



Citation: AAVV (2017) Note & Recensioni. *Aisthesis* 1(1): 173-180. doi: 10.13128/Aisthesis-20916

Received: December 15, 2016

Accepted: April 15, 2017

Published: July 11, 2017

Copyright: © 2017 AAVV. This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Firenze University Press (<http://www.fupress.com/aisthesis>) and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Note & Recensioni

Aby Warburg, *Fragmente zur Ausdruckskunde* [Carmen Metta] • Karin Nohr, Sebastian Leikert, *Zum Phänomen der Rührung in Psychoanalyse und Musik* [Michele Gardini] • Claudia Muth, Marius Raab, Claus-Christian Carbon, *The stream of experience when watching artistic movie*; Benno Belke, Helmut Leder, Claus-Christian Carbon, *When challenging art gets liked* [Gianluca Consoli]

A. Warburg, *Fragmente zur Ausdruckskunde*, ed. by U. Pfisterer, H. Ch. Hönes, in *Aby Warburg Gesammelte Schriften. Studienausgabe*, IV, De Gruyter, Berlin 2015, pp. 372.

Any attempt to review Aby Warburg's *Fragmente zur Ausdruckskunde* edited in 2015 by U. Pfisterer and H.Ch. Hönes should also take into account the edition of Warburg's *Frammenti sull'espressione/Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer pragmatischen Ausdruckskunde* edited in 2011 by Susanne Müller (It. tr. by M. Ghelardi, G. Targia, Edizioni della Normale, Pisa) as well as the relative debate that has been involving the editors so far.

Whereas the edition *Fragmente zur Ausdruckskunde* includes Warburg's *Grundlegende Bruchstücke* (1888-1896/1905-1912) as the most relevant among other texts (*Bemerkungen zu Heinrich Wölfflin. Renaissance und Barock*, 1888 [1889-1891], *Vier Thesen* [1892-1906], *Symbolismus als Umfangsbestimmung* [1896-1901]) concerning «Symboltheorie, Kunstpsychologie» and «Einfühlungsästhetik» (*Vorbemerkung*, p. IX), the edition *Frammenti sull'espressione* is entirely devoted to the *Grundlegende Bruchstücke*.

As a matter of fact, the editing issues, currently being debated, are concerned with the way the editors have brought genetic criticism to bear on the edition of the *Bruchstücke*.

The two bound books (*Hefte*), known as *Grundlegende Bruchstücke I* and *II* (WIA III.43.1.1 and WIA III.43.2.1), are the handwritten transcriptions of Warburg's autograph cards *AE Aphorismen chronolog. geordnet (Zettelkästen [Index Card Boxes] WIA ZK [23])*. While fragments 1-117a had been transcribed by Warburg himself, in 1901 he committed fragments 118-422 to copyist Hermine Streiber, who was accordingly entrusted with the copy of further ones

(*Grundlegende Bruchstücke II*). Both transcriptions would have been amended, commented and integrated by Warburg.

The main topic of discussion among the editors being whether a critical edition of the *Grundlegende Bruchstücke* should stick to Warburg's autograph only, as Susanne Müller claims; or transcriptions as such should be considered not just as a mere copy, rather as the best possible approximation of the definitive text, as maintained by the editors of the *Fragmente*.

