10 Between being and doing

Aesthetics at the crossroads

Jean-Pierre Cometti

In the beginning of *Ethics without Ontology*, Hilary Putnam notes that:

> The unfortunate division of contemporary philosophy into separate "fields" [ethics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, philosophy of mathematics, and still others] often conceals the way in which the arguments and issues arises in field after field.[1]

The recent and progressive re-emergence of ontological questions in aesthetics fully confirms this in a field that has its breakthroughs and drawbacks.

Ontological questions have been reintroduced in the analytical tradition by the 1948 publication of Quine's "On What There Is."[2] They have since developed in the context of a debate which in the Middle Ages already opposed the realists, the nominalists and the conceptualists.[3] Antirealism, partially sprung from Quine's influence and a specific reading of Wittgenstein, contributed to a recentering of the debate around an apparently exclusive alternative, various versions of which may be found in the many fields of philosophical thought, from the philosophy of mathematics to the philosophy of mind.

Until recently, aesthetics could seem to have remained aloof from these quarrels. The philosophy of art was simultaneously influenced by logical empiricism and its doubts about aesthetics, by Wittgenstein's philosophy of language games and its restrictive development, and by Nelson Goodman's own orientations, and as such it has remained neutral and has even abstained from entering this debate until the 1980s. In a famous article in which he insists that one should ask what art does rather than what it is, Goodman has justified this position and warned against the inevitable perplexities that await he who searches for a definition of art. Thus, in his own particular way, he prolonged what had first been John Dewey's and Monroe Beardsley's attitude, which happened to be a significant contribution to aesthetic thought later hastily put aside by positivism.[4]

These successive episodes still mostly constitute the background of today's debates, and I do not believe that one should set aside the questions

raised by Dewey, Beardsley and Goodman. They are intimately related to the eventful developments of analytical philosophy, from the early Carnap and the Quine of the "Two Dogmas" to the "linguistic" and then the "cognitive turn," not to mention the rebirth of pragmatism with authors such as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam and Robert Brandom.[5] But they are also intimately related to the perplexities and questions raised by twentieth-century art and the revolutions that have occured in its development. Indeed, one should note that, contrary to what happens in a large part of European aesthetics, the reflection about art in America, although it has focused on the analysis of problems rather than on some direct or so-called substantial relation to art, has never been totally disconnected from the evolving reality of the artistic field. Arthur Danto, the best known American philosopher in France, is a good illustration of this dual inspiration and of a real interest for the significant events in the history of twentieth-century art.[6]

This interest in recent artistic developments may not be unrelated to the United States' role in the international artistic scene since World War II. For the time being, however, whether this dual inspiration has now dried up or not, it is clear that it has rejoined the trends of other philosophical fields by giving a new impulse to ontological questions, as clearly demonstrated by the renewed interest in the question of the definition of art.[7] Naturally, this gives rise to many different theses, but the doubts raised by the authors of the "linguistic turn" who chose to give up this type of questioning have been left far behind. The debate mostly concentrates on the nature of aesthetic and/or artistic properties, and it expectedly pits the realists against the antirealists, and the relativists against the antirelativists.

I will not make here a complete account of the debate, still less of its many philosophical implications. I will only sketch its essential outline, in order to show how, in my view, aesthetics remains at the crossroads. By this, I mean it is in a position that is essentially linked to the contemporary situation of art, broadly speaking, and to the patterns and representations historically inscribed in it.

The ontology of art

That one may do without an ontological analysis in the philosophical study of art may sound absurd. Indeed, if there is such a thing that we call "art," then it is perfectly legitimate that one should question this "there is." This questioning may take many different forms. It may turn metaphysical, or engage in the "deconstruction" of metaphysics—Heideggerian or Derridian. It may choose more minimal options, whether one wishes to bear or to bull the market. It may also explore other possibilities, taking into account the modes in which the artworks manifest themselves to us or how we relate to them.

