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Art as Formative Technique: The Human Behaviour Between Art and Nature

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Abstract. Reflections upon artistic activities as technique require an exhaustive examination in aesthetics. This paper provides an attempt to sketch out a possible connection between skills related to making art and aesthetic thinking. By means of phenomenological insight, the function of technique is pursued consistently with the considerations of technique as subordinate to a global performative skill or as its development into a general principle. This framework ends in accounting for the notion of craft and its relationship with art. Further, craft encompasses the scope of technique in all its manifestations, since the boundaries of art are broadened to reach the most comprehensive outlook of human activities. While in Formaggio this task is accomplished through the idea of artistry, Pareyson expounds the features of an art theory within the unitary notion of formativity. Finally, the function of technique accounts for an ethical implication of human doing.

Keywords. Artistic Technique, Dino Formaggio, Luigi Pareyson, Phenomenology, Philosophy of Technics.

INTRODUCTION

This paper primarily reflects upon crafts and the philosophy of technics and refers to two of the most distinguished philosophers who have reflected on this theme, i.e. Luigi Pareyson and Dino Formaggio. Their philosophy of technics chiefly involves reflections on the features of art and consider art's scope; furthermore, their philosophy considers what foregrounds the emergence of art, and finally, they reflect if art involves a special relationship with crafts. However, if we confine ourselves only to artistic inquiry, we would not be able to answer these problems without ruling out another relevant feature of art, namely aesthetics as sentience and behavioural acting. This feature introduces acts such as mimesis and creativity that concur to shape our relationship with the world, into an artistic sphere. From the different relationship between artistic and aesthetic facets, the critical stance of this paper springs up. The role of technique

allows for the analysis of these issues: Pareyson would make out *savoir-faire* as related to artistic doing¹, since form is, as we shall see, an organic composition where both parts and the whole comply with each other. An artwork which stems from the artistic doing is still a lively ensemble that reveals a peculiar method of shaping within itself. However, Formaggio makes the technical side of human activities more significant without dismissing subjective facets of form-shaping in regard to the dynamic quality of creation. According to him, technique is not a demanding feature, but a lively activity whereby human beings confer new meanings on their relationship with the environment and the shape of community life.

Pareyson and Formaggio agree that the many-sided arrangement of artworks encompasses the shaping method of form: this should be found within the process of artistic shaping by taking into account, in particular, skills and habits of know-how. This logic requires that the solutions suitable for expression should originate from an opposition between the material and the method of shaping². Artwork reveals itself as a singularity, which discloses its uniqueness in a peculiar configuration; in order to sketch out the relationship between the artworld and the shaping method involved in every human activity, Pareyson devises

¹ Artistic doing is conceived as a creative action entrenched in social practices and traditional skills.

² This logic allows reckoning a unique feature merging art and human activities, since every act, for Pareyson, involves operating with forms, as they are products and tools of a human spiritual activity that shapes reality within a particular interpretation. Form is conceived as the outcome of human acts and means «product», which is created by the hermeneutical device of interpretation. Formativity encompasses all human activities: it is the pattern of every human act (from thinking to making artworks). As Pareyson stresses, moulding implied by formativity entails doing (in general terms) along with inventing the way of doing. Since every act implies forming and producing, moulding entails reflections on the way in which an activity is accomplished. As regards aesthetics, moulding is represented by the tentative shaping process of artworks (Pareyson [1954]: 22-24; Pareyson [1966]: 110-112).

a common and elementary faculty of knowledge by focusing on aesthetics as art theory (Vercellone [2018]: 95-98), whereby the first source of knowledge ensues a kind of intuition which is a figurative way to express the definiteness of impressions (Pareyson [2009]: 98-109). Since intuition is not merely reproductive but a figuration, namely transfiguration of impressions, the purport of aesthetic intuition is rigorously separated from artistic making but stands, as it were, for its setting. If transfiguration means to form and to figurate, the aspect of the expression entailed in it qualifies as a spur of interpretation. Interpretation pours onto all activities in so far as it qualifies as an intertwinement between activity and receptivity (Modica [1980]: 101-105; Pineri [1994]: 549-551; Rosso [1980]: 63-67).

Formaggio primarily charges artistic technique with the eidetic nature of a phenomenological method which subordinates to itself the aesthetic facet of experience (Formaggio [1962b]: 245-246, 307-309). The eidetic method springs from the aesthetic facet so as to blend a pre-categorical sphere that figures out a relationship with materiality and constitutes the setting of phenomenological investigation on artistic experience. Intuition borrows out of a comprehensive framework including an encompassing concern with sensibility and the genetical look over the formation of artistic practices (Pareyson [1966]: 8-11; Pareyson [2009]: 348-356). The relationship between tradition, within which artists are submerged, and the critical reshaping of it involved in every activity disclose an outstanding concern with aesthetic experience, which provides the comparison with the qualitative depth of the world and involves the relationship with morality, meant as the artists's responsibility of acting within a community (Banfi [1988]: 145-149; Scaramuzza [1981]: 354-355). Whereas for Pareyson the artistic facet of the theory of moulding overwhelms the aesthetic quality of intuition as a general means of interpretation, Formaggio's reflection revolves around a broad notion of artisticity which, though split into two different but complementary fields, entails an extended notion of body mimicking the

shaping force of nature (Franzini [1995]: 111-113; Neri [1995]: 132-133).