The harsh critique of U. Pfisterer and H.Ch. Hönes, who do not agree with Müller's interpretation of the principle of the "last hand", was delivered in the *Nachwort* (pp. 324-325) to their edition of the *Fragmente*, and may be condensed as follows: Hermine Streiber's transcription (*Abschrift*) is not a mere "copy" (*Kopie*) of the *Aphorismen*, all the more that Warburg had been long adding comments in the margin and reviewing it. Moreover, since the structure of the text edited by Müller «follows the text construction of the bound books, which in some cases deviates from the sequence of the cards in the index card box (*folgt dem Textaufbau der Hefte, der an manchen Stellen von der Abfolge der Zettel im Kasten abweicht*)» (*Das Wasserzeichen des Gedankens*, in *Frammenti sull'espressione*, p. 11; quoted in *Nachwort*, p. 325), she would arbitrarily combine: «a level of transmission – that of the Index card boxes – with a later version of the same text – its transcription in bound notebooks – (*eine Überlieferungsebene – der Zettelkästen – mit einer späteren Fassung desselben Textes – seiner Abschrift in gebundenen Notizbüchern –*)» (*Nachwort*, p. 325). Reason for adopting the structure of the bound books being for Müller that the author himself had «changed the order of succession [of the cards], [had] left some cards untranslated and [had] put both thematic sections of *Aphorismen* on Symbol on the right side next to the texts of the same period (*ihre Reihenfolge änderte, einige Zettel nicht abschreiben ließ und die beiden thematischen Faszikel mit den Aphorismen zum Symbol rechtsseitig neben die gleichzeitig entstandenen Texte stellte*)»

(*Das Wasserzeichen des Gedankens, Frammenti sull'espressione*, p. 11).

In a brief note in the margin of her recent French edition of the *Bruchstücke*, *Fragments sur l'expression* (L'écarquillé, Paris 2015, p. 28) resting on the same assumptions as the German-Italian edition, Susanne Müller distances herself from the «methodological mistakes (*erreurs méthodologiques*)» of the German editors, their «noncompliance to textual authority (*non-respect de l'autorité textuelle*)» and «misuse of genetic criticism (*un usage erroné de la critique génétique*)», while referring the reader to a yet-to-come circumstantial comment.

Here we can only attempt a conciliation between the two positions, hazarding that the "authorized" transcriptions of Warburg's manuscript, moreover largely incorrect, cannot lay claim to full "authority", but still are evidence of Warburg's painstaking work toward completion.

However, as the *Bruchstücke* appear to be more a «transparent palimpsest» (*Nachwort*, p. 329) than the posthumous re-elaboration of a pre-existent matter, German editors place emphasis on the genesis of the text in a documented critical apparatus, *Nachwort* and *Sachkommentar*, while reporting in the footnotes major variants between the manuscript AE *Aphorismen*, *Bruchstücke I* and *II*, and the so-called *Safekopie* [WIA III.44] – a second transcription of *Grundlegende Bruchstücke I* and *II*, corrected by Warburg and stored in a safe deposit – : that Warburg had had some inter-textual spaces left empty, being evidence that he laid claim to the "creative" property of the transcription.

All things considered, the opportunity for gaining new insight into Warburg's thought through the study of the fragments would deserve greater attention, as they contribute to prepare the philosophical foundation of modern *Bildwissenschaft* (see J.M. Krois, *Cassirer's "Symbolic Values" and Philosophical Iconology*, «Cassirer Studies», I (2008), pp. 101-117). Notwithstanding the most recent studies focusing on Warburg's early works (see *Nachwort*, note 11, p. 325), there has not been after all much theoretical effort to disclose the role of the fragments in the understanding of

early iconology as a “philosophical iconology” (see C. Metta, *Per una iconologia filosofica. I Frammenti sull’espressione di Aby Warburg*, «Bruniana & Campanelliana», XX (2014/2), pp. 403-414). In particular, the inclusion of the problem of myth in the science of images must have persuaded Warburg of a possible convergence between his “pragmatic science of expression” and Ernst Cassirer’s theory of expressive function around the idea of a «general science of culture as the doctrine of man’s affective existence (*allgemeine Kulturwissenschaft als Lehre vom bewegten Menschen*)» (see “Aby Warburg an Ernst Cassirer, 2. Februar 1923”, in E. Cassirer, *Briefe. Ausgewählter wissenschaftlicher Briefwechsel*, hrsg. von J.M. Krois, ECN, Bd. 18, Meiner, Hamburg 2009), far before Cassirer’s theory of mythical thought developed into a “logic of the sciences of culture”.