All things being equal, and setting aside all speculations as to the place they have in a general history or representation of Being or beings, one does have to face the fact that objects of a particular nature do exist to which we

ascribe a specific name and status and which do necessarily attract our attention by their particular properties. From that stance, however simple it may be, the question they raise is not different from that raised by the world or by objects in general, with this only restriction that one must discern the various regions concerned, unless one chooses to satisfy oneself with the answer immediately implied by the question "What is there?": "What there is"—i.e. "everything" there is.

The first hypotheses that come to mind are those suggested by conventional philosophical schemes. Either there does exist a particular nature (essence) of these particular objects we call "artworks" and they call for some kind of particular recognition, or what qualifies an artwork as art must be related to some constituting and recognition process that must be identified as such and from which the very concept of art cannot be severed.[8] This debate differs from its equivalent in the philosophy of mathematics only by the nature of the considered objects. It hinges on the confrontation between the realists and the antirealists. The realists sustain that what qualifies art as art does not depend on the modes of recognition applied to it, while the antirealists believe that the properties ascribed to artworks are inconceivable without these modes of recognition, to which they give a constitutive role.

Naturally, such a schematic description leaves aside many more nuanced, complex, and sometimes ambiguous options. I will mention but a few, of various natures. Beardsley, who is somewhat marginal in this debate since he investigates the nature of the aesthetic experience, notes in the beginning of his magnum opus, *Aesthetics*, that there would be no art nor artwork should we be unable to speak of them.[9] The idea sounds important and I will deal with it further down, but what does it mean in the debate we are now considering? Should one perceive it as a form of what today is called antirealism? Strangely enough, it does not prevent Beardsley from raising the question of criteria for the evaluation of artworks, exactly as if these criteria were dependent on some of their properties.[10] Inversely, how should we understand this thesis which leads Danto to consider that an interpretation is the very principle that distinguishes art from non-art?[11] Such a distinction certainly has some ontological meaning, and subordinating it to properties sustains some form of ontological realism. However, how can we be expected to speak of interpretation without supposing some subject(s) likely to be engaged in the process of interpreting? These two positions are so closely interrelated, that perhaps it is not so easy to be a pure realist or antirealist, or even to give some powerful meaning to this disjunction.

Speaking of artworks, this question calls for a precise scrutiny of the sort of properties that are likely to justify either position—and why not a third one usually excluded from this type of debate? We apparently have no other means to characterize a thing than by indicating what are its specific and differential properties, whatever name we give them. In the case of art, these properties or attributes call for a double specification: they must be such

that they qualify the thing as art, as opposed to what is not art; they must also allow to distinguish artworks from other artworks in terms of their uniqueness as well as in terms of their respective value. In those three cases, it is generally allowed that these properties must be of some artistic nature—although aesthetic properties sensu stricto may also be taken into consideration.[12] Indeed, those properties that allow one to distinguish between two artworks could not be thus applied—and hence be accepted as relevant—should they be similar to those that allow one to distinguish between two ordinary objects, for they would compel us to dissociate what makes the artworks unique and what gives them value.

It goes without saying that such conditions belong to our understanding of the concept of art—one could almost say, to its "grammar." As such, they do not make it possible for us to decide on the reality of the properties considered or, more precisely, on their ontology. However, these two aspects of the question are intially interrelated, for their nature—to know whether artistic, and not only aesthetic, properties do exist—bears upon the very possibility of an ontology of artworks.

On what conditions could they be ascribed some kind of intrinsic objective reality? The usual expedient argument in favor of artistic properties puts forward that we distinguish between what is art and what is not—as we commonly do—by grounding our distinction on specific attributes, or else such a distinction would be impossible and the road would thus be paved for a form of aesthetic relativism that one would likely wish to limit to the field of evaluative judgments.[13]

The problem with this apparently natural hypothesis is two- and perhaps threefold. First, the properties one usually thinks of do not necessarily offer the expected satisfactory guarantee. Second, should this however be the case, one could not assert their (objective and intrinsic) reality otherwise than by begging the question ("it has to be so"). Third, one may wonder whether these properties' status is not exaggeratedly related to some ontological presupposition that gives priority to "objects," to such an extent that the questions raised might radically differ should we decide to give it up. I will dwell on theses three successive points for a moment.

