

Ultrablack of Music: market alibis

Eric Schmid, Connor Tomaka and Guido Gamboa

December 8, 2023

1 Overview

The relationship between axiomatization, mechanization, creative individuation, and virtual/physical individuation presents a fascinating interplay of concepts that have significantly influenced various fields, including mathematics, physics, philosophy, and art. This essay explores these relationships by drawing insights from André Weil's "From Metaphysics to Mathematics," Gilles Châtelet's works, and Schmid's discussion on Gnostic Futurism.

Axiomatization: Weil and Grothendieck

Axiomatization, as discussed in André Weil's "From Metaphysics to Mathematics," represents the transformation of metaphysical concepts into formal mathematical structures. Weil's document highlights the progression from vague metaphysical ideas to concrete mathematical theories. This process is evident in the works of mathematicians like Lagrange and Galois, where initial metaphysical notions eventually crystallized into the formal structures of modern algebra. Similarly, Alexander Grothendieck's work in algebraic geometry involved the creation of an abstract framework that could unify various mathematical concepts, demonstrating the power of axiomatization in providing a foundational structure for complex ideas.

Mechanization: Oppenheimer, Watson-Crick, and Von Neumann

Mechanization, in the context of scientific development, refers to the application of mechanical principles to solve problems and the automation of processes. Figures like Oppenheimer in physics, Watson and Crick in biology, and Von Neumann in computing and mathematics, represent the pinnacle of mechanization in their respective fields. Their work exemplifies how mechanization has enabled the simplification and automation of complex processes, leading to alienating discoveries such as the atomic bomb, the structure of DNA, and the development of modern computers.

Creative Individuation: Gnostic Futurism

Eric Schmid's discussion on Gnostic Futurism, as found in his document, offers a perspective on creative individuation. Gnostic Futurism, rooted in Kantian-Hegelian transcendental universalism, represents a departure from conventional realism, emphasizing a transcendental nature and integration of mythopoeia. This movement in art and philosophy underscores the role of creativity and individual expression in transcending traditional forms and norms. It embodies the idea of creative individuation, where individual creativity leads to the formation of new, often revolutionary, artistic and philosophical expressions.

Virtual/Physical Individuation: Châtelet's Perspective

Gilles Châtelet's works, particularly "Figuring Space: Philosophy, Mathematics, and Physics," delve into the concept of virtual/physical individuation. Châtelet discusses the configuration of space in mathematics and physics, emphasizing the role of diagrams in scientific discovery. This exploration of space, both virtual (as in mathematical abstractions) and physical (as in tangible representations), reflects the process of individuation in both realms. Châtelet's perspective highlights how mathematical and physical representations are not just tools for understanding the world but are also expressions of individual and collective intellectual endeavors.

Interconnections and Synthesis

The synthesis of these concepts reveals a complex tapestry of intellectual development across disciplines. Axiomatization provides a foundational structure that enables the mechanization of processes, as seen in the works of Oppenheimer, Watson-Crick, and Von Neumann. This mechanization, in turn, paves the way for creative individuation, where individuals can transcend established norms and frameworks, as exemplified in Gnostic Futurism. Finally, the concept of virtual/physical individuation, as

explored by Châtelet, represents the culmination of these ideas, where the abstract and the tangible intersect, leading to new forms of understanding and expression.

In conclusion, the relationship between axiomatization, mechanization, creative individuation, and virtual/physical individuation is a testament to the dynamic and interconnected nature of intellectual progress. From the formal structures of mathematics to the revolutionary changes in art and philosophy, these concepts demonstrate how human thought and creativity continue to evolve, challenging existing paradigms and forging new paths of understanding and expression.

2 The Dialectic between “Gnostic Futurism” and “Social Realism”

I would like to thank Bidy Mahy for her generous comments.

Introduction

In the intricate tapestry of artistic and philosophical schools, Gnostic Futurism emerges as a beacon of new romanticism, inspired by an escape from anamnesis or ‘society of control.’ This movement, as epitomized by Huysmans in “Against Nature,” forges a path distinct from the traditional realism and romanticism, paving the way for a new kind of discourse in the arts and philosophy.