The same insistence on the “pragmatic” character of culture resounds in the third and last title Warburg gave to his collection of aphorisms in 1912: *Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer pragmatischen Ausdruckskunde*. The syntagma “pragmatische Ausdruckskunde” seems to allow a cultural, thus wider, acceptance of Warburg’s thought than the replaced titles *Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer psychologischen Kunstphilosophie* and *Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer monistischen Kunstpsychologie*, in that the former lends credit to the assumption that expression is the universal *function* of culture, in which art has a major role that no mere psychological approach is able to describe as such.

Whereas, however, the hesitation between philosophy and psychology appears to be more a sign of the times (from Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* and Fechner’s *Elemente der Psychophysik* to the encounter with the Pueblo culture, this latter making Warburg say he had finally found out a formula for the “psychological law” he had been looking for since 1888), the oscillation between a pragmatic science and a monistic one is worth reflection. A monistic psychology of art would have perhaps allowed too much to a metaphysical interpretation and too little to a strictly psychological one, ending by relinquishing the role of perception as the

place for expression and inter-subjectivity: When it comes to art, the question is why and how we happen to perceive images as if they were alive. One answer could be they *seem* to be alive; another one, they *are* alive. If we assume that they seem to be alive, we also assume that they are not; if we assume that they are alive, we also assume that they seem to be lacking life, appearance being the object of expression, while reality the object of representation. As, however, the mythical question arouses when it deals with giving sense to the absence of life, to *Ausdrucksloses*, we must assume that the absence of life, the *Ausdrucksloses* is the presupposition of our need for perceiving life in what lacks it, in this case the work of art. As soon as the other’s mind hiding behind the work begins acting as an overpowering will subjugating the image itself, it happens to perceive the image as the result of perception rather than its cause. Not just of the I’s perception indeed, but the other’s. As far as we perceive the action as independent from us, we perceive life as the other’s life. When we eventually gain power over things, then we perceive them as depending on us. Here we happen to “lose appearances”: our identification with the *object* of our representation, our lived life (*Erlebnis*), confines us to the expressionless world of symbols inhabiting our memory like for-ever-lost experiences.

In the opportunity that the I estranges itself in the world of meanings, in his distancing it, is also a chance for it to perceive life as duration and temporality. Art plays a major role in this regard, as it provides a non-conventional example of “work”, whose author we come to know by means of his work, not vice versa.

The text at stake was first published in 2009 in *Symbol - Grundlagentexte aus Ästhetik, Poetik und Kulturwissenschaft* (ed. by F. Berndt and H.J. Drügh, De Gruyter, Berlin), and later included in *Aby Warburg, Werke in einem Band* (ed. by M. Treml, S. Weigel and P. Ladwig, Suhrkamp, Berlin 2010). It was conceived during Warburg’s trip to America and carried on until 1901.

Its schematic character is explicitly intended to convey a somewhat definitive, mathematized truth.

“Symbolism as the determination of boundaries” attempts to sketch a casuistry of the I’s estrangement in the world, his inorganic spatial expansion leading to the loss of its self-identity of living, factual being. The incipit sounds programmatic: symbolism means determination of extension (*Umfangbestimmung/Längsrichtungsbestimmung*) and thus of direction (*Richtungsbestimmung*) (p. 299). As such it is comparable with the function of gravity (*Schwerkraft*). Like the function of gravity, symbolism acts as a force determining extension and direction of the spiritual world (*geistiger Haushalt*). As, however, gravity is a physical concept, should we consider the determination of extension in a physical rather than logic acceptance? After all, the determination of extension is concerned with the possibility to experience the bodily distance from the object repeatedly and therefore ideally. Moreover, man’s subjugation to gravity implies his physical resistance to the pressure of symbolism, entailing the strenuous defence of his verticality. This very condition of being always at risk of losing one’s balance, one’s standing position (of stillness), one’s self-consciousness and feeling of distance between oneself and the object (see p. 298: «*Verlust [1. des Standortes (der Ruhe) 2. des Ichbewußtseins] des Distanzgefühles zwischen [...] Objekt u. Subject*») makes the use of instruments necessary for the human being to encompass its limits. Ornament (*Schmuck*), tool (*Gerät*), possession (*Besitz*), figurative art (*bildende Kunst*) are all different ways to the distancing of the object: sublation of distance (*Aufhebung der Entfernung*), distance within reach (*Entfernung in Greifnähe*), distance tout court (*Entfernung*). As soon as incorporation removes distance, the latter is soon regained as consciousness (of the distance) and promptly archived as memory.