The difficulties and ambiguities that characterize the first point have to do with the fact that the properties likely enter into a suitably functional definition must be of an "artistic" nature—i.e. they must be different from those that help us determine how an object or a feature belongs to a style or a genre: the novel or the epic in the field of literature, painting or drawing, Impressionism or fauvism, baroque or Romantic music, etc. Such classificatory distinctions are the objects of possibly polemical descriptions, but no one doubts the possibility of these properties and descriptions. Criticism and history are largely dependent upon them, and the descriptions and categories they use include value judgments that hark back to some cultural context, but the propositions they make are likely to be explained in such a way that discussion is possible—as long as they use a common form of

language that is open to justification.[14] But when, one may ask, does a property cease to be generic—not differing from those that usually allow us to classify objects—to become truly artistic, if one means by this that it may qualify an object as art without being assimilable to a mere conventional criterion? Naturally, conventions as such do assume this double function—identification and recognition—, but as such they naturally fail to ground as real the properties they help us identify.[15] In this sense, they offer no guarantee. I will not dwell upon the discontinuities of the "history of art" that may confirm our doubts. The only way to overcome them—or to turn them around—may consist in trying to close the "pale of history" as Arthur Danto has been doing for over two decades. But this possible rescue of realist artistic properties is inevitably turned upside down in the end, since, when history ends and art "after the end of art" begins, the recapitulative and intertextual dimensions of the postmodern thus made possible inevitably transform what the realist stance attributed to art per se into mere conventions.[16]

Needless to say, that those attempts at restoring the pertinence of intention—be it an "art intention," as suggested by Genette—change absolutely nothing, since one may not invoke any form of intention without resorting to criteria that must be external by definition.[17]

So, how could one ascertain the "reality" of the postulated properties otherwise than through the forms and conditions of their recognition? Realism as to aesthetic properties—be it metaphysical or moderate—is like all realism: it begs the question and ascribes a decisive role to the imperative sentence: "It has to be so." This imperative plays a part that the history of metaphysics has made respectable—if only because it has often been serviceable—but it really makes clear how are reasoning is often based on injunctions whose necessity, at best, is based on what is suggested to us by grammar. It may be, indeed, that a large fraction of conceptions and conceptual certainties are principally grounded in grammar, which in some cases serves as a justification. The grammar of the word "art," indeed, opens upon a number of implications belonging to our language. But it also opens upon a whole set of specific illusions, of which the realism of aesthetic properties may be a sample. Are these illusions necessary? At this point, one must examine the question of the object.[18]

A short survey of the ontological approaches of artworks reveals how much they rely on the object in relation with the question of identity. The ontology of artworks essentially is an ontology of the object (of presence, a Heideggerian would say), and this obviously is the reason why the question of properties has such an important part to play in it. Naturally, this same question may be applied to events and processes, but in order for these events and processes to become artworks or art, it is necessary that they should at one point fit into some object category, for under this condition only may the identity of the artwork be preserved. Music is a case in point. A work's performance (language does predetermine our meaning ...) may

be considered as an event or process some of whose properties as a musical language or emotions conveyed may be described. But, as in all allographic art, we here have only an occurrence of the work, so that these describable properties must ultimately somehow, at least for some of them, refer to some underlying reality that can not be limited to the sole performance, or else it would not even be identifiable or classifiable as such. The object we call the work—whether one sees it as a type, an inscription, or whatever—seems to be the condition under which the possibility of art exists. In this sense, the problem of the identity of the artwork is indeed subsumed in the postulate of a particular category of objects. Most artforms and artworks we are familiar with justify this reduction which, no doubt, belongs to the grammar of the word "art."

There remains one difficulty, however—clearly raised in the discussion of Goodman's theses on music—when one focuses on non-written, traditional or improvised musics, or more generally on all these musics whose meaning and identity are strictly limited to one occurrence or, to be more precise, to one performance as such.[19] The questions of the identity and of the object are then put in a radically different way and the natural postulations of the ontologies of art become highly contestable. I will now try to develop this point and to extend its implications beyond the limited realm of these specific types of music.