Gnostic Futurism is deeply rooted in Kantian-Hegelian transcendental universalism, bridging foundationalist logical positivism and anti-foundationalist pragmatist inferentialism. This movement is exemplified in the Heretical Gnostic Truths, which challenge traditional semantic norms and propose a new understanding of history and knowledge. The movement finds its voice through the mythopoeia, deflated of its ontological sufficiency as proposed by Laruelle.

Gnostic Futurism in Art

The realm of Gnostic Futurism is vividly expressed in the works of artists like Matthew Pang, Giangiacomo Rossetti, Samuel Hindolo, and others. Their art transcends traditional forms, infusing mythopoeia and transcendent themes into their work, reflecting the core tenets of Gnostic Futurism. These artists defy conventional realism, instead opting for a portrayal of reality that is steeped in transcendental and mythopoetic elements.

Contrasting with Social Realism

Social Realism, in stark contrast, anchors itself in the portrayal of societal issues, focusing on the lives of the working class, the impoverished and techno-overclass. This movement is characterized by its direct and often gritty depiction of reality, as opposed to the abstract nature of Gnostic Futurism. Artists include Morag Keil, Gili Tal and Georgie Nettel.

The Dialectical Relationship

The relationship between Gnostic Futurism and Social Realism is dialectical. While they appear to be on opposite ends of the artistic spectrum, they influence and inform each other in profound ways. Gnostic Futurism’s transcendental nature provides a counterbalance to the materialist focus of Social Realism, and vice versa. This interaction enriches both movements, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of each. The technological apparatus, which is immanently critiqued by social realists (but ultimately co-opted by capitalism), establishes the cybernetic condition for anamnesis, from which Gnostic Futurists formulate “higher register” speculatist metaphysics. Lena Tutunjian’s work operates in the space of this dialectical relationship.

Gnostic Futurism’s Philosophical Underpinnings

Gnostic Futurism’s foundation in Kantian-Hegelian transcendental universalism and its emphasis on mythopoeia and Heretical Gnostic Truths mark a significant departure from conventional realism. The work is ultimately formal in its medium-specificity and choice of a finite mode of representation, despite the virtually infinite dispersion of images. It challenges established norms and creates a new semantic framework, offering a unique perspective on history and knowledge. The realizability of self as a constructed and manipulated intelligence which posits itself continually in its dynamic navigation of semantic norms, renegotiating existent norms to construct new spaces of reason inhabiting the spirit of world/worldliness in the interplay between self-as-agent, mind, spirit, intelligence, world and other-as-agent via formal innovations of minimal syntax coupled with interaction of multi-agents co-constitutive of each other.

The Role of Art in Gnostic Futurism

Artists within the Gnostic Futurist movement, such as Matthew Pang, Giangiacomo Rossetti, and Samuel Hindolo, exemplify the movement's core principles in their work. They integrate transcendental themes and mythopoeia, moving beyond traditional artistic expressions and offering a unique, abstract representation of reality.

Social Realism as a Counterbalance

In contrast, Social Realism provides a grounded portrayal of societal issues, focusing on realism and the material aspects of life. This movement's direct depiction of the working class, the technoverclass and impoverished communities serves as a counterpoint to the abstract nature of Gnostic Futurism. This work embraces the technostate described by Gilles Chatelet as a form of immanent critique, but the power of the work is limited by the expressiveness of the technological apparatus. In contrast, Gnostic Futurism carves out a radically novel mode of expression at the joints of nature, an act between multi-agents and their being-there of Geist (World Spirit) made formal through minimal artistic vocabularies computing beyond the limits of computational decidability.

Synthesis and Conclusion

The dialectical relationship between Gnostic Futurism and Social Realism reveals the complexity and interdependence of these artistic movements. While they may seem contradictory, they complement and enrich each other, offering a broader understanding of artistic expression and philosophical thought. We have explored the intricate relationship between these two movements, shedding light on their unique characteristics and their influence on each other. As we continue to explore these complex ideologies, we uncover the multidimensional nature of human expression and thought, highlighting the endless possibilities of artistic and philosophical exploration.

3 Châtelet

The intricate interplay between nations is often shaped by the intellectual currents of their times. Gilles Châtelet, a renowned mathematician and philosopher, offers a unique perspective on this dynamic in an interview that sheds light on the broader geopolitical landscape, especially concerning the US's influence on French international relations.