Less concerned with the above texts – but as much pregnant – are the notes to Heinrich Wölfflin’s dissertation *Reinassance und Barock* (WIA III.57.2.9.1) published for the first time. They testify to Warburg’s peculiar attitude to paraphrase single words or expressions from the books he read in an effort to translate them in his own language, as if to appropriate them. As a consequence

of his consideration of the “text” as a living organism, he takes blank spaces as culture medium of thought. Like images, words set in motion once they are put in relation with time.

When it comes to an autograph text like the *Four Theses*, Warburg is faced with the evidence that one’s own work can suddenly turn into something independent at all: the heavily corrected autograph version (WIA III.39.5.2) and the printed one (WIA III.40.1.1) re-elaborated twice (WIA III.40.1.1 no. 2 and WIA III.40.1.1 no. 3), show that Warburg could hardly imagine to license a text that would be expected to present in a definitive shape the very core of his dissertation – and this is as much true for the *Grundlegende Bruchstücke*, which are the core of his thought.

The four theses can be condensed further as follows:

1. The treatment of dynamism in art entails the distancing from the real milieu of the still-image already dynamic;
2. This estrangement calls for symbolization, as far as symbolization implies a confrontation with the real milieu;
3. Symbolization is a kind of idealization brought forth by means of confrontation between memory and impression;
4. The artistic imagination is the reaction of our mind to gravity.

The invisible fracture between image of the senses and image of memory, the irreducibility of space and time within our perception, are finally made visible in the work of art as duration and life.

Table of contents: Dank, p. VII; Editorische Vorbemerkung, p. IX; 1. Grundlegende Bruchstücke [1888/1896-1905/1912], p. 1; 2. Bemerkungen zu Heinrich Wölfflin, Renaissance und Barock, 1888 [1889-1891], p. 273; 3. Vier Thesen [1892-1906], p. 285; 4. Symbolismus als Umfangbestimmung [1896-1901], p. 295; Nachwort: Der “kleine Antennerich” – Kunstpsychologie als Selbsterkundung als Kunstpsychologie, p. 321; Verzeichnis der abgekürzt zitierten Literatur, p. 353; Abbildungsnachweise, p. 357; Personenindex, p. 359.

Ulrich Pfisterer is Professor of History of Art at the Institut für Kunstgeschichte of the Ludwig-

Maximilians-Universität München (since 2006) and Director of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte of the LMU München (since 2015)

Hans Christian Hönes is Research Associate on the *Bilderfahrzeuge – Warburg's Legacy and the Future of Iconology* project at The Warburg Institute of London (since 2014).

Carmen Metta

K. Nohr, S. Leikert (ed.), *Zum Phänomen der Rührung in Psychoanalyse und Musik*, Psychosozial-Verlag, Giessen 2016, pp. 190.