Being or doing

Allographic works in general are interesting for they do not concentrate our attention on the object but on the performance.[20] Naturally, as is suggested by the case of music, the very fact that one may associate the work to a number of occurrences or performances presupposes that the work has some distinct status. The theses on identity, whether they resort to an inscription or to a type, presuppose that one may relate the performances to something that makes the identification possible and whose properties must also be identifiable.[21] In this sense, the allographic work, like autographic works, must assume some condition of subsistance that guarantees the possibility of its existence. This condition may take different forms, but it is grounded on some more essential stability that allows us to speak of the work in the singular.[22]

It is likely that, in this context, the attribution of the work to its author plays a more important role than one would first be ready to believe.[23] One of Goodman's examples best illustrates this. If one admits that an artwork exists as an artwork only when it functions as an artwork, then one may consider that a painting by Rembrandt used to fill in a broken window pane ceases to exist as the artwork it is as soon as it is used to this other end. But then one cannot abstain from thinking that it will again assume its previous status as soon as it is hung back on the walls of the Rijksmuseum. ... However unstable its status may appear, it reveals itself to be resistant, as if

it was incorporated in the work itself as much as in the concept of the artwork.

Significantly, dealing with the question of identity raised by such possible détournements, Goodman finally admits that the Rembrandt used as a window pane does not lose its identity. It ceases to be an artwork because it does not function as such, but its attributive identity is not modified.[24] One is tempted to ask to what extent it may resist modification. How far should one go in the détournement of the object—it is an object, indeed, in this case—for the object to lose all identity (including its identity as an object)? One may answer that the limit is not factual but conceptual. If we needed to think that, under extreme conditions, artworks somehow cease to be identifiable, we would then no longer need to speak of artworks, unless we modified our concept of artworks and redefined all artworks as ephemeral—and this would make sense only if one related the artwork to an author. This last point doubtless is a major condition of the concept of artwork—especially when one considers how the various possible détournements jeopardize an identity which the physical object is in no position to ascertain by its own means.[25]

Another famous example goes in the same direction. In the name of his "right of détournement"—quite comparable to that Duchamp himself brilliantly exerted in his own time—a young artist of Marseilles decided to put Marcel's "Fountain" back to its original use. The trial that ensued clearly foregrounded the importance of property rights (they contribute to the fixation of identity, since they presuppose it) and the crucial role of attribution as regards the constitution of an object as artwork and its integrity—and hence, its identity.[26]

At the same time, all this reveals the contingency of the object's properties. "Fountain" is irrelevant as object, as Duchamp has often repeated. As object, it offers conditions of identification and permanence that are useful, but it is not these properties that give it the status of art.[27]

We have been dealing with autographic works. Is it any different with allographic art? In the case of music one might first be tempted to say that détournements—which are so frequent in this medium—are limited in scope by the prescriptions given by the score, or at least—when there is no such thing as a score—in a set of identifiable features which have a normic effect.[28] In the case of a readymade, the physical object's defining features are not likely to have any relevant normic value. On the contrary, a series of notes or a harmonic suite may have such power.[29] The only acceptable détournements are those that preserve a sufficient number of identity features. They may then be perceived as variations and the value they are given depends upon their difference. To be more precise, it is the distance and the nature of the distance taken with the source work that gives them meaning and value.

The only artworks which seem to share the characteristics of music and of the readymade are those, such as acousmatic music, for which there is no

inscription and whose occurrences have a status comparable to that of a primitive recording's copies. But once more, as in all the cases I have mentioned, reasoning in terms of works that are identifiable in a form or an object probably puts the question wrongly.

The conditions in which a great number of musical works are being produced today may help us understand why. The recording—the printing or digitalization—has become a decisive element of the process. As such, technically, it may seem merely contingent, but such is not the case. First, because the printing acts as a condition of production and of diffusion: a work's conditions of diffusion are part of its process of production. Second—and simultaneously—because this is a true condition of production, since what is being printed (or digitalized) is not an occurrence of the work but the work as such, i.e. the realization at a given instant of a sound event whose identity strictly adheres to what happened at that instant under certain given conditions that may only be preserved through a recording.

