflection” of judgment. How can there be reflection on the object without any deductive or inductive analysis? Isn't it somewhat contradictory to talk of using cognitive powers without talking about postulation? Such a position leads to the big problem of thought processes for the agent when it comes to beauty. There is also some confusion as to when one's decision on the judgment of beauty is merely the result of “reflection.” And where does this lead to a universal understanding of beauty? To further elaborate on Kant, this discussion will lead to a more in-depth study of his *Analytic of the Beautiful* by summarizing and exploring the Four Moments or the four parts to his judgment of taste.

## Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*

### The First Moment: a Qualitative Judgment

Kant divides his *Analytic of the Beautiful* into four parts. He calls them moments, but they are essentially parts that will define his theory of taste or the judgment of the beautiful. In the first moment, he introduces the imagination as necessary to understand beauty. Here, he differentiates between the use of imagination and that of cognition. The imagination involves a creative play, whereas for Kant cognition takes on a more preset, predetermined conceptual ideal of what things ought to be. In accord with this, Kant claims that “the judgment of taste is . . . not a judgment of cognition, and is consequently not logical.”<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, he emphasizes that the aesthetical judgment is subjective.

“Subjective” appears to mean belonging to the subject. The image is the representation of the object to the subject. In this representation, the subject is affected where “the representation is altogether referred to the subject and to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or pain.”<sup>6</sup> Then, the sensations in the varying degrees of pleasure and pain belongs to the subject’s response of feeling and thinking. This may explain Kant’s differentiation between the imagination and the cognition of a thing. He makes this distinction because the subject detaches himself or herself from the object and moves toward feeling and away from thinking. The imagination is the detachment from the object and moving to an intuitive feeling for the thing and away from the analysis. The subject’s response is in reference to the “feeling” of life. The subject’s response is

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<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, t (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), pg. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Kant, pg. 37.

not a thinking process necessarily, but one of feeling that refers to the pains and pleasures in the absorption of the object's properties or characteristics.

Kant also places a condition for beauty to be judged (i.e., for the judgment of taste), claiming that the delight produced by the object must be "disinterested." The disinterest is actually a kind of understanding of the object, but one that lacks concern for a purpose. The appreciator has a certain detachment from the object. In this, there should be no attachment to the object's purpose, to the designs or mechanisms underlying its creation, or to the circumstances of its existence. An example of disinterest is not being attached to the fact that a building or a work of architecture has taken much effort from several people. The beauty or the delight attained may not justify the effort and work involved, but it is still there. So, there must be a certain detachment or disinterest concerning the purpose and circumstance of the created object or the thing itself.

Next, Kant introduces the notion that the faculties must unite to produce the sensation of the pleasant. Here, he distinguishes between the objective nature of the thing and the subjective response in the individual. It is not merely the representation of the object that is important, but the subjective state of the judging person. For instance, how does the color green of the meadow affect a person who favors green as a color as opposed to a person who favors blue? This subjective difference will influence the aesthetical judgment.

The subject's senses lead in, some cases, to the pleasant. The state of detached senses is a disinterested attention in the beauty because it belongs to the subject, and his or her state. The aesthetic judgment does not belong to the object and object's purpose or



circumstances. Here, Kant leads to the notion that the subject's disinterest lies in no concept of the thing or analysis of it. Thus, any judgment that is disinterested is not logical (in Kant's sense). Moreover, the object must be perceived through the faculties of the subject, an immediate reception of it, and must please immediately. This is an important introduction to the use of "the immediate" since it connects with Kant's theory of the free play of the imagination and understanding united with a simple reflection or immediate reflection of the beautiful.

Ultimately, Kant believes "the beautiful" results from what will please with a disinterest through integrating the senses in an immediate response.

#### The Second Moment: Quantitative Subjectivity

Here, Kant appears to claim there is universality in the judgment when he says that

For since [judgment] does not rest on any inclination of the subject (nor upon any other premeditated interest), but since the person who judges feels himself quite *free* as regards the satisfaction which he attaches to the object, he cannot find the ground of this satisfaction in any private conditions connected with his own subject, and hence it must be regarded as grounded on what he can presuppose in every other person.<sup>7</sup>

However, the universality is dependent on the subject and not on the object because the object is not to be seen or perceived with concepts. There is no prior notion of the object

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<sup>7</sup> Kant, pg. 46.

or the object's ideal or perfect condition. Rather, we must view it with a disinterest, a detached sense of its supposed state and see it as it is without context. In this disinterest, the perception lies within the subject. Thus, it is a subjective universality since, according to Kant, we all have the capacity for imagination and understanding and the free play. Due to this universality, everyone should have the same satisfaction from the object because it is not the object but the ability for the subject to respond in the same manner to the object.

In this part of the Second Moment, Kant briefly notes that since the judgment does not belong to the concept, one does not employ the tool of logic. He claims that the first judgment is of taste and the second is of reflection. The first is private, belonging to the individual imagination and understanding, whereas the second belongs to the public ability of all humans' capacity for this free play.<sup>8</sup> This is in reference to that first taste of sense. It is without concept, so that the judgment is in agreement to everyone. The second refers to the fact that because everyone has one's own opinion, but is in agreement, there must be universality; in other words, this general agreement leads to a *public* judgment. What does this mean that there is one of taste and one of reflection despite the absence of a concept of the object? At this point, Kant appears to generally state that there is possibly the private as well as public judgment leading to universality without either a concept, or a logical derivation of the judgment. He justifies this argument by claiming that the beauty and perception of the beauty solely belongs to the

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<sup>8</sup> Kant, pg. 48.

subject. Basically Kant is saying that “we cannot infer that which is logical because that kind of judgment does not extend to the object.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to this subjectivity of the judgment, Kant focuses briefly on the singularity of this judgment, in other words, the particular judgment of one thing. While this Moment or part is called “Of the Judgment of Taste, According to Quantity,” the real argument is not that we can only judge one rose at a time as beautiful versus that all roses are beautiful, but that the judgment is singular according to the subject. This means that the subject views only one object and does not deem a universal judgment among all roses.