Il fenomeno emotivo della commozione è per più ragioni uno sfortunato apolide. Esiliato troppo a lungo tra le pagine di una popolare e mediocre letteratura romantica o decadente, praticato dunque con un certo pudore e un vago senso di colpa dalle cosiddette persone colte, non ha mai trovato – nonostante la sua evidente universalità – una giusta udienza presso discipline come la psicoanalisi, l'antropologia o la musicologia, che pure avrebbero avuto tutto il diritto e dovere (e quali altre mai, se non proprio esse?) di prenderlo in carico. Freud non ne fa parola. Nella lista degli affetti fondamentali stilata da Ekman non compare, né sorte molto migliore ha in ulteriori tentativi di sistematizzare teoricamente i fenomeni emotivi. La musicologia, specialmente se ispirata dal formalismo di Hanslick, tende ovviamente a guardarlo con degnazione e fastidio, quasi fosse materia da terza pagina.

Un recente convegno della Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychoanalyse und Musik, i cui contributi sono raccolti nel volume qui recensito, ha tentato meritoriamente di colmare, per quanto possibile, la lacuna e di rievocare il rimosso. Esso fa seguito ad altri convegni e, rispettivamente, ad altri volumi, tutti pubblicati dall'editore specializzato Psychosozial-Verlag, che nel mondo tedesco svolge – fra l'altro – l'importante funzione di promuovere e mediare l'approfondimento dei poco esplorati rapporti tra musica e psicoanalisi. Naturalmente, come sempre accade nel caso di atti di convegni, il risultato finale non corrisponde a uno

studio organico. I contributi sono ovviamente molto diversi per provenienza (psicoanalisi, psicologia, neurologia, musicologia, letteratura...), ampiezza e valore, e più che un affresco compiuto tracciano le forme di un mosaico ancora parzialmente indeterminato e incompleto, più fine in certi punti e più grossolano in altri. Probabilmente, allo stato delle cose, non è ancora possibile fare molto di più.

Questa recensione non potrà toccare, per ragioni di spazio, tutti i singoli saggi, e trascurerà in particolare quelli più applicativi, cercando in cambio di ritrovare, nella varietà a volte irriducibile degli approcci, almeno un sottile filo d'Arianna e una comune suggestione. Dopo un primo contributo di carattere soprattutto letterario, una specie di premessa un po' estranea al resto e concentrata sull'importanza dell'"attimo" esistenzialmente pregnante (proustiano) nello scatenamento del fenomeno emotivo in questione (Gidion), e un secondo saggio di tenore completamente opposto, che connette scientificamente il "brivido" della commozione nell'ascolto musicale a una serie di vantaggi evolutivi, come l'attivazione dopaminergica che regola l'attenzione, sostiene la motivazione e favorisce il consolidamento della memoria episodica e procedurale (Altenmüller), il seguito del volume sembra sempre più concentrarsi sul carattere relazionale proprio dell'esperienza di ascolto musicale. La musica appare, fenomenologicamente, portatrice di una serie di caratteri emotivi, come una "quasi-persona" che ci interpella. Nella relazione diadica ascoltatore-suono, in quanto riconducibile ontogeneticamente alle prime interazioni sonore tra bambino e madre e in seguito al mondo relazionale dell'individuo, va correttamente collocato anche il fenomeno della commozione.

Contro l'opinione di Lacan (e in fondo dello stesso Freud), va riconosciuto pieno diritto a un doppio registro della soggettività: accanto a quello verbale, quello sensibile/cinetico che si estrinseca particolarmente nella musica. Qui, mentre un minimo di ripetizione delle forme è necessario per generare nel fruitore confidenza sufficiente ad abbandonare il terreno sicuro del linguaggio

gio e immergersi nell'incerto fiume percettivo, lo "schiacciamento" analogico sulle coazione a ripetere freudiana risulterebbe tuttavia frettoloso e incauto. Il tipo specifico di ripetizione musicale è anzi ciò che, "orficamente", spezza nelle sue figure mitiche (Tantalo, Sisifo) la coazione a ripetere pulsionale del mondo infero e apre in suo luogo uno spazio utopico (Leikert: 133). La commozione è, per così dire, l'"immagine mobile" di questo spazio, il momento in cui cade la "cattiva" ripetizione e osiamo superare la barriera fra noi e ciò che ci sta di fronte. Per questo, pur nella marcata somiglianza esteriore dei sintomi, la commozione è fenomenologicamente l'opposto della vergogna: benché entrambe presuppongano il riconoscimento, quest'ultima chiude la soggettività in sé e nella propria prigione corporea, reificandola e negando la trascendenza. La commozione, al contrario, sostiene la fiducia grazie alla quale il soggetto, trascendendo sé e la propria differenza, muove verso l'Altro (Nohr).

