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Art and Hyperreality

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HYPERREALITY & ART

A RECONSIDERATION OF THE NOTION OF ART

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by

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ABSTRACT

My thesis pertains to philosophy of art. Its main purpose is a reconsideration of the notion of art as a response to claims stating the end of art, as in the case of the writings on hyperreality, stating that the transformation of reality, has resulted in a world that is permeated with a virtual reality that replaces traditional schemas for ways of living in the world, that valued the originality of art.

In the setting up of the subject, I will briefly mention descriptions of both reality and hyperreality, and the developments in art throughout the modern, and post modern periods, up to the contemporary period. The inclusion of chapters on reality for the intention of providing a contrast or background to emphasize the importance of art as one of its modulators, then to bring the theme down to an everydayness level. Therefore my work is not that of a metaphysical approach, but rather on aesthetics and, more specifically, philosophy of art, a critical reflection on culture, and art, in an alternative practical theorizing approach.

As a vehicle for articulating my position and conclusions, I follow the work of Maria Rodriguez Magda on philosophy of transmodernity, and the critical philosophy of art of Arthur Danto.

My conclusions present a perspective on the current state of art, based on the brief historical conceptual outline that I laid out, and how that entails that humans need to develop a practical purpose for art that emerges from one's own personal philosophy of art. In my case, as an artist, this means that I will apply my work in theory to my own practical, creative endeavors.

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INTRODUCTION

In my application for admission to the Master's degree in Philosophy, I stated my intention to continue advancing my studies in aesthetics. In honoring that commitment, with my MA Thesis I focused on the understanding of the implications of aesthetics in life, mainly as it refers to Art. As the title implies: Art & Hyperreality - Reconsidering the Notion of Art , my thesis is a review of art, as it has by now been affected and influenced by virtual technologies, followed by an exploration of the possibility of discovering whether any true nature of art still exists. Because the avant-garde nature of this theme, its philosophy is very complex, and difficult; therefore, my work can only be considered an initiate's attempt at its elucidation.

My preparations for this thesis included a study of Futurology that included recent developments such as Transhumanism and Transmodernity, this led me to read Critical Theory. By taking up these concerns, I then was able to reconsider its liberating and healing philosophy that is so essential to Critical Theory. These readings inspired in me ideas intended to be applied in the formulation of my thesis. Specifically, I found myself drawn to the work of Jean Baudrillard, who, among other thinkers, exposes the conditioning of our minds and lives through the fabrications of cyber technologies, and into a hyper-reality. His type of philosophy describes the effects of technology in our lives and its possible detrimental outcomes.

Baudrillard is one of the foremost contemporary critics of society and culture who is often seen as the guru of French postmodern theory. He is a prolific author who has written over twenty books, and whose reflections on art and aesthetics are an important, if not central, aspect of his work. Although his writings exhibit many twists, turns, and surprising developments as he

moved from synthesizing Marxism and semiotics to a prototypical postmodern theory. Interest in art remained a constant of his theoretical investigations and literary experiments.

By immersing myself in the study and deduction of his critical work, I hope to contribute to a revised understanding of art. Until now I have had an a priori, intuitive approach regarding aesthetics and true art as one important way that we as humans can help ourselves become liberated from the socio-political-economical traps that we have devised for us. Now with this thesis, I have revised my position, especially in regards to the kind of art that we need to have in these days of virtual technology.

An important part of this work has been my discovery of many different theoretical works including the ones that elaborate on the concepts of: Simulacra, Integral Reality, Semiotics, Exchange value, Cyberspace, Biopower, and others, even some Pataphysics. On one hand, I consider these readings to be some of the most significant analyses of the present condition of human life, and how it is evolving in our present days and for our future. On the other hand, they have been revelatory on a personal level, in the sense that they are conducive to the answer of the question that I have been asking myself after many years of study, that is, what do all these philosophies, competing theories, and discussions have to do with to just a regular mundane individual like me? With this thesis, I believe I have raised more questions than answers but have come to the conclusion that it is more important than ever before to direct myself to personally creating art.