1. Market Democracies and the World Market: Châtelet begins by addressing the overwhelming presence of "postmodern capitalism," describing it as a "complex and extremely deadly machine" that threatens to engulf states, knowledge, bodies, and thoughts. He laments the transformation of history into a series of "surprise parties," where significant events are flattened out and equated with mere trends, such as "the 2CV years, the Yoplait years, the Reagan years, the Star Wars years..." (Châtelet, p.7). This perspective underscores the influence of global market forces, often driven by US-centric economic policies, on shaping international relations and historical narratives.

2. Democracy and Mediocrity: Châtelet critiques the contemporary understanding of democracy, stating that it has become synonymous with mediocrity. He argues that any activity aspiring to excellence is now viewed with suspicion and labeled as elitist. This "tyranny of the lowbrow" establishes a uniformity that suppresses genuine intellectual and cultural pursuits (Châtelet, p.10). The influence of American culture, which Châtelet suggests is experiencing exhaustion (Châtelet, p.10), might be seen as a driving force behind this global push towards mediocrity.

3. The Spirit of the Times: Reflecting on the late 70s, Châtelet speaks of the era of "post-leftism" and the "victorious offensive of the Liberal Counter-Reformation." He mentions the success of 'setting the record straight' during this period (Châtelet, p.7). This could be interpreted as the rise of neoliberal policies, championed by the US, influencing French political and economic landscapes. **4. The Role of Intellectuals:** Châtelet emphasizes the importance of intellectuals in society, suggesting that their work is often exhausting as they constantly have to point out the obvious, akin to shouting that "the emperor has no clothes" (Châtelet, p.5). The influence of US-centric ideologies and market-driven policies might be seen as challenging the traditional role of intellectuals in French society, pushing them to take on a more critical stance.

5. The Market and Democracy: Châtelet draws a parallel between the market and democracy, suggesting that the latter has been perverted to serve the former. He notes that in France, democracy began to be seen as a "photocopy of the market" during Giscard's era, reflecting the increasing intertwining of economic and political spheres (Châtelet, p.9).

In conclusion, Gilles Châtelet's interview offers a profound exploration of the societal and intellectual dynamics in France, especially in the context of global market forces and the influence of US-centric

policies. While not directly addressing US-French relations, the themes discussed provide a backdrop against which the broader geopolitical interactions between the two nations can be understood.

4 Uses and Abuses of Math

In an era marked by the convergence of diverse disciplines, We present a compelling exploration that intertwines the realms of music, mathematics, and philosophy. This exploration serves not merely as a recounting of facts but as a profound argument underscoring the interconnectedness of these domains and their collective impact on human understanding.

We initiate the discourse by delving into the narrative of Drexciya, a Detroit electro-techno outfit formed in 1989. They emerged into the limelight in 1994 with "Aquatic Invasion." The enigmatic members, James Stinson and Gerald Donald, crafted a unique mythology, envisioning a "Drexciyan" race of underwater beings descended from pregnant slaves cast overboard during trans-Atlantic deportations. Their music, as We articulate, serves as a conduit between their African heritage and the modern USA. "Their music...was imagined as a 'dimensional jumphole' between their black African roots and the contemporary USA" [Page 1].

Transitioning from music to the realm of French historical epistemology, We shed light on the works of Jean Cavaillès and Gaston Bachelard. The influence of this intellectual tradition on structuralism is evident, with notable contributions from thinkers like Jean-Toussaint Desanti. We further discuss Bourbaki's mathematical structuralism from 1950, posing a pertinent question: can it be regarded as philosophical structuralism? We argue that category theory offers a form of "philosophical structuralism," even if Bourbaki did not incorporate these categorical methods. "Category theory provides a 'philosophical structuralism' (as Steve Awodey has said) even though Bourbaki did not include these categorical methods in their treatises" [Page 2].

Drawing inspiration from Grothendieck's "récoltes et semailles," We employ the metaphor of building houses to elucidate the nature of mathematical exploration. Grothendieck's reflections on his mathematical journey underscore the dichotomy between mathematicians who operate within a fixed conceptual framework and those driven to innovate. We compellingly argue that while some are content with maintaining and embellishing inherited knowledge, others, akin to builders or pioneers, are propelled to create anew. "Most mathematicians...are inclined to constrain themselves to a conceptual framework...They are like the heirs of a large and beautiful fully-furnished house" [Pages 2-3].