Certamente, il puro e semplice sincronismo dei suoni, degli atti e delle intenzioni merita – in quanto artificioso e dunque potenzialmente "sospetto" – di essere criticamente indagato dalla psicoanalisi. Tanto nella vita quanto nel *setting* terapeutico, non necessariamente la (troppo) precisa corrispondenza diadica è sintomo di evoluzione positiva e di salute. Essa, al contrario, può risultare un mimetismo patologico e nocivo al libero sviluppo della personalità (Krause: 64), i cui sistemi relazionali devono risultare dialettici e non – appunto – mimetici, quasi fossero l'infinita replicazione – questa sì coatta – di tautologie vuote. È un peccato, a nostro parere, che l'autore non abbia colto proprio qui il preciso corrispettivo musicale del suo modello psicoanalitico: quel sentimentalismo fatto di una troppo prevedibile, facile, immediata, dunque "cattiva" corrispondenza con una cattiva musica di consumo che a propria volta lo replica e alimenta, e i cui caratteri inconfondibili sono stati altrove individuati ed elencati con non comune finezza da Roger Scruton.

Se dunque la musica è per eccellenza l'arte dell'aspettativa e del suo adempimento – realizzata, differito o eluso –, il sincronismo vissuto non si

realizza nella sua verità esistenziale in forme semplici e immediate, come un amalgama indifferenziato. Il "brivido" fusionale di commozione nasce al contrario quando un'aspettativa viene sì adempiuta, una corrispondenza col mondo realizzata, ma in modo sorprendente, benché non eccessivo (Nohr: 148 s.), quasi che solo allora, nel cuore stesso di quest'esperienza vissuta, ci si rendesse conto con sorpresa e meraviglia di cosa davvero si aspettava. E se la commozione è una forma di conoscenza di sé – proprio nel momento paradossale in cui il sé rinuncia alla rigidità del proprio perimetro –, essa nello specifico passa dalle mani di un Altro ipercritico (un Super-io persecutorio, oppure il "sabotatore interno" di Fairbairn) a quelle di un Altro benevolo e partecipativo (149). Dalle Erinni alle Eumenidi, verrebbe da dire ancora in termini mitici.

Un percorso che attraversi con pazienza e attenzione questi complessi contributi ritrova infine, per così dire, la premessa fondamentale che sottende la loro intera, variegata proposta: l'inadeguatezza del modello epistemologico monadico di Freud a rendere giustizia dei ricchi e profondi rapporti che intercorrono tra psiche e suono, dunque anche tra psicoanalisi e musica. La "sordità" musicale della psicoanalisi classica trova qui una spiegazione soddisfacente. Come il nostro psichismo, così anche la musica può al contrario vivere solo se immersa in «scene d'interazione», composte di soggetti, oggetti, credenze, aspettative e – soprattutto – forti contenuti emotivi mediati attraverso analogie cinetiche. Per questo il suono musicale ha la capacità di risvegliare il fantasma delle nostre *Urszenen* depositate nell'inconscio, al punto che «[l]a musica elaborata dall'Occidente cristiano [...] altro non fa che rispecchiare affetti appartenenti a scene d'interazione e offrire loro un *containment*» (Trapp: 169). Se il *transfert* psicoanalitico corrisponde anch'esso esattamente a questa definizione, resta solo da meravigliarsi che sia stata e ancora sia necessaria tanta strada per rompere resistenze idiosincratice e tabù ideologici e istituire infine un dialogo produttivo tra questi due mondi.