CRAFT ON THE THRESHOLD OF ART

Formaggio's and Pareyson's theories share a common feature to the extent that they expound the turn of craft in art. This turn occurs every time the mastering of the rules of a specific activity is so entrenched in artist's skills that they translate the theorizing on the formative chances immanent to the material. Art reaches its highest and purest form by coping with the material without relinquishing an active project ability (Pineri [1994]: 545-548). What Formaggio means by artistry is the attempt to sketch out the infinite gradation between handicraft and art while admitting the comprehensive facet of technique, which encompasses the totality of human activities that assign a value to their doing (Formaggio [1986]: 34-35). All meanings attributed to art concur to shape a large scope of values that pertain to human life and encompass the wide range of activities that give rise to any formation. Artistry aims properly to represent this new income by disregarding an overt aesthetization of life while salvaging the role of technique in every activity. By means of technique, every action can initiate fruitful relationship with the world things and only in this encounter, Formaggio argues, even the humblest activity can participate in the setting of values, since it actually exposes the uncertain cohesion of various elements within a successful form (Formaggio [1991]: 176-180). While Formaggio acknowledges significant gradation between the everyday craft activity and the work of art, which, nonetheless, shares with the first the basic import of technique, Pareyson, though, cannot help but reckon the deep linking between the material import of technique and the perfectibility of artworks.

The importance of *savoir faire* in making art is crucial even though the conscious handling of the material is not enough in order to originate a work of art. Therefore, the introduction of han-

dling rules in the practice, along with the ability to conceive solutions for the formative chances coalesced in the material, is the only way to pass through the distinction between craft and art (Pareyson [1954]: 160-163). If expertise makes up the core of tradition, it must be related to the formative style of artist's intentionality (Pareyson [2009]: 307-318). The same tenor may be ascertained in Formaggio's reflections on technique: while, on the one hand, technique in industry is committed to a proper need, it is, on the other hand, committed to art as making because it supports artists in the achievement of a complete and successful form (Formaggio [1962b]: 244-246; Formaggio [1953]: 188-193; Formaggio [1991]: 181-183, 192-193)³. The role of technique in art is to find and put in practice solutions suitable to the formative aim and to the material at disposal. In this regard, completion of form and completeness of form are two sides of the same coin. Whenever the work is completed, it entails the meanings conferred by the formative aim and by the style purported by the artist, which frees the technical ability in its potential, in its purest form along with intentionality – as Pareyson stresses. As a result, all aesthetic values are subordinated to an overall technical skill which turns itself into art, whereby social meanings and values command the aesthetic facet since intentionality cannot but entail the functional activities that give form to the material; the dominant intentionality is strictly related to the interplay of technique and artistic making and derives from the intertwinement between communicative effort and community life (Formaggio [1962b]: 228-232; Minazzi [2018]: 270-273; Scaramuzza [2015]: 21-25; Scaramuzza [2018]: 297-299).

Pareyson stresses the importance of materiality as physical substance that initiates the dialectics between the independence of the material and the interiority of the artist. At the same time, he acknowledges the interplay of craft and

³ Technique is strictly intertwined with project ability: cf. (Formaggio [1990]: 91-95; Franzini [2015]: 128-131; Mazzocut-Mis [2015]: 49-50).

art by sanctioning their respective autonomy: whereas the technique of craft and art entails the independence of the material within the concrete activity, the significance of materiality is ascertained in so far as the artist detects its potentialities. Inspired by the concern with technique, Pareyson aims to go beyond the sharp distinction of theory and practice by reassessing their constitutive mingling in the constraint of the material accounted by the artist's intentionality (Pareyson [2009]: 175-178). Formaggio also envisages the significance of materiality so as to make it the linchpin of artistry. He stresses that the division between technical lead and artistic making is supported by an effective technique filled by a kind of intentionality dealing with signs and gestures rather than ruling norms (Formaggio [1953]: 298-301; Formaggio [1981a]: 108-110). This practice grows along with the formation of artwork, which may be envisaged as successful as long as artist's intentionality copes with the chances entailed by the material (Mazzocut-Mis [2015]: 49-53). The work and the projectivity implied by the handicraft activity are the inner core of artistic intentionality, which begins ever anew (Formaggio [1953]: 308-311; Formaggio [1981a]: 118-121).

It is noteworthy that the turn of technical ability into artistic praxis is recorded by the supervenience of gesture intentionality over the informative one (Chiodo [2010]: 170-173). It cannot be underestimated the importance of functionality and of craft activities: they are, though, strictly related since function is understood as the way of translating the aesthetic concretion into the symbolic meaning of shared traditions; the form stands for the technical and social meanings related to the technical skills that contribute to shape the work of art. The decisive function of craft institutes the relationship between technical skills that confine themselves to work and the constitution of meanings that concur to shape a community life (Formaggio [1962b]: 217-222). Artistry is related to the idea of pure technique as an establishing act which completes and grants the successfulness of artworks while depending on a universal activ-

ity⁴, which is nothing but the unity of internal and external technique⁵ overlapping with the notion of *forma formans* expounded by Pareyson, which is discussed in the next paragraph.