Through the readings that I have been engaged with, my research has thematically focused on the thought, that we are in the age of simulation, an age of artificial signification, constructed through the hype in media, computer programing, and fabricated environments, a phony

transcendence. For me this is problematic and it needs further investigation. This thesis will also provide a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of this age of simulation.

I believe the main purpose in any philosophical study is self-knowledge, and if any adjacent benefit can be distilled from the resulting product it can also be important , but indeed this is beyond and above any power that the author can have. Therefore, the intentionality and style of my thesis can only be existentialist, personal, practical.

Many of our invented worlds can be used to enhance fantasy. But we can also mistake fantasy for reality, and end up playing a role in other people's fictions. Virtual realities are a place where our narcissism meets metaphysics, a place where we design fictional worlds modeled after ours. But, as we do so, we begin to see that the boundary between the worlds of fact and of fiction is actually breaking down.

We have also a culture of deception, in how we are constantly confusing simulations for what they imitate. We do so by accident and because a great many people profit by tricking the public. Some of our governing elites now largely rely on deceptive appearances to maintain their wealth and power. By bringing fantasy to life in popular culture, we increasingly move from one kind of virtual reality to another. Here, instead of reading about characters in stories, we are starting to become the characters. What we do in these invented worlds is what we also do vicariously in more traditional forms of fiction; we act out the fantasies, fears and desires that are essential to our personalities, but with a more exciting setting and plot that enhances the experience. Through an automated virtual reality, we fabricate environments that are full, not only of simulations but also of intelligent technologies and forms of automation that wait on us and give us control over our surroundings. This is the seduction, of the simulacra. Much of the environ-

ment of the near future will be made up of intelligent technologies and illusion. It is the deconstruction of reality, which also calls for the deconstruction of the self.

Since the approach of my thesis is philosophical with an emphasis on art, I did not think it was pertinent to include elements of spirituality, theology, or anything mystic. I have also avoided advocating any political position. And in addition, I also suppressed any hint of revolutionary fervor. My thesis should be a sober one. I should also add that the conceptualizations in the study of hyperreality are historically located work from the discipline of Semiotics, which is probably one of the most recent advances in philosophy in general. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, their interchanges, and values and has foundations in the philosophical study of language. For me this means, finding language as a dynamic energy-creating reality, and hyperreality, of course. My overall concern here is to simply provide a contribution towards understanding this strong and strange phenomena called hyperreality, and its influence and consequences in art, and in our lives. I am also hereby declaring that most of this work is the result of extensive research; therefore an important part of its content is more descriptive than prescriptive.

The two chapters on reality and hyperreality in this study provide a preliminary platform for the remainder of my thesis where the focus is on art. For reasons of limitations of time, space and knowledge, I am not including, other forms of artistic creation, such as music, dance, cinema, or literature. Rather I solely concentrate in the area of the visual arts, as exemplary of what happens to art during the transition from the modern to the postmodern, and then within the postmodern, and the influence and effects of the hyperreal on contemporary art.

CHAPTER I

A BREVIARY ON REALITY

A definition of Reality in the etymology dictionary finds the origin of the word in the 1540s, as the quality of being real, from French *réalité* and directly Medieval Latin *realitatem*, and from Late Latin *realis,* meaning, real existence, or all that is real is from 1640s; that of the real state (of something) is from 1680s. Also meaning, sincerity. The origin of the word can also be found in *re* which has to do with *res* in Latin meaning 'thing' and the suffix -*al* means 'kind of' or 'having the form of' and the suffix -ity meaning 'a state or condition'. Implying that reality means the state of kind of things, as they actually exists (Online Etymology Dictionary).