Indice: 1. *Zum Phänomen der Rührung in Psychoanalyse und Musik. Ein Gespräch der Heraus-*

geber als Einleitung; 2. Danksagung; 3. H. Gidion: «War er ein Tier, da ihn Musik so ergriff?». Musikalische Erfahrungen zur Sprache gebracht; 4. E. Altenmüller: *Schauer und Tränen beim Musikhören: Woher kommen sie, wozu führen Sie? Neurobiologie der durch Musik ausgelösten Emotionen*; 5. R. Krause: *Auf der Suche nach dem «missing link» zwischen Analytiker und Analysand, ihren Körpern und ihrer gemeinsamen Seele. Oder wie ist der intersubjektive Raum konstruiert und tapeziert?*; 6. T. Vollstedt, *Tiefenhermeneutische Überlegungen zum ersten Satz der Sonate für zwei Klaviere, D-Dur (KV 448/375a) von Wolfgang Amadé Mozart*; 7. D. Niedecken, *Zwischen Heintje und Mozart. Ein kulturalanalytischer Vergleich*; 8. S. Leikert, *Berührung, Erschütterung, Transformation. Die Beziehung von Affekt und Wahrnehmung in musikbewirkten Veränderungsprozessen*; 9. A.D. Haas, *Kinästhetische Legasthenie. Oder warum so viele Autisten Musiker werden*; 10. K. Nohr, *Was ist Rührung? Eine essayistische Annäherung an ein wenig beachtetes Thema*; 11. J. Trapp, *GEFÜHL und Musik*; 12. Autorinnen und Autoren; 13. Abbildungsnachweise.

Karin Nohr, psicoanalista, docente e scrittrice, è membro del consiglio direttivo della Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychoanalyse und Musik.

Sebastian Leikert, psicoanalista e docente presso l'Institut für Psychanalyse und Psychotherapie di Heidelberg, è presidente della Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychoanalyse und Musik

Michele Gardini

C. Muth, M. Raab, M., C.C. Carbon, *The stream of experience when watching artistic movie. Dynamic aesthetic effect revealed by the Continuous Evaluation Procedure (CEP)*, "Frontiers in Psychology", 6, 365, 2015; B. Belke, H. Leder, C.C. Carbon, *When challenging art gets liked: Evidence for a dual preference formation process for fluent and non-fluent portraits*, "PloSONE", 10, 9, 2015.

The influential processing fluency theory of aesthetic appreciation, articulated by Reber,

Schwarz and Winkielman (*Processing fluency and aesthetic pleasure: is beauty in the perceiver's processing experience?*, 2004), argues that liking and aesthetic pleasure are function of the interpreter's processing dynamics, in particular of the fluency and ease of these processes. Because fluency is associated with progress towards a successful recognition of stimuli, it is positively marked and people very often drawn on their subjective experience to make evaluative judgment. So, the more fluently perceivers can process an object, the more positive their aesthetic response. In particular, a set of experiments clearly suggests that variables able to influence processing fluency (such as perceptual and semantic priming, stimulus repetition, symmetry, balance, clarity, and prototypicality) increase aesthetic appreciation.

However, there is at least a striking limitation of fluency theory: in a large part of art history many artists manipulate the ease of processing of their works in order to prevent automatic identification, direct attention, and hamper straightforward inference. Many artworks involve disorder, disorganization, disharmony, ambiguity, contradictions, indeterminacy, uncertainty, strangeness, and so on. In recent years an innovative frame concerning the link between perception and appreciation of art has been proposed by Van de Cruys and Wagemans (*Putting Reward in Art: A Tentative Prediction Error Account of Visual Art*, 2011). The central idea is that more often than not great artworks do not allow an immediate and easy recognition – so that the more fluent the processing, the higher the appreciation. On the contrary, they are creative and innovative, challenging and surprising. They inhibit ordinary routines and violate predictions. However, viewers – with a sufficient degree of expertise – often succeed in establishing a new predictable pattern on a different level. This transition from an initial state of uncertainty, associated with unpleasant and negative affect, to a subsequent state of increased predictability and fluency is highly rewarding. In this perspective aesthetic pleasure is deeply intertwined with knowledge acquisition.