THE MOULDING ACT OF ARTISTIC MAKING

Pareyson maintains that every form of activity expressed by human spirituality⁶ is tied to specific rules that drive the shaping-method for non-artistic activities to a channel proper for a definite and specific activity. Instead, art represents the most important human activity, since its scope encompasses human existence on the whole. Yet, the skillset that is entailed by artistic doing shapes the field proper to art. In order to comprehend these claims, we must remind ourselves that for Pareyson human spirituality implies a connexion between the individuality of a person, which is the outcome of a process, and an ontological pattern retrievable by interpretation, which human beings innately do. Pareyson's spiritualism follows the existentialist framework since art is one of the many activities of human beings, but it overcomes its involvement in the finitude of human existence. He tries, as it were, to square the pluralistic range of historicism and existentialist philosophy

⁴ An important source for the delineation of artistry, along with *Kunstwissenschaft*, which will be considered below (see *infra*, *The Phenomenology of Technique*), is Étienne Souriau's aesthetics. Formaggio, in his consistent analysis of Souriau's thought (Formaggio [1953]: 178-195), acknowledges his attempt to define a universal method of constituting things (artworks) as unity of material and form but complains about his inadequate attention to the techniques entailed by artistic making. Cf. (Mazzocut-Mis [2015]: 47; Scaramuzza [1995]: 140-142; Touboul [2017]: 67-73; Wiame [2017]: 79-83).

⁵ See *infra*, *The Phenomenology of Technique*.

⁶ In Pareyson's philosophy 'spirituality' is related to the personality of human beings for in every activity humans act and create according to their unique style (Ciancio [1992]: 31-34; Corbetta [1988]: 64-65; Cuffari [1981]: 116-118; Morpurgo-Tagliabue [1993]: 9-12; Pareyson [1954]: 28-31; Pareyson [2009]: 185-188). As regards aesthetics, artists shape artistic forms thanks to an exclusive shaping mode, which is peculiar to every work of art.

with an original conception of ontological personalism, where the existentialist commitment to the historical finitude of human beings coexists with the idea of a relationship with history and nature as embodied by a correlation between truth and interpretation⁷. Thus, interpretation becomes the main hermeneutical device through which human beings shape their world for «the presence of Being can be configured only historically, and Being has no other way to appear or place to reside but in historical forms. Being resides there in its *inexhaustibility*, that is with a *presence* that makes these forms its only way of appearing, yet with an *ulteriority* that allows none of them to contain it exclusively» (Pareyson [1971]: 37). As Ferraris (2011: 144-145) maintains, Pareyson's connection with existentialism does not enable him to concede a unique world to artworks, since art is, like all human activities, an expression of existence.

For this reason art is not, properly speaking, an outstanding activity which everyone else must follow. However, art is construed by Pareyson as the perfect example of moulding (Ferraris [1996]: 376-378). This conception ensures the legitimacy of artistic doing by adopting the notion of τέχνη within a broad spectrum of aesthetics. Thus, actual activity influences theoretical reflections. That is to say, theory can only account for the constraints of a tangible doing. Moreover, theoretical activity shadows the actual expressive process of a specific personal project. This idea integrates the intertwinement between theory and practice (D'Angelo

[2018]: 47-49). Pareyson regards art as a pattern that is common to every activity in so far as he relates the idea of τέχνη to artistic shaping; pure moulding is the linchpin on which art relies. Nevertheless, this feature as such do not sound regarding other activities, as if it ascribed aesthetic value to a formal aestheticism that would be an overarching feature which discerns amidst art and other activities. This view preserves the overall rationality of thought and ends up in revising it while being committed to moulding.

Instead, according to Pareyson, if it is true that every human activity springs from moulding, art represents the perfect example of moulding, since art shaping implies creating within an inventive style of (artistic) doing (D'Angelo [2018]: 50-52; Pareyson [1954]: 275-276). As a result, every project in the artists' mind does not purport its significance ahead of factual inquiry. Only after a successful expression, Pareyson argues, artists "know" what they had to do (Pareyson [1954]: 60-62). If it is true that art does not exist without human spiritual activity arranging it, then moulding gains a proper significance in art making, nonetheless. As a result, notions like 'form' and 'idea' encompass anti-dogmatic meaningfulness. The distinction between forming and shaping objects is assumed by the traditional idea of creation as well as by the *a posteriori* conception of the meaningfulness of a form. The same distinction is due to the overall division between factual scrutiny and rational thought because the former is tied to the actual material and the latter to project design.

The solution for this conundrum is the notion of the cue. It is the sketch of a project, which may come up suddenly or even after a long-training exercise; its guidance leads the artist's expertise through a pathway of impulses that an experience offers to artists. Taking form implies an establishment of a form which is involved with impulses leading the shaping process. This convention finds its *raison d'être* in the action of form – even before its completeness as a result of its success – by confirming the independence of the cue from artist's intentions: form is what needs to be expressed

⁷ Ontological personalism maintains that people can mould their spirituality – since they take up a formative process of constituting their personality, see note 4 – within an original relationship with Being (Antonelli [2017]: 91-94; Corbetta [1988]: 60-62, 74-77; Di Nino [1999]: 42-46; Garulli [1973]: 241-243; Modica [1980]: 111-119; Perniola [1997]: 178-179; Tilliette [1996]: 728-733). Therefore, they cannot help but interpret otherness, namely what overcomes human finitude. Otherness, as regards this paper, should be conceived as history (traditional habits of action) and nature (environmental scope). Each person is, as it were, a work, namely a unique and original form which revises the relationship with otherness repeatedly.

according to the tension between personal projects and cues (D'Angelo [1983]: 62-67; Rosso [1980]: 75-79). The balance between cues and an artist's aim is represented by the notion of *forma formans* (forming form), which implicates that expression is always joined to an artwork during its completion (Antonelli [2017]: 82-88; Pareyson [1954]: 75-76; Pareyson [1966]: 20-24)⁸.