I would say that reality is often contrasted with what is imaginary, delusional, dreamy, what is false, what is fictional, or what is abstract. At the same time, what is abstract plays a role both in everyday life and in academic research. For instance, causality, virtue, life, and distributive justice are abstract concepts that can be difficult to define, but they are only rarely equalled with pure delusions. A common colloquial usage would have reality mean "perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward reality," as in "my reality is not your reality." This is often used just as a colloquialism indicating that the parties to a conversation agree, or should agree, not to quibble over deeply different conceptions of what is real.

But, what is real? This has been one of the key questions in the history of philosophy since its beginning in antiquity. Let us consider some developments in its conceptualization in science and philosophy. Philosophers, and other ancient and modern thinkers, have made a distinction between thought corresponding to reality, coherent abstractions (thoughts of things that are imaginable but not real), and which cannot even be rationally thought. By contrast, existence

is often restricted solely to that which has physical existence or has a direct basis in it in the way that thoughts do in the brain.

This chapter offer a brief ontological catalogue as an attempt to list the fundamental constituents of reality, I've found in my readings where, both the existence and reality of abstractions is in dispute: one extreme position regards them as mere words, another position regards them as higher truths than less abstract concepts. Certain ideas from physics, philosophy, sociology, literary criticism, and other fields shape various theories of reality. One such belief is that there simply and literally is no reality beyond the perceptions or beliefs we each have about reality. Such attitudes are summarized in the popular statement, "Perception is reality" or "Life is how you perceive reality" or "reality is what you can get away with", and they indicate anti-realism - that is, the view that there is no objective reality, whether acknowledged explicitly or not.

Philosophy addresses two different aspects of the topic of reality: the nature of reality itself, and the relationship between the mind (as well as language and culture) and reality. On one hand, ontology is the study of being, and the central topic of the field is couched, variously, in terms of being, existence, what is, and reality. The task in ontology is to describe the most general categories of reality and how they are interrelated. If a philosopher wanted to proffer a positive definition of the concept of reality, it would be done under this heading. Some philosophers draw a distinction between reality and existence. In fact, many philosophers today tend to avoid the term "real" and "reality" in discussing ontological issues. But for those who would treat "is real" the same way they treat "exists", one of the leading questions of analytic philosophy has been whether existence (or reality) is a property of objects. It has been widely held by analytic philosophers that it is not a property at all, though this view has lost some ground in recent dec-

ades. On the other hand, particularly in discussions of objectivity, philosophical discussions of "reality" often concern the ways in which reality is, or is not, in some way dependent upon (or, to use fashionable jargon, "constructed" out of) mental and cultural factors such as perceptions, beliefs, and other mental states, as well as cultural artifacts, such as religions and political movements, on up to the vague notion of a common cultural world view (Sampson 1).

The view that there is a reality independent of any beliefs, perceptions, etc., is called realism. More specifically, philosophers are given to speaking about "realism about" this and that, such as realism about universals or realism about the external world. Generally, where one can identify any class of object, the existence or essential characteristics of which is said not to depend on perceptions, beliefs, language, or any other human artifact, one can speak of "realism about" that object.

Anti-realism is the latest in a long series of terms for views opposed to realism. Perhaps the first was idealism, so called because reality was said to be in the mind, or a product of our ideas. The view, propounded by the Irish empiricist George Berkeley, states that the objects of perception are actually ideas in the mind. In this view, one might be tempted to say that reality is a mental construct; this is not quite accurate, however, since in Berkeley's view perceptual ideas are created and coordinated by God (Sampson 1). Finally, anti-realism became a term for any view that holds that the existence of some object depends upon the mind or cultural artifacts. The view that the so-called external world is really merely a social, or cultural, artifact, called social constructivism is one variety of anti-realism.

A correspondence theory of knowledge about what exists claims that "true" knowledge of reality represents accurate correspondence of statements about images of reality with the actual reality that the statements or images are attempting to represent. For example, the scientific

method can verify that a statement is true based on the observable evidence that a thing exists. Many humans can point to the Rocky Mountains and say that this mountain range exists, and continues to exist even if no one is observing it or making statements about it (Williams 71).