In conclusion, We assert that the intricate tapestry of music, history, philosophy, and mathematics offers profound insights into the nature of creation, innovation, and the human drive to understand and express. This argument serves as a testament to the boundless potential of interdisciplinary exploration and its capacity to enrich human knowledge.

5 Dystopia today

The dynamics of international relations are often influenced by internal shifts within nations, and France's relationship with the US in the realm of foreign affairs is no exception. One of the most intriguing aspects of this relationship is the changing attitudes of French intellectuals, especially their evolving perspectives on leftist ideologies and parties. This intellectual shift, as detailed in a CIA dossier titled "France: Defection of the Leftist Intellectuals," provides valuable insights into the broader political and diplomatic landscape between France and the US. Historically, "Intellectuals have traditionally played an influential role in French political life. They have conditioned the political atmosphere and have often shaped political and ideological trends" (Dossier). Their influence has been so profound that their ideological leanings and affiliations can be seen as a barometer for the nation's broader political and diplomatic orientations. In the post-World War II era, the left, especially the Communists, attracted a significant portion of the intellectual community in France. Their alignment was not just ideological but was also rooted in the resistance against fascism and the Nazi occupation. However, as the dossier notes, by the late 1960s, a shift began to emerge. Some intellectuals started to challenge and criticize the left, marking the beginning of a significant transformation in the intellectual landscape (Dossier). One of the most notable shifts was the distancing of "Leftist intellectuals... from socialism since the early 1970s" (Dossier). This change was spearheaded by a group known as the "New Philosophers," many of whom rejected Marxism and developed a strong antipathy towards

the Soviet Union. This sentiment weakened the traditional anti-American stance that was prevalent among leftist intellectuals. The dossier highlights this shift, noting a "spirit of anti-Marxism and anti-Sovietism" that emerged among intellectuals (Dossier). This intellectual evolution had broader implications for France's foreign affairs, especially its relationship with the US. The weakening of traditional anti-American sentiments among intellectuals suggested a potential for closer alignment or at least a more nuanced engagement between France and the US. The dossier's observation that this shift made it difficult "to mobilize significant intellectual opposition to US policies" (Dossier) underscores the potential for a more collaborative approach in foreign affairs. However, it's essential to note that while the intellectual shift indicated a potential thawing of relations, it did not guarantee a seamless alignment between France and the US. The complexities of international diplomacy, historical baggage, and national interests ensured that the relationship remained multifaceted and dynamic. In conclusion, the changing attitudes of French intellectuals, as detailed in the CIA dossier, offer a unique lens to understand the intricacies of France-US relations in foreign affairs. While intellectuals' perspectives do not dictate foreign policy, they certainly influence the atmosphere in which such policies are crafted and executed. As nations navigate the complex world of international diplomacy, understanding these internal shifts becomes crucial in anticipating and shaping future engagements.

6 Conclusion

Per Brassier, Noise is no longer a genre under which to classify a collection of musical tendencies, but a concept by which we understand a process of creative individuation, a productive escape rather than a reductive sign. It is in its treatment only as the latter that we see "the average" emerge, identifiable by the "accumulation of stock gestures." It is perhaps no coincidence that the dilemma Noise has faced in its mechanization as genre mirrors so closely the appropriation that chaos theory has endured under the auspices of democratic market ideology and cybernetic vogues according to Chatelet, "slackening the criteria for discriminating between innovation and cliché to the point where experiment threatened to become indistinguishable from platitude." Likewise, it may be the case for both Noise and Chaos that their simple signification of absence, negation and disorder in their mechanized forms are no longer adequate, and they now face the task of negating the form of the "generic" above all in this cyberpasture that tolerates everything but an inappropriate productivity: "Noise becomes generic as the form of invention which is obliged to substitute the abstract negation of genre for the production of hitherto unknown genres." The form of liberal individualism that emerges from the machinations of this "invisible hand" must then be subjected to the virtuality that has perpetually been displaced and subsumed by the excessive application of "market operativity" (music genres, the cyber mercantile order), but stills finds purchase in the diagrammatology of math, physics and metaphysics: "and if potential can claim the crucial status that is henceforth accorded to it in physical theories, it is because it has always retained a certain ontological dignity, even if it was, until quite recently, sacrificed as a mere intermediary element in calculation."