In discussing this subjectivity, Kant delves into the state of the subject’s mind and its reflection. He calls it “cognition,” an ambiguous term for Kant. Or to be more specific, “cognition in general requires *imagination* for the gathering together the manifold of intuition, and *understanding* for the unity of the concept uniting the representations.”<sup>10</sup> The use of “intuition” is not the conventional understanding of the term but that of the sense data, the use of the senses. Imagination, the understanding, and the use of intuition are the cognitive faculties that will lead to a subjective judgment. But as Kant argues, the judgment does not belong to the object, the predicates, or the characteristics, but to the response of the subject or subjects, because there is to be no prior concept of the beauty. The object is essentially nothing by itself without the reference to the subject. Ultimately, judgment is universal, since everyone, according to Kant, has the ability to respond with the free play of the imagination and understanding to

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<sup>9</sup> Kant, pg. 49.

<sup>10</sup> Kant, pg.52.

the object in contention. But the judgment is to be singular. This means judging only one object at a time and it is to be a subjective universality since the object itself holds no characteristics of beauty due to the absence of a “pre-concept.”

#### The Third Moment: According to Purposiveness without Purpose

In this section, Kant claims that the judgment of beauty is without purpose or the idea of the perfect. This means there is no prior consideration of the circumstance, the good, or use in the utilitarian and moral sense of the object. For instance, if we look at a building, we cannot consider the use of the building but must look at it in terms of its appearance. However, there is a purposiveness to the judgment. The purposiveness lies in the state of mind of the subject. This is subjective purposiveness. In other words, the judgment lies in the condition of the subject and how the subject feels about the object.

In this subjective purposiveness, the state of mind is bound up with the feeling of pleasure. Then, the judgment of beauty, a subjective purposiveness, is necessarily the purpose of the end result of pleasure. This is crucially tied with the condition of the subject and how the subject feels about the object in judging its beauty. Kant ties the state of the mind with the feeling of pleasure as “identical.”<sup>11</sup>

Kant takes this judgment according to the subjective purposiveness with the end result of pleasure for beauty falling into two categories: the empirical and pure. He claims that the first asserts the pleasantness while the second asserts the representation of beauty. The empirical belongs to the judgment of the senses; the pure belongs to the

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<sup>11</sup> Kant, pg. 57.

formal one of taste. The empirical judgment seems to be simple since it takes into account the manifold of sensations including all of the sense data. This means that the empirical includes all of the senses and intake of the material of the object including color, smell, sound, etc.

However, the “pure” judgment for Kant belongs solely to the form. It is an abstraction for Kant where the representation of the object no longer belongs to the mere sense data but to a higher level beyond the senses where there is a delineation of the object. This means that the structure of the object or the design of the object pleases rather than the delight occurring from the manifold of the senses, such as smell, sound, or even the sight of color. Rather the shape and design in its delineation will delight the subject. This is the pure judgment of beauty.

Kant then returns to the notion of purposiveness of beauty and the purposiveness being objective. Objective purposiveness regards utility. He dismisses utility or the purposiveness from the aesthetic judgment because it would stain or corrupt the purity of the judgment. Once again, he stresses that in order for the judgment to be correct and pure, the essence of the judgment lies in the feeling or the state of mind of the subject. We have noted in the previous sections, the state of mind is not likely to change from subject to subject since according to Kant, we all have similar capacity for our imagination and understanding to interact. The judgment of beauty occurs when the senses absorb the data of the object and result in a feeling for the object. Then, essentially for Kant who will claim that “nothing remains but the subjective

purposiveness of the representations in the mind of the intuiting subject,”<sup>12</sup> judgment is to be pure and free. This means there is to be no reason, no concept of the object. Rather the aesthetical judgment is one which involves the feeling of the subject of the internal sense where the harmony is in play with the mental powers of the imagination and understanding of the sensations. The object is then to be “felt” rather than “thought” according to Kant.

#### The Fourth Moment: Universality of the Judgment

This is a brief section on the subjective judgment of beauty. Basically, Kant claims that since the judgment is based on the common sense determines, we all have the capacity for the imagination and understanding. Common sense means we all have the senses required to interact the imagination and understanding and its free play. Under the ideal situation where there is disinterest, no prejudice, and a certain amount of neutrality, we will all come into agreement as to the judgment of the beautiful. Here, he stresses that the satisfaction inclusive of pleasure is one that everyone will feel if one individual feels it. This is based on the fact that the imagination and understanding is grounded on the common sense. Again, “common” refers to the common capacity everyone possesses when they use the free play of the imagination and understanding. If this is the case, then, there will be a universality or to be better worded, a commonality in the judgment. In this commonality, the shared ideal or common situation, it is required that all assent to the same judgment. Finally, the judgment is necessarily results in a similar satisfaction

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<sup>12</sup> Kant, pg. 63.

for all. This similar satisfaction will result in a correct judgment of the understanding and imagination where there is no mistake or prejudice. Essentially, there must be an ideal and common situation where everyone judges under the same circumstances.