Since an artwork is bound to a norm which is uncovered throughout the process of creation, the feature of its success and the related idea of its completeness endorse the overall constitution of art as an organism in which projects coexist with impulses prompted by the everchanging condition of making art (Pareyson [1966]: 65-68). The form does not only bind success and completeness to a peculiar shaping but accounts for the impulses of a cue, which the subject by enjoyment regards as artistic completeness. The same trend aims to convey form into a perspective focus, which cannot be regarded as formal aestheticisms like a pattern, but as the linchpin which leads the process of subjective shaping. These notions allow for assuming that the world of art is prone to choice. Further, once form has gained its finality and completeness, it can be put under scrutiny by analysing the process where the impulses and the *forma formans* have to pass through in order for the artwork to take up an expression. *Forma formans* coincides thus with the process of making art and warrants the formation of artworks.

In this regard, we could even merge the perspective of expression and personal creation since form is acquired in a teleological way, notwithstanding the everchanging condition of motifs and traces, and the personal projects that have to confront a cue. The composite nature of artworks binds the analysis of enjoyment to the appreciation of the guiding motifs that have led to final-

⁸ The analogous to *forma formans* in Formaggio's reflection is represented by *trans-morfosi*, which qualifies artistic making as a process where the import of technique is related to the changing project. The imaginative capacity of concreting meanings within bodily shaping is subjected to a constant refiguring; cf. (Formaggio [1990]: 127-130; Mazzocut-Mis [2018]: 287-293).

ity. Therefore, artists can also view their work in retrospect, which reveals the leading paths that have directed personal projects. It is worth noting that Pareyson, despite the intertwinement between the making of an artwork and the development of expression, has engaged mostly upon the techniques of handling disposable material, where artists find many cues to start a particular project. Additionally, Pareyson is concerned with the techniques that control the configuration of artworks and balance the impulses of the cue in the process of creation. Thus, Pareyson enhances the expectation related by him to a feature of intentionality that pertains to spiritual life as moulding (Pareyson [1954]: 81-83)⁹.

Pareyson, then, expounds the essential features of artistic practices that introduce the creation of art and allow for sketching out a phenomenology of artistic technique. To the extent that he encompasses the value of moulding in art and its valence of purity to the field of human spiritual activity, his aesthetics accounts for activities occurring before the process of art-shaping. Since the constitution of form overlaps with art-making, it is difficult to split these phases into different practices. In fact, once artists have extracted a cue from a cluster of potential hints, these phases concur as artists make the decision to propel the guiding cue, which has caught their attention into their single focus of creation. This view for Pareyson re-enacts the qualitative features of experience: he acknowledges both unexpectedness and patience and supposes their mutuality by drafting three central practices that are involved in the phenomenology of moulding (Di Nino [1999]: 23-25; Pareyson [1954]: 84-91; Pareyson [2000]: 70-72; Pareyson [2009]: 178-182, 324-330), namely practice, the search for a formative intention of rescuing material from indifference by granting material practical availability, improvisation, inspi-

⁹ The remark on intentionality makes sure that the sphere of art follows the existential perspective within which art is understood: on the one hand, it must spread over the aesthetic field, since the exemplarity of art encompasses the scope of moulding; on the other hand, artworks are solely committed to a norm proper to them.

ration, whose tasks (the priority of personal activities within a commanding notion of creation and the primacy of subjective spiritual activity) are envisaged and criticised by Pareyson, who blends subjective and objective features in a self-modifying act occurring throughout the artistic process. Inspiration is nothing but the subjective standpoint of the process consisting between material and a project, which is put forward by a subject, who acknowledges the productive issue of a cue whereby Pareyson mingles human spirituality and the activity of moulding forms. Through this fruitful encounter, efforts are always scrutinized by a norm and expound the successfulness of artworks by giving free rein to the organicism of the shaping process, represented by the unity between form and expression. The unitary aim of the cue, which leads the concretion of the artwork, the constitution of the form within the shaping process, the interplay between expectation and practice, and finally the tensions between inspiration and real objectivity are all facets of a unique artistic and human activity.

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF TECHNIQUE

The phenomenology of artistic doing is akin to the objectivist turn of phenomenological aesthetics, as far as both are focused on the aseity of the artistic object, whose features defy blatant naturalistic views. Hence, we shall focus on the relationship between the first phenomenological aesthetics and a kind of reflection on the phenomenology of artistic doing. This effort might not only explain the relevance of the phenomenological movement in reflections on art, but also brings out the importance of the phenomenology of pure moulding which we have appreciated in Pareyson's thought. What finally will be shown is the cohesion of the theories just exposed under a coherent conception of artistic and human doing. The first step in this approach involves Dino Formaggio's works, who has deeply latched on to artistic practice.