Recent evidence suggests a crucial relationship between insights and aesthetic pleasure. In the study by Muth, Raab and Carbon (2015) participants watched and evaluated a stop-motion movie depicting evolution and metamorphosis of Gestalt. The movie used an intuitive drawing technique which allows for the development of Gestalt out of arbitrarily set lines to slowly reveal order in a seemingly diffuse picture, in particular through various stages differing only slightly in detail. On the basis of a specific method (Continuous Evaluation Procedure), they assessed liking, interest, determinacy, and surprise in a very time-accurate way, while complexity was computationally analysed (size of the movie's frames after JPEG compression). Every participant watched the movie twice and evaluated it continuously on the key dimensions (determinacy, liking, surprise, interest). The insight window corresponded to a temporal interval containing liking ratings ranging from 60 frames prior to each insight moment to 60 frames after that insight moment (note that 2000 movie frames correspond to about 67s). According to Gestalt psychologists, (perceptual) insight was defined as a sudden (strong surprise) and a clear (high determinacy) solution to a problem, and it was identified as the peaks of determinacy and surprise in Gestalt formation. Statistical results showed that during the insight window interest already increases 1.500 ms before the moment of insight with the peak at 1000 ms, supporting the hypothesis that it is evoked by an expectation of understanding; there is a strong correlation between insight and determinacy and between interest and determinacy; sudden insights happen only during increases in complexity; above all, the increase in liking after an insight moment was significantly higher than other changes in liking during the evaluation of the movie.

This evidence clearly shows that liking increases after insight, as predicted by the hypothesis that aesthetic pleasure is linked to insight. So, it is undoubtedly true that in general variables able to influence processing fluency increase aesthetic appreciation. However, aesthetic appreciation often involves the success in establishing a new

predictable pattern on a different level and so the transition from an initial state of uncertainty to a subsequent state of increased predictability, associated with a positive affective reaction.

Moreover, recent findings suggest that, in order to exert phenomenally pleasing processing, the transition from an initial state of uncertainty to a new level of predictability requires cognitive mastering, that is deliberate, conscious, top-down controlled iterative cycles of extensive elaboration. In the study of Belke, Leder and Carbon (2015), in order to capture preference changes, two kinds of stimuli (easily processed "fluency" portraits vs. mentally challenging, ambiguous and indeterminate "mastery" portraits with a high stimulation potential) were repeatedly evaluated on numerous rating scales that foster deeper elaboration of stimulus. The repeated evaluations were based on the Repeated Evaluation Technique (*The Repeated Evaluation Technique (RET). A Method to Capture Dynamic Effects of Innovativeness and Attractiveness*, Carbon and Leder 2005). Specifically, half of the subjects were assigned to a repeated evaluation condition and the other half to a familiarity condition, in which participants were instructed to attentively look at the portraits without any evaluation instruction. Art-inexperienced participants showed a preference increase for mastery portraits in the repeated evaluation condition from a first to second viewing phase. Initial appreciation for mastery was lower than for fluency portraits; after a repeated evaluation phase preferences for mastery portraits increased, while appreciation for fluency portraits remained stable over time. No such preference gains for mastery portraits were observed after the familiarity task. Art-experienced participants show an increase for mastery portraits in the familiarity condition. This suggests that participants self-induced elaboration without external encouragement.

This evidence shows that the extent to which perceiving challenging (and so initially unpleasant) art becomes aesthetically pleasant essentially depends on the viewer's phenomenal state of effort and cognitive mastering, even if sudden and intense insights do not occur in this process.

Gianluca Consoli