#### Concluding Remarks on Kant's Analytic

Kant's basic assertion about the judgment of beauty is that it belongs to the subject, and that it is a universal aesthetic judgment that is based upon the common faculties of the imagination and understanding. He claims the judgment of beauty is not conceptual and thus, not logical. There is no prior understanding of the object's function or mechanisms whether it is architecture or art. However, he does comment that there is reflection in the judgment. I find difficulty in his argument that a judgment that includes mental faculties such as understanding and reflection does not have some logic. More important, how does one completely separate the historical or cultural context when judging the object, whether it is art or nature? How does one keep things pure when context seems to surround the object, whether it is physical or mental? A famous beauty such as Marilyn Monroe, would be considered beautiful in one era and not in another, depending on fashion and trends. Certain cultural norms dictate what beauty is, and these cultural norms are not necessarily universal. When we consider all of the elements of the unity of Marilyn such as the hairstyle, blonde hair, a voluptuous body, face highlighted by cosmetics, a becoming dress, we have beauty. These characteristics, portrayed in America during the mid-twentieth century as the qualities of a beautiful woman, offer us an object of beauty according to a particular cultural context. However,

norms change and with them so does the understanding of beauty. We can see that in the sixties, models such as Twiggy embodied the thin ideal for beauty as opposed to the voluptuous Marilyn. So, Kant's argument that there is universality to the judgment based on our common sense of the imagination and understanding does not completely succeed. Moreover, cultural and historical contexts appear to suggest to the logic of understanding certain elements or at least recognizing the elements of beauty as defined by the times and the place. Kant lacks this exploration of context. He claims there is reflection and understanding for the judgment of beauty. But he denies there is concept or idea of the object in considering its beauty. Thus, there is no logic or reasoning. Ultimately, Kant goes in the right direction by exploring the process of how judgment is based on the senses and the faculties of the imagination and understanding. However, he falls short in terms of explaining how context works. Basically, he does not consider the time or the culture in contextualizing the judgment of beauty. In this contextualization, a standard is established where possibly logic or reasoning is included with the imagination and understanding. Finally, this analysis for logic and reasoning required in a standard of contextuality requires more than Kant's mere reflection, but a deeper and more complex understanding of beauty that Hegel offers.



## Hegelian Analysis

### Science of Art

Even if beauty depends upon the subject or the beholder, it would require something beyond Kant's mere reflection and intuition. Objective sense in the analytical understanding, not instinctive sense, dictates that beauty exists because it is beautiful and not because an individual perceives it that way. The subject's mere judgment does not deem the object as being beautiful. Rather, an object is beautiful because it possesses the properties of beauty. The next step is to define what creates or constitutes beauty. As I have been arguing, determining that an object is beautiful requires a calculation of the qualities or properties. To elaborate this part, I now turn to Hegel and his approach to aesthetics as a "science."

In his Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics, Hegel starts out by evaluating the subject of beauty. Here, he explores the study of 'Aesthetic' as a subject worthy of defining the judgment of art and its beauty as a science. While a judgment of beauty belongs more to the senses of the imagination and understanding for Kant, Hegel adds that "beauty is born of the mind." Consequently, "beauty of art is higher than the beauty of nature."<sup>13</sup> There is a transformation of previous interpretations here, because what exists passing through a man's head is "*higher* than any product of nature." But, here Hegel distinguishes himself from the rest by claiming that "such a fancy [what passes through the mind] must at least be characterized by intellectual being."<sup>14</sup> Hegel offers the definition of 'higher' as something of the imagination and the intellect unlike Kant.

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<sup>13</sup> Georg Hegel, Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics, (London: Penguin Books, 1993), pg. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Hegel, pg. 4.

However, we will find later that art will require more the intellect and the concept in consideration of its beauty.

Hegel claims that the “mind and mind only, is capable of truth.” At this point, there is a sharp departure from Kant who believes in the intuitive naturalness of beauty, in that Hegel credits the mind and its comprehension of beauty as a higher element especially in art.<sup>15</sup> Reflection belongs to the mind as a “mode whose really substantial element is contained in the mind itself.”<sup>16</sup> Hegel takes the notion of beauty out of the realm of mere imagination and understanding of the senses. Rather, he understands that there has been too much vagueness, and that aesthetics has been “too destitute of a criterion.” Hegel essentially believes that fine art or the beauty of it deserves a scientific treatment. He insightfully claims that historically, fine art and beauty has not been treated with scientific seriousness because art has been perceived by some as a superfluity. And perhaps this is the reason some philosophers, in defining aesthetics or beauty, only claim it to be not a science. They, despite their interest, believe it to be superfluous, a flimsy area unlike the subjects of ethics, logic, or religion.

Hegel offers a highly complex view of aesthetics. It is not merely reduced to something superfluous as just an appreciation of beauty. Nor is it a pure mental abstraction leaving a certain dry intellectual quality. He confesses it resists “the regulating activity of thought” is “unsuitable for strict scientific discussion.”<sup>17</sup> He claims that fine art is a fleeting pastime, merely serving the ends of pleasure and entertainment,

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<sup>15</sup> Hegel, pg. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Hegel, pg. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, pg. 8.

is and mere decoration, not free but “servile.” More important, there exists art which is free and capable of serving other aims. In that sense, art is like science. “The science [that is art] liberates itself from this service to rise in free independence to the attainment of truth.”<sup>18</sup> When art or beauty is free and achieves its highest task, it reaches into a “supra-sensuous” world, going “beyond over against immediate consciousness and present sensation.” So, an example of beauty or art to extend beyond mere decoration, is one that is free and performs the highest task. It thus, achieves the freedom of thought in cognition. And Hegel might argue that, as a consequence, beauty and art deserve a scientific treatment. With all of these complexities, fine art might be the reconciliation of the pure thought of science and the external, the sensuous, and the transitory. In this emphasis placed on pure thought, we shall see that he departs from Kant’s mere incorporation of the understanding and the imagination. Rather, Hegel takes it to a notion of beauty and art as an idea and concept that Kant negates. This will be covered later, when we look at the section titled *Aesthetics: The Ideal*. First, I will discuss the primary difference between Hegel and Kant.

Kant distinguishes between the world of phenomena and the world of noumena. The world of phenomena includes internal and external phenomena. External phenomena is made up of the material world. The noumena includes the world of things-in-themselves. This means that Kant’s ideas will naturally lead to a de-conceptualization of objects, such as objects of beauty or works of art. They remain in the real world of material manifestation (what Kant calls the phenomenal world) even if perceived with the

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<sup>18</sup> Hegel, pg. 9.

free play of the understanding and imagination. However, Hegel will take this realm of the phenomena and the genuinely real into that of the scientific realm where things may be conceptualized with an idea or an ideal of the thing. This means the mind already has a preconceived notion of what the thing is to be, so that a standard may be set. As a consequence, an analytical process of the standard can also be established.