The first and most important issue we must provide is the distinction between aesthetic and

artistic facets: this outlook can be regarded from two different perspectives, either by reckoning their relationship in the same field of artistic creation, or by attributing the former to the qualitative means of experience, especially the perception of artistic objects, and the latter to artwork creation *strictu sensu*, which does not only include artistic creation, but also the expression of enjoyment in artworks. This outcome is blatant where an aesthetic theory is laden with realistic stances: for example, Ingarden's conception of artwork is bound to subjective experience, which implies a concretization, an actual establishing of intentional meanings that must be uncovered, but his anti-historicist viewpoint, according to which the intersubjective identity of artworks is separated from concrete enjoyment, maintains that the meanings entailed by the strata that constitute each work of art would subsist even if nobody enjoyed them¹⁰. This conception establishes the difference between aesthetic perception and artistic autonomy. Scaramuzza (1976: 66-68) rightly contends this view in Ingarden's philosophy because the intentionality of meanings constituting the layers of artwork, related in an anti-historical perspective to the creative acts of the artist, compels us to consider that self-sufficiency lies only in the material substrate, whilst both the artistic and the aesthetic facets related to it dwindle (Ingarden [1975]: 260-263; Zecchi [1978b]: 87-89; Zecchi [1983]: 234-235). Rather, these features might be matched, since aesthetics may involve both artistic creation and the perception of artworks as objects.

By taking into account the artistic facet, we recognise that artistic creation implies relevant features of technique. Technique does not encompass a poor naturalistic understanding of objects and operates in connection to human activity – this state of affairs chimes in with the anti-psychological stance inherited from the phenomenological tradition up to Edmund Husserl. The

¹⁰ The distinction between the ontological concern with works of art and enjoyment of them makes sure that the intersubjective identity of works cannot encompass their meaning.

critique led by Husserl to this framework, which involves the distinction between the psychological influence on the process of thought and the logical meaning of thought content encouraged some philosophers (e. g. Moritz Geiger, Roman Ingarden) to withdrawal from analysis of impressions and feelings raised by artworks so as to focus on the objectivity of the field of aesthetics, where the artistic facet of enjoyment is related to the aesthetic structure of artworks, and basically to the aesthetic object *per se*. This dogma is the source of the objectivist turn of phenomenological aesthetics (Scaramuzza [1976]: 16-17, 40-42, 62-63, 171-179; Zecchi [1978b]: 83-85). A specific relationship with this point may be envisaged with Pareyson's claim according to which a cue affects artistic behaviour.

Dino Formaggio's thought deals with a second difficulty, i.e. the dilemma between aesthetic and artistic facets, since he relies on technique by withdrawing from the aesthetic scope of contemplation and the importance of artistic doing and human activity. Additionally, he enhances the significance of artistic facets in regard to the objectivist worry about artistic objects considered in their social relationship. The affinity with the so-called *Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* ("General Science of Art"), theorised by Max Dessoir and Emil Utitz, is expounded by Formaggio, as he focuses (Formaggio [1953]: 198-216; Formaggio [1958]: 235-246; Formaggio [1981c]: 15-17) on this movement, which helps to blur the distinction between beauty and practice (Formaggio [1953]: 203-205): he expresses his reserves on the psychologist interpretation of creative acts implied by the arrangement of artwork and acknowledges the limits of Dessoir's concept of the artistic facet, which is affected by external factors (such as religious, social and moral aspects) that interrupt the practice of making art (Formaggio [1958]: 257-259; Perucchi [1981]: 307-309; Pinotti [2015]: 93-97). The concern with technique seems neglected, but Dessoir acknowledges the importance of technique for he criticises inspiration as it involves an exclusive concern with subjective feelings. Nonetheless, Dessoir states the significance of the psy-

chological analysis of feelings; Formaggio identifies the limit of Dessoir's framework, as long as it grants a psychological analysis of an intersubjective constant in the experience of particular subjects. At the same time, Dessoir explicitly acknowledges the power of the material's availability.

Furthermore, the concern with *Seinschicht* ("existence layer", which is an expression coined by Utitz) conflates the remarks on material constraint and subjective involvement in the shaping of aesthetic value and material needs: it implies a wide range of possibilities regarding the comparison between artists' efforts and objective necessity. Artistic making involves, as Utitz stresses, a certain mode of *Gestaltung*, which is the German translation of the term «formativity», which implies for Utitz a conception of the artwork as a concretion provoking an enjoying and expressive experience (Formaggio [1953]: 204-205)¹¹. Utitz identifies a norm proper to technique, but he maintains that it is secondary to material constraint, as he turns his attention to the relationship between material and the proper means for its expression. Therefore, experience is conceived as a continuous balance between human effort and reality by also pointing out the role of handicraft, which is a constant reference for Formaggio. Instead, Utitz is concerned with emotional expression or feelings that an object provokes in the subject; as a result, he construes technique as a temporary means of granting an artwork its completeness.

The interpretation which Formaggio endows *Kunstwissenschaft* denotes the originality of his thought regarding technique, where, according to Utitz, the experience itself was restricted to a relationship between aesthetic values and objects, as a consistent process of constituting artworks. Thereby, the legitimacy of technique dismisses both systematic analyses purported by the psychological

¹¹ With respect to Pareyson's theory of formativity, it ought to be noted that it does not only account for the shaping process of the artwork and its relationship with material but also discloses an outstanding implication with ethical concern, which is considered in the conclusion of this paper.

conception of acts and the casualty to which technique is condemned in Utitz's proposal.