The transformation of the works' conditions of production is of great interest. It modifies musical practices as such. The record has played a decisive role in the evolution of jazz music and, more generally, of all improvised musics. The possibility of hearing several times the same musical sequences has refashioned learning processes by refocussing them on hearing the music rather than reading a score. The place given to sound is another important element in those new musical practices that benefit from the new techniques of the record and CD. However, the most important consequence of all this is a new perception of "reproductibility" and of the meaning one should give to the conditions in which a work is being produced.[30] I will now dwell upon this point, for it may help us understand why the ontological approaches are so limited in scope.

Certainly, a record is an object. What qualifies it functionally, and may allow us to ascribe it some value, is contained in the fact that it is the recording of a musical event that is not necessarily just another performance—by which I mean one occurrence of a work which may have many occurrences. In such a case, in which the work resides within a unique event, the recording is not a contingent element anymore. Contrary to what happens with the recordings of written works, the take here gives the condition of reproducibility without which the work would only exist in a given space and time. The record, here, is what gives the work its identity, and this identity cannot be dissociated from the record.[31] The technical possibility guarantees the work's aesthetic existence, and they cannot be dissociated.

One may formulate this differently, however. Our representation of what a work should be makes it look much like an object and obfuscates a very important aspect that is more obvious in musical works. A recording session is an event or a performance of which a record keeps a trace. Not only can the work not be dissociated from it, but it cannot be dissociated from the conditions of the session—this includes the characteristics of amplification, the definition of the sound, whether there is an audience or not, the envir-

onment, whether and how the recording was prepared or rehearsed, and all the variable conditions of the moment. In other words, to use one of Goodman's favorite words, one should include into the definition of a work's production all the modes of its activation.[32] But one should be aware that such a formulation still distinguishes the activation from the work. In the case of a works as performance, the work and the activation are but one.[33]

One may object that these remarks concern but one very specific type of art in the limited field of music. I believe such is not the case. As far as music is concerned, it would be an error to believe that a work's performances are but mere occurrences or instantiations of it. This would be contestable even for written music, and it is contrary to the practices of music lovers who may be attracted by such or such composer but may also be passionately devoted to such or such interpretation. The quest for a satisfactory interpretation often takes the appearance of a quest for "authenticity," but this illusion is self-contradictory since it values a mode of attraction which, as far as music is concerned, is performance-centered.[34] Now, of course, while we speak of performance, written works exist in an inscription that defines its rules and limits. But perhaps one should see this as a mere historical contingency that has been hypostatized by our language as well as by our institutional, legal and economic frameworks.[35]

Furthermore, what we have glimpsed concerning musical works is not irrelevant to visual artworks. Autographic works, which are more easily given object status, are not to be dissociated from the conditions of activation that allow them to function aesthetically. The reification or fetishization of which they are the object is in the line of an illusion generally held to be a constitutive element of the judgment of taste, but this illusion obstructs our understanding of works that function contextually and interactively. Anyhow, if no object may play this part of the artwork alone, if the illusion that it is possible all the same is based exclusively on reasons and conditions limited to certain institutional cultural and economic conditions, and if this culturally determined illusion cannot pretend to have a final say about the art of all eras and cultures, then one must admit the obvious and give up once and for all the ontology of the object that governs our analyses and valuations.

Aesthetics without ontology

If I were to sum up my reflections and the reasons why, in my mind, we should reject all ontological approaches to art, I would like to do so by adapting Putnam's phrase I used at the start of this chapter: we need an aesthetics without ontology.[36] Naturally, all depends on what one tries to defend under the banner of ontology. I have tried to show that a philosophical or critical approach to artworks should devote some attention to the conditions under which they function. This Goodmanian notion is rooted in the idea that the only possible aesthetics is an aesthetics of usages and that

pragmatic conditions should always prevail over other conditions.[37] As Wittgenstein suggested in another context, it is in the nature of philosophy that it fall in the trap of images that create confusion and perplexities. For all things pertaining to art, the object is such a powerful image that springs from our grammar—by which I mean our language and all that is suggested by our judgments.[38] Furthermore, this powerful image is in tune with our familiar tendency to reify, with the needs and preferences of the economy of art, not to speak of our economy of desires, which both spring from and return to the global market. But this image is not the truer for all that. It is directly contested by a great variety of contemporary artistic modes I have not analyzed here, ranging from Duchampian readymades to land art and new forms of music. Finally, this powerful image does stand when the philosophical analysis of art takes into account the role of activation and of contextual and interactive conditions under which artworks actually function.