In establishing a world of appearance where science exists along with standards, concepts, and analysis, Hegel departs from Kant and incidentally, also from Plato<sup>19</sup>. Hegel claims “an appearance or show . . . is essential to existence.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, contrary to Plato’s assertion that art is deceptive Hegel claims that it reveals truth. How does this differ from Kant? Kant may see the truth in art but only through the understanding and the imagination. He will deny that further analysis beyond mere reflection is needed. However, Hegel will conclude that an idea due to the “appearance” or show will display the truth through the idea and the ideal. This means that the pre-concept will lead to the truth. The understanding of the beauty in the object or the art exists through an analysis will transcend the world of appearance.

Again there is some difficulty in determining the difference between Hegel and Kant since Kant does believe there is a transcendent realm where he puts some faith. But note, that in the sections of the *Analytic of the Beautiful*, previously covered here, Kant does not go further than the imagination and the understanding and would deny that analysis is part of the process in deciphering beauty. He will only contend that a mere reflection plays in the process, whereas Hegel believes that the mind is more capable than

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<sup>19</sup> Plato would believe that art is a world of appearances where deception exists.

<sup>20</sup> Hegel, pg. 10.

the imagination. For Hegel, the mind has an idea and will conceptualize the object leading to an analysis. This analysis will also offer the standard of beauty in what may be considered for Hegel, the science of beauty. I now turn to the idea and the ideal that will establish the concept of objects of beauty or art for Hegel in his *Aesthetics: The Ideal*.

### The Concept of Beauty

In this section, Hegel claims the highest attainment of existence is freedom. For freedom to exist, there must be knowledge. He essentially argues that in the “realm of spirit to obtain satisfaction and freedom in knowing and willing, in learning and actions,”<sup>21</sup> to gain knowledge, is to satisfy human existence. This is philosophy or science, for Hegel will treat them the same. If art is worthy of philosophical consideration and, thus, also worthy of a scientific treatment, then it will also reveal truth and knowledge. As a consequence, the analysis of objects of beauty and art is to satisfy man’s existence and his desire for freedom.

While there is material satisfaction in the world of things, existence within the inner world needs to be satisfied through the understanding and attainment of knowledge. This knowledge whether through other philosophical endeavors or through the understanding of aesthetics will allow a “rational freedom of the *will*.” This individual state or condition is determined by the concept or the idea of the thing. For the idea of the highest existing state there must be an ideal for the satisfaction to be met. This is contrary to Kant’s understanding in aesthetics where there is to be no concept, no

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<sup>21</sup> Georg Hegel, *The Hegel Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pg. 424.

preconceived notion, nor ideal of beauty so that perception will not be governed by prejudice. However, for Hegel, full satisfaction of life requires that there be an ideal so that it may be actualized in the understanding and in the attainment of knowledge. This knowledge will lead to freedom, the highest of existences.

To attain this knowledge, reasoning is required for Hegel. This is Hegel's "analysis." It is also the logical aspect of philosophy or science for Hegel. This reasoning would also include the determination of the understanding of aesthetics and the judgment of beauty in objects and in art. Hegel claims that because of its "preoccupation with truth as the absolute object of consciousness, art too belongs to the absolute sphere of the spirit."<sup>22</sup> Thus, Hegel believes that the understanding or the judgment of art belongs to the realm of philosophy or science.

If this is the case, the judgment of art and its beauty also needs the ideal of truth. This ideal requires an idea of the thing, essentially a preconceived notion of what is beautiful. This contrasts with Kant's belief that the imagination and understanding should be free from a concept and idea of beauty. Thus, Kant argued that "mere reflection," including a free play of the imagination and understanding, is not an analytical process gives rise to aesthetic experience. Hegel, on the other hand, leans towards an analytical process since he believes that art is part of the attainment of truth and deserves a scientific treatment. Further, he believes in the idea of a concept of things in the world where there must be satisfaction for the inner mind.

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<sup>22</sup> Hegel, pg. 426.

Hegel, in forming this theme of the idea and the concept, will not disagree with Kant about the *sensuous intuition* of art, but he will take it to a sensuous configuration. Configuration means some kind of analytical skill involving logic and the idea of perfect beauty. Thus, there is an ideal and concept that is configured in the process. He is like Kant, in that the truth of the beauty of art will be revealed through the imagination. But note, he believes also in the concept of the thing. He claims "it is precisely the *unity* of the Concept with the individual appearance which is the essence of the beautiful and its production by art."<sup>23</sup>

In this unity of the Concept, Hegel will bring art nearly to the importance of religion and the will for freedom and the attainment of the spirit. While he raises the importance of art, he also compares it to philosophy. In this comparison, he notes that we must acknowledge the *thinking* involved where the process "knows conceptually what otherwise is only the content of subjective feeling or pictorial thinking."<sup>24</sup> In this "thinking," Hegel claims art and religion are united in philosophy. There is the spiritual side of art which raises it to be close to religion, and the thinking involved, which will unite both within philosophy. So, Hegel believes there is a certain consciousness and will of thought in art and the judgment of it that deems it deserving of a scientific treatment. This thinking involves true thought, the Idea, which will lead to consciousness and freedom, the satisfaction of life. Consequently, if art is to be understood, it must require more than Kant's free play of the imagination and understanding. According to Hegel, because it is like religion and united within philosophy, the understanding of art is a

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<sup>23</sup> Hegel, pg. 426.

<sup>24</sup> Hegel, pg. 428.

thinking process with an idea. It is also then an analytical process. The judgment of beauty of objects and art is a thinking process with analysis. I now turn to the significance of the ideal.