The constitution of technique within experience, which is indistinguishable from it, grants Formaggio the ability to configure a dialectical phenomenology of artistic creation, since technique, as a cluster of accrued norms¹², is identified with the process of constituting artworks¹³. It is now understandable why Formaggio, under the Hegelian influence, maintains that art is a process of achievement via technique, since the aim is valued, namely the expression of value according to a particular interpretation of material (Franzini [2015]: 121-123; Scaramuzza [1986]: 189-197; Scaramuzza [1995]: 138-140). Moreover, the subject who shapes the material into a definite form encounters social influences of tradition and technique. Technique is a development of environmental processes since Formaggio considers the connection between handicraft and artistic technique. Thus, technique encompasses a wide range of activities, which reminds us of the meaning of moulding – which holds true for all human activities – established by Pareyson, who explicitly recognises the relevance of crafts, since he acknowledges the operative quality of acts entrenched in tradition (Pareyson [1954]: 64-65; Pareyson [1966]: 28-32; Pareyson [2009]: 279-288). It is clear that this doctrine, although it does not reject research done on aesthetic experience, looks mostly upon the structure of artwork, not as much into its internal cohesion, like Ingarden does, but as into the intersubjective conditions of creation. As a result, he does not subscribe to Ingarden's reflections on a phenomenological aesthetics, which considers the phenomenology of enjoyment, and chooses the creative and operative side of artistic autonomy. He also split tech-

nique into two different but complementary facets: an internal technique and an external one (Formaggio [1953]: 321-323; Formaggio [1981a]: 132-135). The first one involves mental acts that arrange artistic creations and are akin to the projects involved by practice (the first act of Pareyson's phenomenology of technique), even though he limits its field to the pure sphere of thought.

Nevertheless, external technique merits particular appreciation for Formaggio, as if it were a prefiguration of what relates to a concrete doing (Formaggio [1953]: 248, 253-254). However, this framework does not precede the empirical trial, but instead follows it in the everchanging conditions of material shaping; it resembles the relationship from the development of expression to artists' efforts reckoned by Pareyson. By salvaging a critique of inspiration similar to Pareyson's, the relevance of theoretical projects in the first technique is tied to the recurrence of specific responses to the material. Thanks to tradition the response turns into a proper habit. Finally, external technique represents the fulfilment of imagining into actual practices.

The concern with technique, as it is envisaged in social, religious, and moral developments, endorses the continuity between nature and art-shaping; if we look into the continuous arrangement of natural processes (Scaramuzza [1989]: 182-185)¹⁴, it is expected to interpret the artwork as a τέχνη handling its efforts and objects (there is a clear steadiness between these reflections and those that represent the core of Pareyson's phenomenology). Formaggio frees from phenomenological influence and takes into account technical reflections through material modification. Furthermore, he claims that natural objectivity modifies artistic doing since the artist has to extract a form from the possibilities concealed in it and bestows on the projective facet of technique and

¹² It is noteworthy that Formaggio construes, as for the conflation of experience, *savoir-faire* and self-theorizing, the essential notion of patience, and he frames a concept, as regards artistic creation, akin to hint expectation (Formaggio [1953]: 271-276). It is just what Pareyson means by 'expectation'.

¹³ In his masterpiece Formaggio (1953: 40-43, 48-49, 270-271) deals at length with idealistic philosophy.

¹⁴ Dufrenne (1953: 84-92) is the chief source for this theme in Formaggio's later works since both agree over a common phenomenological framework (Chiodo [2010]: 174; Daturi [2015]: 78-80; Formaggio [1962b]: 267-269; Morpurgo-Tagliabue [1960]: 462-465).

the creative power of art making the ability to express a world (Dufrenne [1981a]: 46-48; Zecchi [1978b]: 99-100). This conception liberates aesthetic aseity associated with the values of sensibility since the artist senses the requirements of materiality by moulding its objectivity under a final aim of expression. The artist has to follow the impulses concealed within mere sensitivity; here we can outline the affinity with Pareyson's similar remarks on the contrast between personal efforts to form a material and the impulses entailed by materiality.

The distinction between artistic and aesthetic facets is thus subsumed, according to Formaggio, within the primacy of technique: this is the first feature which inhabits the very concept of experience by including the features of aesthetic experience, since it is the conjunction of norms proper to the process of making and the constitution of technical models. Thus, technique reveals itself as *forma formans* and encompasses the aesthetic facet of shaping forms and the technical configuration which originates in the everchanging features of natural processes. Technique encompasses a reflecting activity which aims to describe the laws of making art. Thus, technique turns into an idea of making art which stems from experience and, at the same time, it reflects on practices entailed by making art. The involvement in a transcendental layer is inherited from Formaggio's master, Antonio Banfi, but while Formaggio permits reflections which Banfi has phrased about dynamism and self-regulation of a transcendental principle of experience, he aims to go beyond his master, without denying the common phenomenological background (Daturi [2015]: 73-76; Formaggio [1953]: 151-154; Formaggio [1986]: 30-33; Franzini [2013]: 135-141, 144-146; Franzini [2015]: 123-126; Zecchi [1978b]: 91-93). According to Banfi, the aesthetic principle represents the antinomy between a subject and the world it experiences, while the artistic facet is expressed by its transformation in the cultural domain. As Formaggio states, this distinction, in case the dialectics of the first and second technique were endorsed, should be overlooked.