This is the reason why we should include the works' operating modes in our view of artworks or in the very notion of the work of art—but do we really need to seek a definition? And naturally, we should first take into consideration the necessarily variable conditions under which they operate. Concentrating our attention on this aspect would not necessarily exclude all ontology, but it would considerably alter its meaning and reach. One important aspect would have to do with the question whether it is useful to reason in terms of properties. I have already expressed my doubts about this. I would add that the only acceptable properties, in my perspective, are those that remain describable in a given context of action and understanding, somewhat like what happens in Wittgenstein's language games. In other words, the description should focus on those rules and criteria that are immanent in the game, but also, and in a comparable measure, on the implied situation.

One is often mistaken in situations of linguistic communication when one concentrates exclusively on the words. It is the usages and the pragmatic conditions they determine that make the whole system work meaningfully. So it goes with art. The Being is always one with a Doing beyond which it is useless to cast one's net. In this matter also there comes a moment when "my spade is turned."[39] One should not exclude the possibility of a humble ontology: art and artworks have their own mode of existence, although they thus interact with conditions far in excess of their restricted field of definition. In the perspective of such an appreciation, however, questions of aesthetic properties' realism or irrealism, transcendence or immanence, are utterly irrelevant. Ontology, in this perspective, is rather one with anthropology.

Translated by Bertrand Rougé

Notes

1 H. Putnam, *Ethics Without Ontology* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) 1.

2 W. V. O. Quine, "On What There Is," *Review of Metaphysics*, 1948, in *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper, 1963).
3 Cf. Quine, op. cit.: 14–15.
4 M. Beardsley,*Aesthetics : Problems in the Philosophy of Crticism* (Indianapolis IN: Hackett, 1951). Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art* (1978) can be read as giving up any positivistic prohibition, and opening a way to pragmatist views, contrasting with definitional approaches.
5 W. V. O. Quine "Two Dogmas of Empiricism"; in R. Rorty (ed.) *The Linguistic Turn* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); R. Brandom, *Making it Explicit* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994). This story—in relation to questions belonging to philosophy of language and then to philosophy of mind—runs along two main streams corresponding to analytic and pragmatist philosophy. Contrasting with analytic aesthetics' interest in definition and ontology, pragmatist aesthetics gives priority to *experience* (Cf. R. Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) and *Sous l'interprétation* (Paris: L'Eclat, 1994)).
6 A. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).
7 Cf. J.-P. Cometti (ed.) *Les définitions de l'art* (Brussels: La Lettre Volée, 2004).
8 For such aspects of the question, see Rainer Rochlitz, "Définitions philosophiques et définitions pratiques de l'art," in *Les définitions de l'art*, op. cit.
9 Cf. M. Beardsley, op. cit.: 2nd edn, "post scriptum" of 1981.
10 M. Beardsley, op. cit.
11 A. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, op.cit.
12 Sensu stricto, "aesthetic" properties cannot be relevant. But the very notion of "artistic" properties is not clear, and perhaps it is misleading, for it might be restricted to generic properties, i.e. properties falling into descriptions and conventions. The only other possibility seems to be what Wittgenstein uttered in his *Tractatus* : "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen." In such a case, there is no room for what we call "aesthetics" as a field of philosophy.
13 Relativism of taste is not self-refuting, for the claim itself is not a matter of taste. But subjectivism generates other difficulties and paradoxes in relation with Kant's "claim to universality" involved in any judgment of taste. To give it a meaning, you have to rely on (public) *criteria*—and not on any "private language."
14 As they can be *described* they can be *justified*. This is a (philosophical) presupposition of any valuation. If not, there is no other way than subjectivism and the fallacy of private language.
15 This does not mean that where you have conventions you do not have any "objectivity." But properties that are ascribed to objects on the ground of conventions, and help us to give a referential pole to the discussion cannot either be *the same* or tolerate the *same description*. Even physical and perceptual properties, often taken as irrelevant, from an artistic point of view, may have an artistic meaning under *some conditions*. The same colour, for instance, or the same sound—both *have* a physical status and *do not have* the same value or meaning in two different works. *These* conditions play the main part for distinguishing what is art and what is not art. It is not enough to conceive art in the light of thought or interpretation.
16 "Postmodernity"—i.e. the transformation of properties and styles into conventions able to be used without any precondition—exemplify such a situation. The Hegelian concept of *Geist* only conceals the very nature of this conviction: "Anything real is rational, anything rational us real." That is the magic way for solving the question of "aesthetic properties."
17 Cf. G. Genette, "Du texte à l'oeuvre," in *Questions IV* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1999). Speaking of "intention d'art" rather than of "intention artistique" does not supply any solution. It begs the question and looks like a tautology. It makes no difference.