### The Ideal of Beauty

In this section, existence is to be understood not just materially, but also spiritually. Basically, for Hegel, the “outer must harmonize with the inner” so that existence is revealed in this unity. Art plays a role in this unity through the harmony of the concept of appearance. He claims art purifies the appearance by casting aside that which does not correspond with the concept. This means that art reveals truth through an interpretation of the understanding and the thinking. This produces the Hegelian Ideal. Here, Hegel contends that art is more than mere imitation, especially in the case of portraiture. Painters who leave out flaws in portraits may be accused of flattery. However, Hegel argues that the goal of portrait is to provide the ideal and reproduce the subject in a universal and enduring personality. Essentially, good portraiture is the outer form in art mirroring the inner soul of the subject. Thus, the ideal of beauty is necessary to reveal the inner soul and its existence. Hegel, then, essentially believes that the ideal is necessary to reveal the truth and freedom of existence unlike Kant who would not emphasize such an ideal. Hegel argues for the form of the object. Kant argues for the perception of the object.

The artistic ideal exists in the spiritual realm, basically the inner realm. Hegel, however, claims the judgment of beauty does not reach the extreme of just thinking,



although he does not deny this as Kant does the artistic ideal. The combination of the sensual and mental leads to the spiritual, inner realm of existence. In the allusion to the supra-sensuous realm, he agrees with Kant's free harmony of the imagination and understanding. But Hegel believes in abstracting from the material world and interpreting the sensual elements for an ideal and the concept. He means there is subjective unity manifesting in the ideal. This means the individual actualizes the existence with the concept or idea of what spiritual existence means. Hegel seeks to concretize things with the unity of the ideal. Essentially, there is an abstraction with an interpretation connecting to the ideal. In this connection, Hegel synthesizes subjectivity and objectivity.

In this understanding of spiritual existence of beauty, the ideal also exists in the spiritual sense in art. But within this ideal, there is a search for the idea and with that a concept. To take this further, in the search for the ideal, there is a conceptual or configuration of the understanding of the ideal. I believe this to be a standard of the concept. This concept requires an analysis of the standard in order for the ideal to be established. This ideal is at the highest, Hegel claims, because it belongs to the spiritual realm. Then, the analysis of the standard for the concept of the ideal is also important. The ideal must be abstracted from pure externality, according to the artistic vision and imagination. The artistic vision appears to include a certain standard or concept that is the object of beauty for the abstraction to occur. This is the science, according to Hegel, the first step in science in determining what is the object. In determining what the object is, thinking is involved. This differs from Kant. However, since Hegel believes in the

ideal of a spiritual consciousness, with a concept, this should also include an analysis within the artistic vision. Artistic vision will play an important role on the concept of beauty and the analytical thinking involved.

#### Concluding Remarks on Hegel

Hegel is similar to Kant in that he would agree that there is a free harmony or play of the imagination and understanding in the judgment of beauty. However, he believes that beauty or the philosophy of this judgment, especially in the fine arts, deserves a scientific treatment. He reaches this position by his understanding that the Ideal is necessarily tied with the Spirit and thus, is at the highest level of existence. Within this Ideal, there is the unity of the concept. The concept, whose role in judgment Kant would deny, for Hegel, belongs in the realm in the ideal of spiritual truth as preserved and portrayed by art.

The concept or the idea within art is a critical development for Hegel since here is where the intellect plays a more definite role in the analytical process. It is also important to note that Hegel mentions the artistic vision since I believe that the artistic vision entails an analytical procedure when as part of the creative process. The analysis and thinking involved is the main issue concerning the understanding of beauty. Kant will allow only a mere reflection in the judgment. He believes there should be no concept of the beauty of an object. Hegel, on the other hand, in search of the Ideal, alludes to the unity of the concept and the idea of the thing underlying it.

By alluding to these elements, Hegel also refers to artistic vision. He suggests, then, that the spiritual ideal, the unity of the concept, the idea, and the mental processes involved are necessary for the artist's vision. Vision may need intellectual analysis in order to create. Thus, how can we as viewers, merely perceive art without considering analysis? This is a question that will be explored in the next part in discussing Piet Mondrian and Pablo Picasso.

## Art Criticism and Its Application of Art Analysis

In this section, some aspects the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Picasso and Mondrian will be covered. This will serve as an example of analysis in the creation of art. It will be argued that this analysis is like the analysis and the concept within the Hegelian view of artistic vision. Furthermore, this exploration will show how their art is not only analysis, but also related to semiotics, the interaction of signs. By this, I mean that the work is a form of deconstruction of sight and is similar to semiotics. This results that once the dissection of sight occurs, the dissection works like symbols to indicate significance. In this signifying, it will be argued that thinking and analysis occurs in the creative process.

### Artistic Vision as Analytic Imagination

“Thinking is . . . the activity of working with signs.”<sup>25</sup> Here, W. J. T. Mitchell invokes Wittgenstein to differentiate and explain the use of both the pictorial as well as the verbal as forms of communication. Basically, the signals which man uses to transfer meaning. With this point, Mitchell also offers the dynamics of *picture, pictogram, and phonetic* sign. This system is to be interpreted as object or original impression (representation), idea or mental image (imagination), word (semiotics or visual strokes). With this highly theoretical understanding of imagery, verbal or visual, he grants more intellectual significance than is usually recognized in the ordinary reality.

Further, Mitchell claims that “verbal imagery . . . seems to be a metaphor for metaphor itself.”<sup>26</sup> This can be applied to several painters who exceed the mere imagination but involves the thinking process. It is specific reference to Monet, van Gogh, Matisse, and Seurat. If we turn to the diagram of object as idea or mental image as word, then, these four artists are most representative of the semiotics within visual paintings as the physically painted word.

This assertion is made due to the effect of these painters who forged beyond mere representation and spoke with visual strokes. The visuality of these painters relied much upon their style of strokes resulting in sight deconstruction. The physical explanation of reality with the paintbrush is apparent to the eye and touch, where the paintings, by using texture, trespass their own medium to be like sculpture. One who is familiar with some

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<sup>25</sup> WJT Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago), pg. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Mitchell, pg. 21.

art history can recognize the differences yet also see their commonality in the use of the bodily stroke to evoke imagery and to communicate and imply emotion and mood.