Then, Formaggio institutes an idea of technique which oversees all other external values. Further, he reclaims a self-standing concept of art, and he ascribes an autonomous sphere to it in regard to external influences, but he does not go as far as to claim art's detachment from them: he reckons indeed that the aesthetic facet should not be neglected by the pre-eminence of technique, since expression is committed to the aesthetic facet. What Banfi represents for Formaggio's thought is the self-consciousness of rule-making development throughout experience, whose phenomenological insight is mingled by Formaggio with Hegelian influence. Neither the transcendental principle of experience nor the dialectics of technique are essentialist efforts to account for reality in a comprehensive framework. Rather, they are managed by the awareness of the composite nature of a norm which portrays the relationship between a human being and the world that is represented for the late Formaggio by artistry, which can be a brief, yet complete paraphrasal of the role of technique.

The interplay of theoretical issues, tethered to art making, and technical matters leads up to the social meaning of craftsmanship. The feature conjoining them is, as we have seen, technique insofar as it melds an organizing praxis and its shared traditional values in deploying a chief intentionality, with its symbolic meaning, grounding the correspondent successfulness of the artwork, which, for the so-called functional art, is represented by the social-led aim to gather all values encompassed by intentionality under the unitary trait of community life (Banfi [1962]: 133-136; Banfi [1988]: 103-106, 268-270, 319-323; Formaggio [1962a]: 30-32, 36-39; Formaggio [1981b]: 340-342). The integral feature of intentionality in the renewed vision of artistic praxis results in the meta-projectual side of those motivations (religious, economic, etc.) uncovering the symbolic facet of discarded minor arts, that aim at recovering them through functional focus (Formaggio [1981b]: 351-355; Zecchi [1978b]: 94-96).

In so doing the traditional distinction between form and content as to artistic concretion is

blurred – as long as the form of functional artworks puts forth the aesthetic concretion along with the enjoyment of their formal patterns – in favour of the conception of art as a modality of social work and as a sign of a unitary form of life (Banfi [1962]: 148-149, 154-155; Banfi [1988]: 114-116, 261-262; Dufrenne [1981b]: 60-62, 67-69; Scaramuzza [1981]: 358-359). Actually, the moral values entailed by the artist's personality betrays her peculiar style as she tackles the constraints put by traditional artistic conventions: given the encompassing feature of formativity, its artistic facet gathers the moral values including them under successful form. The effective expression of community values enacts the guiding path of the cue and becomes indistinguishable from it: since it cannot overwhelm the common formativity of human being, there can be no distinction between applied art and the alleged pure art. The social values are nothing but the hints, the suggestions that make one's own style unique, whereby the artist accomplishes her aim, which cannot but imply the community life (Pareyson [1954]: 293-298; Pareyson [2009]: 129-136, 206-209, 276-280). Further, the tentative shaping process of *forma formans* entailed by artistic formativity chimes in with the idea of aestheticity as the transcendental principle informing the antinomy between ego and world, whose relationship is reframed constantly according to the dialectical resolution of the normative reflections on the cultural sphere (Formaggio [1962a]: 26-28; Zecchi [1978a]: 41-43, 45-46). Indeed, whereas the first one relies on the vision of nature as the inextinguishable bottom and principle of becoming, the second one qualifies as the integral part of art sphere since its main core purports aesthetics to be an overall and encompassing feature of intuitiveness (understanding, valuing, acting, behaving), wherein special attention is devoted to the encounter of human spirituality with the variable and mutable world appearances, thus giving rise to an aesthetic transfiguring synthesis of the world, which owes its peculiarity to a conception of subjectivity as consciousness receptive to the world, as unceasing linkage with materiality (Banfi

[1962]: 433-437; Banfi [1988]: 88-91, 94-98, 134-135, 171-178; Dufrenne [1981a]: 40-45; Pareyson [1954]: 275-286; Pareyson [2009]: 173-182, 304-314; Zecchi [1981]: 92-94, 97-98; Zecchi [1983]: 139-140).

As a result, the notions of τέχνη and enjoyment are renewed: technical issues constitute the concrete and material verge wherein social values, through artist's individuality, cope with the actual richness of objective sources and issues within a tentative act of art making, thereby calling forth style questions and the enjoyment of the sensible concretion and of the formal structure of artwork (Banfi [1988]: 68-71, 99-100). Moreover, the concern with technique does not only blur the distinction between art and human activities, but also helps to pore on the intentional and qualifying acts making artworks meaningful as representation of the functional relationship between the artist and the world. Indeed, function ought to be conceived as the undefining and *in fieri* process of the reciprocal mediation between subjectivity and objectivity, whose boundaries are persistently muddled through an infinite intuitive varying of the perceptual and imaginative setting of experience.

CONCLUSION

Formaggio recognises the relevance of pure moulding in the context of Pareyson's thought, and, by following his concern with technical issues, finds a similar involvement in Pareyson's conception of spiritual activity (Formaggio [1953]: 71-73; Formaggio [1962c]: 125-143). Pareyson indeed acknowledges the impulses that the material conveys in the aesthetic experience of objects; this results in the awareness of a constraint on expression by the factual arrangement of material. He is concerned with artistic successfulness, which involves aesthetic experience wherein the struggles, which the process of art-shaping is fraught of, meet the subjective effort to impress a peculiar mode of expression onto the material.