18 R. Wollheim's *Art and its Objects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) helps to understand what aporia we have to face when thinking in terms of objects.
19 One can think of course of traditional music without any score, but overall of what happened with new means of recording, i.e. new modes of production and diffusion—on the ground of the same material: recording is the very condition under which the work enters into the public space, and by which it exists.
20 See D. Davies, *Art as Performance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) and the discussion around his arguments in *Philosophiques*, 32.1, "Disputatio."
21 Such a possibility depends on several properties shared by any performance. But it does not hold in contextual, random or improvised musics.
22 This fact contributes to the conception of work as an object.
23 In present conditions, the connection of any work with a name plays an important role in recognizing the work as art, and in giving it a place on the market.
24 Cf. N. Goodman, "Art in action," in *Of Mind and Other Matters*, op. cit.
25 As in any case where the object is "indifferent" (Duchamp) or "indiscernable" (Danto).
26 Cf. Nathalie Heinich, *L'art contemporain exposé aux rejets*, Nîmes: J. Chambon, 1998, V, "Pinoncelli pisse à Nîmes."
27 What would allow us to take it as an object—of some kind : properties of form, color, material, and so on—is on the contrary what excludes it from the world of art. One would have to make a special case for aesthetic properties, but this is exactly what Duchamp refused.
28 The meaning and value of such détournements depends on aspects and determinations belonging to the first work. A lot of cases have to be considered: irony, humor, reference, quotation, and so on, but you have first to recognize to *what* such or such aspect refers—and so you are able to *hear as*. One question is whether the same holds for "readymades". What holds for Duchamp's *In Advance of a Broken Arm*—for instance—doesn't seem so different. In thinking it in terms of "indiscernibility," you let in on the side what appears as a lateral reference and its ironic or critical meaning.
29 They hold as *prescriptions*.
30 See the interesting remarks of Vincent Cotro and of Christophe Kihm in "Révolutions industrielles de la musique," *Cahiers de médiologie/IRCAM* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).
31 Recording played a major part in jazz and its development, especially regarding improvisation. For instance, Charlie Parker paid a lot of attention to Lester Young's own records. For several important reasons, a score (including a retranscription) could not help in this way; what can be heard in this way could be compared with Kant's *exemplarity* of any work of art.
32 It's difficult not to think of Benjamin's "aura" and "technical reproductibility." But—I think—new means of reproduction need new ways of thinking *authenticity* (the question of *here* and *now*).
33 Any record is of course an object, and can be related as such to magical aspects or functions.
34 N. Goodman, "Art in Action," in *Of Mind and Other Matters* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984) 146–74.
35 See the discussion with D. Davies, in *Philosophiques*, op. cit.
36 H. Putnam, *Ethics Without Ontology*, op. cit.
37 In such a way that it involves its very *plurality*. As for interpretation, there is here no room for *exclusivity* nor *authenticity*.
38 Cf. *Art, modes d'emploi*, op. cit., and my "Activating Art," *Journal of Aesthetices and Art Criticism* (winter 2000).
39 L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) section 217c.