Why is it important to note or even refer to these painters? They define the struggle for surpassing the merely representational with their innovative styles. At a higher level, this struggle took them beyond mere visual image into the particular form of textural application, striking them as different from the past. The paradigm of a different kind of painting shifts with the impressionists and post-impressionists and not with the cubists or those involved in the de Stijl movement. It is well-documented how radical this shift was by the fact that their work was rejected by the Academy and its standards.

What might have been a failure for these painters were a success due to their challenge of what mental and visual reality might mean for the humanities. The paintings offered a visual communication to the senses. Specifically, the subject matter of the paintings was not extraordinary or controversial. But the manner of their depiction was at the heart of the controversy. Vision, as well as realism, was challenged by these painters. In reconsidering realities and ideas, the painting system compares with the physical visualities as well as the science of signs and signals. With the advent of photography, I propose that these artists had to do something as drastic as reevaluating the art as mere portraiture or decorations and expose a different kind reality. In this attempt, the styles change from flat color covering the canvas to the vital stroke and signature styles of Monet, van Gogh, Seurat, and Matisse.

With this radical metamorphosis of the canon, these artists also spoke a different language with their imposing styles. It was a visual chaos to see life through their eyes.

In this “seeing,” the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists created a new kind of language. Preceding the Cubists and the de Stijl movement, the language is heavily ridden with semiotics. The brushstrokes and colors involved such as in Seurat note a deconstructive use of dots. There is also linear movement in the van Gogh’s brushstrokes. Specifically, one notes that van Gogh forgoes direct representation, but relies upon his emotive power to provide a visual transcendence of the subject whether it be *The Night Café* or *Starry Night*. Similarly, Matisse offers an alternative interpretation movement away from the concern with the visible and to the mental with his shading and outlining as shown in *The Green Stripe*. Then, these works of art as the “painted word” or language are “verbal imagery . . . [as] metaphor for metaphor itself.”<sup>27</sup> They represent a semiotic interpretation of sight, preceding the deconstructive styles of Picasso and Mondrian. Equally important, they had to address the dying style of the realists by offering a new, linguistic-related vision. The brushstrokes no longer use traditional method of realistic representation. Instead, they offer brushstrokes that are semiotic through dots and lines. This semiotics is linguistic-related. Thus, this semiotics provide the inheritors, the luxury of mental interpretation as demonstrated by the Cubists and those involved with de Stijl.

With the de Stijl movement emerges a style that goes beyond mere representation and the exploration surpassing the physical that the preceding Impressionists had established. Member of de Stijl were instilled with the belief that humanity could be

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<sup>27</sup> Mitchell, pg. 21.

raised to a higher spiritual level through art. In *de Stijl*<sup>28</sup>, the first issue claims to seek a “new” sense of beauty. This odyssey into aesthetics is not a radical departure such as that of the Impressionists. But we encounter for the first time, a deliberate focus and emphasis on the “logical” exploration of the spiritual realm as articulated by the abstraction of those involved with the de Stijl movement. The message implies thinking occurs in art making and thoughts are transferred by the art. Where Impressionism sought to escape the boundaries of Realism, the de Stijl movement is the intentional search for the spirit with an organizational abstraction, formulaic in its delineation of the soul. de Stijl included politics and a canonical philosophy which governed its existence. It searched for purity and utopia, a process that necessarily required thinking. Mondrian, as a primary player in the de Stijl movement was a convert to Theosophy, the spiritual faction for utopian purity. He looked for an art that was transcendental rather than merely representational. This very effort to transcend required a philosophical thinking to be manifested in the physicality of the painting. The vision as idea was to be re-shaped and to be abstracted into formulas of symbols and signs. Thus, we have the development of Mondrian’s paintings where in his forties, he began to change and transform them into a more semiotic structure beyond the world of the senses.

We know that since 1912, Mondrian had been using black lines like a grid lying on the surface of the picture. The result was that the lines themselves became the framework for the painting, superceding the actual material presence of the canvas. The function of these black lines surpassed the physical realm and became the expansion of

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<sup>28</sup> The journal belonging to the Constructivists.



space. The physical nature of the canvas no longer defined or confined the painting. In his later works, the size of the paintings did not matter, since the idea of the painting was not dependent on the size, but on the formula and the logic of composition and color.

Here, we see that Mondrian used paint as if it were the symbol for the canvas, the text. The abstraction is not so much the alternative vision of reality as the Impressionists had it. Rather, it began to take on the connotations of math, specifically the obvious relations with geometry. The objects within the paintings were not imitated but transported bodily to canvas, where the canvas held the painted word. Arguments have been made that Mondrian's abstraction was less the geometry, without the commensurate parts and lacking rigid symmetry. This is necessarily true and is also the reason his art is more about playing with the painted sign, a discourse between the artist, using the art, to signify to the perceiver.

As Mondrian asserted the nonmimetic forms, he began to use his intellectual imagination to convey the ideas of a separate form, different from the original image. He used critical intuition, not just a mere instinctive intuition, where balance, order, and harmony are in experimental mode and exploration. This may specifically apply to his *Broadway Boogie-Woogie*. The oppositions are apparent, where contrast and difference display the movement and vibrant rhythm through the colors, shapes, and overall composition. Just as van Gogh showed the metaphysical experience of life through his swirls and circling of lines, Mondrian also displayed the "beat" in life with the throbbing color contrasts. This kind of metaphysical truth is perhaps best expressed by the

explanation given through his essay in triologue form, Natural Reality and Abstract Reality.

It has been noted that Mondrian accepted and adopted fauvist and divisionist techniques. These methods offered him a freer form, implying a dematerialization of objects, a distance from the mundane quality of constant nature. In this loss of specificity, he yielded to the universal with the focus on generalizations through basic colors and lines of intersection.