The difficult compliance of these two features compels Formaggio to extend this frame-

work to overall aesthetic theorising about the relationship between artistic doing and tradition. According to him, Pareyson's effort reveals that the relationship between personal research and the configuration of form in the domain of successfulness is prone to a metaphysical commitment between human spirituality and nature. As Formaggio puts it, the completion of any process in a dialectical movement does not subscribe to a search for pure moulding, but involves any activity that finds its realisation by following a complex of norms entrenched in tradition, which is the pivotal prerequisite of artistic doing and the beginning of interactions. Instead, Pareyson follows another point of view and institutes a field of pure moulding devoted to the expression of human spirituality.

However, putting the difference regarding the relevance attributed to artist's will aside, Pareyson and Formaggio share views about the relationship between nature, technique, and the meaning of making art. Pareyson envisages a considerable influence of the aesthetic feature over the artistic one, which can be seen in enjoyment that regards artwork as a completion of a form. By retrieving the meaningfulness of moulding in human spiritual activity and the affinity with form-shaping, artistic making traces its method back to a natural shaping skill, which is expressed by an aesthetic encounter with natural objects. The so-called notion of art as an imitation of nature is thus interpreted by Pareyson as mimesis of its own doing¹⁵.

¹⁵ The tentative shaping process of the artwork, the moulding of the material as a form, chimes in with the Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of *Verwandlung ins Gebilde*, which implies the cohesion of form and material, and with his conception of mimesis, which is free from aesthetic delight and propounds the relationship between the unity of the artwork and its different interpretations (Marino [2012]: 146-147; Matteucci [2011]: 84-89). This last claim reflects the ontology of the inexhaustible in Pareyson, even though his conception of interpretation differs from Gadamer's one considerably (Modica [1980]: 119-126; Rosso [1980]: 94-97, 108-110; Vercellone [2018]: 99-100).

In compliance with the phenomenological analysis of technics, the meaning of nature is unfolded by the attempt of the spiritual reshaping of natural patterns by acknowledging a natural ability to mould forms (Pareyson [1954]: 278-281; Vattimo [1981]: 340-341). Since knowledge for Pareyson does entail neither mirroring nor an idealistic arrangement of things, then nature does not also imply mechanical processes to be discovered, but brings forth environmental patterns and knowledge, and subsequently re-enacts these patterns by recognising a formative principle within natural events (Pareyson [1971]: 91). With respect to artistic making, it is likely to assess the successfulness of artworks only after interpretation has detected the guidance of the forming form, which highlights the presence of truth. Truth is unobjectifiable and undefinable since knowledge does not define but represent the relationship between humans and Being (Ravera [1994]: 45-48; Tomatis [2003]: 45-49). The remark on representation implies that the outcome of every interpretation is a form, which links each human activity, from thinking to making art¹⁶. As a result, artworks come into the world thanks to the shaping skill that humans retrieve from the environment. By withdrawing from attributing to aesthetic experience a form of intuition related solely to delight (Vecchi [1956]: 354-355), enjoyment coheres with interpretation to the extent that «the only form of genuine knowledge is interpretation, which is in itself historical and personal and thus constitutively multiple and not definitive» (Pareyson [1971]: 50). Whenever interpretation ends or an artwork has been completed, contemplation arises, since form is acknowledged as an original singularity and corresponds to the natural power of creating new things within the environment. Contemplation and enjoyment converge and, like artistic making, enjoyment is the protean experience wherein the constitution of artworks pursues the moulding of forms implied by nature (Pareyson [1966]: 115-117; Pareyson [2009]: 52-60; Tomatis [2003]: 49-52; Vecchi [1956]: 356-361). Like natu-

¹⁶ See note 2.

ral objects, artworks change according to their explanation or reading, and are fixed in its process of expression and infinite interpretation, whereby contemplation involves the production of forms retrievable in the shaping power of nature (Pareyson [1954]: 204-206, 216-218; Pareyson [1971]: 47-60; Pareyson [1998]: 111-113; Pareyson [2000]: 55-58; Pareyson [2009]: 22-27); Riconda [1980]: 185-191). As a result, a formative skill of moulding arises: human spirituality enhances the moral perspective inside art (Ferraris [1996]: 379-381), where moulding pursues a value by accomplishing a specific cue revealed by the enjoyment of the artwork. Since art is rooted in spiritual activity, artworks are eligible to a formative aim, thereby proposing an interpretation concerning social life (Banfi [1962]: 128-131; Chiodo [2002]: 1-3, 17-18).

For Formaggio, spiritual activity is yet more critical if it is regarded as a frequent and constant quality of artistic creation, and it produces new meanings since technique implies an unceasing reshaping of rule clusters entrenched in practice (Formaggio [1973]: 157-161). Pareyson and Formaggio agree that the shaping mode of material is a form-moulding process, which imitates natural events and improves them at the highest fidelity. Finally, artwork is shaped material, namely a translation-transfiguration of an artist's behaviour within environmental restriction. In conclusion, art is a field where human beings, thanks to the shaping mode of materiality, withdrawal from a deep traditional practice and initiate an emancipating practice, characterised by a lively interpretation and an ethical perspective. However, this framework may take place in a horizon of shared interests and meanings within a community.

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