In the triologue, a conversation exists, concerning the nature of relationships of color and form where:

Z. Plastic expression takes place through opposition of color and line, and this opposition is *relationship* . . . . the more natural is abstracted, the more pronounced is the expression of relationship<sup>29</sup> . . . [where] all things are *parts* of the whole: each part receives its visual value from the whole, and the whole from the parts. Everything is expressed through *relationship*. One color exists only through *another*, dimension through *another* dimension, and position only through *another* position opposing it. That's why I call relationship primordial.<sup>30</sup>

The focus on the relationship between the particulars of the composition is critical for Mondrian. He is a painter who, like van Gogh, provides a differing interpretation of the metaphysical realm. In this interpretation, the result is the relationship that displays the bare essentials. In doing so, Mondrian experiments like a biologist who might dissect

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<sup>29</sup> Piet Mondrian, *Natural Reality and Abstract Reality: an Essay in Triologue Form*, (New York, George Braziller), 1995, pg. 21.

<sup>30</sup> Mondrian, pg. 25.

and find under the general form of the body is a purer underlying reality made of organs and bones. He is a biologist who strips away the excess and shows the skeletal nature of art that has been hidden or covered with external components that are apparent in conventional representation.

This kind of essentialism reveals the truth resulting from oppositions in the relationship. He claims only through opposition and contrast does a definition arise. As a consequence, we come to know the true nature of things with the provision of something that is different. It is a logical process as Mondrian shows “if not red, then green.”

Despite the credit given to the intuitive motives in creating an abstraction, it is more deductive logic. Mondrian does not claim this directly, but it is apparent in his works as well as in his dialogue that the abstraction was a careful thought out process requiring the painter to reevaluate the essence of object as subject of the work. This essentialism bares the reality into the rudiments of form. In doing so, Mondrian does more than the painted word, that of semiotics; he explores the painted logic. The painted logic is not the initial representation but the product after the image has been reordered and a vision of the image has been consumed to release a certain formula of the image.

What occurs in this reordering of the forms? The painter visualizes what is the idea of the image versus the representation of the image. In the ensuing visualization of the image, the imagination is engaged where image and intellect are paired. With this pairing, instinct and experience produce a logical understanding of the metaphysical realm. For instance, when Mondrian paints a tree, it is not mere representation, but the

idea of a tree. This process of engaging both the imagination and the intellect is not merely the maturity of the artist. Rather it signals the primordial relationship. As children, we draw our understandings of form with the use of stick figures. The man and woman are not direct representations but are made from the basics of circles and lines. This is the first offering of using the idea of man and woman. We recognize them to be humans not because these pictures resemble humans, but because they offer the idea, the skeletal understanding of humans.

In this return to the primordial technique, Mondrian shows both a maturity of his art and the logical process returning to the essentials. This essentialism reflects the logical reduction of the form. By stripping away the excess, Mondrian uses more than intuition, but must find a resolution between that of emotional and the computational intellect of the artist as coder of the image. Thus, Mondrian must define the art, not by a singular notion of the object, but by looking to the relationships where truth is revealed through opposition. The consequence is an essentialism. This essentialism is not unlike that of Picasso's deconstruction of the image where he also plays with the idea of the image but differs from Mondrian's purpose to reach purity. Rather, Picasso unlike Mondrian elaborated rather than minimized. The Cubists like the de Stijl artists appear to have taken to the intellectualization of visual image made possible by the Impressionists' departure from realism.

To understand Cubism and its difference from the de Stijl movement, we must first look at Cezanne's search for a reality beneath the material surface. This attempt for internal structure led to the beginnings of Cubism's analysis of spatial structure.

Cezanne, was like the Impressionists in regard to his haphazard organization and ephemeral forms. He saw vision as an interrelationship of parts, using color as building blocks for the physical structure. This understanding of form and structure was like Seurat's, but not as precise or as rigid as the divisionist method. Rather, Cezanne explored the physics of nature where when the subject is viewed in multiple times, the vision absorbs the shapes and the depth of space. This led into Cubism is more the physics of structure and less the geometry rendered by Mondrian. The Cubists, as the inheritors of Cezanne's style, focusing on the structure of objects and spatial depth, differ from the minimalism of Mondrian. Mondrian is all about colors, lines, and basic shape, more mathematical in nature. This minimalism contrasts with the elaboration of space, structure, and parts as introduced by Cezanne and epitomized by Picasso's fragmented embellishment of his subjects.

If Cezanne introduced the Cubist notion of the subject as object of vision, then Picasso elaborated on the vision of the object as the subject to his deconstruction of materiality. This "ultimate" analysis of the object is what might be called the "science" of Picasso. This science of Picasso is no more complex than the minimalism of Mondrian. It, however, elaborated rather than diminished the visuality of the subject as object. In this elaboration, the subject as object has not one absolute form. The object possesses as many as there are planes in the domain of meaning. This is a critical aspect of Cubism differentiating it from de Stijl. Mondrian attempts to get at a simplified and reduced conclusion of the object. However, the Cubists, as represented by Picasso, strived for the multi-faceted perception of reality. To arrive at such a conclusion requires

a thinking process. Representation is left at the door and the entry into another realm is a complicated interpretation of the multi-dimension of forms, shapes, line, volume, and space. Picasso captured this multiplicity first introduced by Cezanne and brought a more abstracted vision of the subject as object. He is the anti-thesis to Mondrian's effort at one true form. His understanding is that the subject as object has many forms to display and present itself, i.e., the relativity of the visible reality.

If reality were to be of many forms, Picasso's "studies" usually served as fields of experimentation, with ideas for different compositions originating from the same drawings. This is an abstraction of varying interpretations of the same thing; so that, understanding and completion of an idea of the image would include several readings of the subject. Just as there are multiple interpretations of literary texts or formulas for a mathematical concept, Picasso saw that there was more than one view of an image. He was eager to develop the cubist idea of revealing internal and external structure simultaneously. His experiments included superimposing one representational system on another or contrasting two different types of drawings to reveal both surface and internal volume. This imposition and contrast are like Mondrian's search for the true form through the *relationship*. This structural comparison of objects in space by portraying the many facets at the same time was called *simultaneity*. Then, we have Picasso's equivalence of Mondrian's *relationship* with his *simultaneity*. Picasso's derivation of the first image was a method of reduction different from Mondrian's minimalism. The reduction focused on space dimensionality revealing multiple forms. While both painters attempted to discover the truth through a method of comparison and contrast in

abstraction, they result in opposite conclusions. Picasso found that reality is intricate. Mondrian found that reality is simple. In this reductive deconstruction, Picasso defined reality as a distorted vision through his revolutionary *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.)*.

Many claims have been made concerning the *Femmes d'Alger* as some form of statement or duplicate concerning African art. However, this is too simplistic of an explanation. Rather, the turning point for Cubism is with the *Femmes d'Alger*. The unusual shapes of the figures and the contortion of the bodies, especially the squatting figure, are ambiguous positions. They develop the visual dimensionality, especially with the ambiguity preventing one from determining whether she is exposing her back or her front. Despite the originality of the depiction of the nudes and reference to the primitivism of the African masks, the notion of analytical beauty in this piece is the element of spatial relationships in the "background."

Picasso was less about geometry and more about physics because the disparate parts act separately and in conjunction to create the whole. The parts, then, together made the sum total for understanding of spatial relationships. The figures in *Femmes d'Alger* are positioned to emphasize and highlight the background which should be a reticent framework for the women. Paradoxically, then, the painting is more than just about the contorted figures as the subject. While much discussion has been made concerning the figures, the deconstruction of the space is the true subject complemented by the women. The deconstruction of space is the division of it. This is also the volume brought forth through this division. The women stand and squat at various levels to bring forth the volume and depth of the space. This is both a revision and repetition of sight and

perception so that the multiplicity of the view or perspective exposes the spatial relationship. There is depth of space which brings the illusion through the dividing lines that repetition occurs throughout this space. Consequently, Picasso displayed more the physics of space that is also to be included to understand the deconstruction of vision.

Claims have been made that Picasso was familiar with Henri Poincaré's idea on the fourth dimension. Poincaré states that

The images of external objects are painted on the retina, which is a plane of two dimensions; these are *perspectives*. But as eye and objects are movable, we see in succession different perspectives of the same body taken from different points of view . . . Well, in the same way that we draw the perspective of a three-dimensional figure on a canvas of three (or two) dimensions, so we can draw that of a four-dimensional figure from several different points of view.<sup>31</sup>

Picasso understood the potential to understand a dimension beyond the third with the different perspectives. However, he differed from Poincaré, in that, these perspectives should be shown in a spatial simultaneity. Thus, we have the bodies of the women to provide the layering parts of space. It is important to note that the background is not a flat plane with one shape and shade, but partitioned and "sculpted" into multiple dimensions. Thus, if Picasso used geometry to bring volume into the painting, the result

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<sup>31</sup> Arthur I. Miller, *Space, Time, and the Beauty that Causes Havoc*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), pg. 105.



was a physics about perception and vision showing the dimensionality of space and shape.

In this display of the parts working to create the whole, Picasso rendered an understanding that, first, the part must be understood as he focuses on certain areas such as the face or the turn of the body to create the whole picture. With this emphasis on the part, Picasso demonstrated the understanding of the fragmentation of the physical realm that reveals the many forms of the subject as object. This revelation of the object possessing several forms runs counter to the typical belief that art offers only one perspective. Picasso challenged this belief with the distortion of the figures and spatial layering in a mixed perspective. The fancy deconstruction is basically a rebellious response to conventional wisdom, perception, and reality. He just imagined something else that the others did not, that reality was not what appearance dictated.

If we turn to how Picasso and Mondrian agreed and differed, we may assume that both believed that a thinking process was necessary to create art. On one hand, Mondrian minimized the concept to result in a holistic vision of the object as subject. Then, there is Picasso who took apart the subject as object to find that the parts made the whole. In doing so, Picasso brought out the dimensionality of vision, showing that sight is not a single process of mere seeing, but also a mental process of perceiving the distorted realms of space and depth. Both artists offered an abstracted understanding of reality, but through opposite systems. Mondrian's answer was simplicity. Picasso's answer was complexity.

In this opposition of simplicity and complexity, the result of the post-Impressionists as well as the Impressionists was creating a language for the visual text. It is a type of speech which Roland Barthes in his *Mythologies* calls semiology. The semiotics of the text requires a thinking activity as Wittgenstein suggests. Moreover, the visual text of the paintings as semiology is a science of forms. In that, all sciences have values. In this aspect, the semiology of the painters offers a value of an analytical aesthetics. Ultimately, the thinking activity occurring within the paintings for Picasso and Mondrian offers a resolution to the question of analysis in the aesthetic experience. They may demonstrate that the aesthetic experience is more than Kant's mere reflection, even though the experience may include the free play of the imagination and understanding. They serve as example to the Hegelian artistic vision with a concept and ideal.

## Conclusion

In the ensuing possibility that the aesthetic experience can be an analytical one, what are the conclusive insights to art? Kant believes the experience of beauty to include the imagination and the understanding. However, the Impressionist artists, Mondrian, and Picasso through their art show the creation of art to be more analytical. One may even go as far as to claim it to be analytical logic. They analyze the creative planning and use logic to bring certain effects in the art. The use of semiotics in the brushstrokes demonstrates the use of analysis. This is closer to Hegel's understanding that the judgment of beauty especially art is a science. Ultimately, unlike the Kantian theory that only mere reflection occurs, there must be more to that in order to understand and create art. As a consequence, the understanding of beauty of an object or art must also include analysis as in the Hegelian ideal.

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