The nature of being is a recurring topic in philosophy. For instance, Parmenides taught that reality was a single unchanging Being, whereas Heraclitus wrote that all things flow. The 20th century philosopher Heidegger thought previous philosophers have lost sight the question of Being (qua Being) in favor of the questions of beings (existing things), so that a return to the Parmenidean approach was needed.

The question of whether or not existence is predicate has been discussed since the Early Modern period, not least in relation to the ontological argument for the existence of God. Existence, that something is, has been contrasted with essence, the question of what something is. Since existence without essence seems blank, it associated with nothingness by philosophers such as Hegel.

The question of direct or naive realism, as opposed to indirect or representational realism, arises in the philosophy of perception and of mind out of the debate over the nature of conscious experience the epistemological question of whether the world we see around us is the real world itself or merely an internal perceptual copy of that world generated by neural processes in our brain. Naive realism is known as direct realism when developed to counter indirect or representative realism, also known as epistemological dualism, the philosophical position that our conscious experience is not of the real world itself but of an internal representation, a miniature virtual-reality replica of the world (Scribd 1).

The status of abstract entities, particularly numbers, is a topic of discussion in mathematics. In the philosophy of mathematics, the best known form of realism about numbers is Platonic

realism, which grants them an abstract, immaterial existence. Other forms of realism identify mathematics with the concrete physical universe.

Anti-realist stances include formalism and fictionalism. Some approaches are selectively realistic about some mathematical objects but not others. Finitism rejects infinite quantities. Utra-finitism accepts finite quantities up to a certain amount. Constructivism and intuitionism are realistic about objects that can be explicitly constructed, but reject the use of the principle of the excluded middle to prove existence by *reductio ad absurdum* (Scribd 2).

The traditional debate has focused on whether an abstract (immaterial, intelligible) realm of numbers has existed in addition to the physical (sensible, concrete) world. A recent development is the mathematical universe hypothesis, the theory that only a mathematical world exists, with the finite, physical world being an illusion within it.

An extreme form of realism about mathematics is the mathematical multiverse hypothesis advanced by Max Tegmark. Tegmark's sole postulate is: All structures that exist mathematically also exist physically. That is, in the sense that in those worlds complex enough to contain self-aware substructures they will subjectively perceive themselves as existing in a physically 'real' world. The hypothesis suggests that worlds corresponding to different sets of initial conditions, physical constants, or altogether different equations should be considered real. The theory can be considered a form of Platonism in that it posits the existence of mathematical entities, but can also be considered a mathematical monism in that it denies that anything exists except mathematical objects" (Sciforums 2).

Philosophy of space and time is, a traditional realist position in ontology is that time and space have existence apart from the human mind. Idealists deny or doubt the existence of objects independent of the mind. Some anti-realists whose ontological position is that objects out-

side the mind do exist, nevertheless doubt the independent existence of time and space.(Exactspent 1).

Kant, described time as an a priori notion that, together with other a priori notions such as space, allows us to comprehend sense experience. He denies that either space or time are substance, entities in themselves, or learned by experience. He also holds rather that both are elements of a systematic framework we use to structure our experience. Spatial measurements areused to quantify how far apart objects are, and temporal measurements are used to quantitatively compare the interval between (or duration of) events. Although space and time are held to be transcendentally ideal in this sense, they are also empirically real, i.e. not mere illusions (Plato.Stanford 1).

As well as differing about the reality of time as a whole, metaphysical theories of time can differ in their ascriptions of reality to the past, present and future separately.

Modal realism is the view, that all possible worlds are as real as the actual world. In short: the actual world is regarded as merely one among an infinite set of logically possible worlds, some "nearer" to the actual world and some more remote. Other theorists may use the Possible World framework to express and explore problems without committing to it ontologically. Possible Worlds Theory is related to alethic logic: a proposition is necessary if it is true in all possible worlds, and possible if it is true in at least one. The many world interpretation of quantum mechanics is a similar idea in science (Plato.Stanford 2).

Pertaining to Theories of Everything and philosophy, the philosophical implications of a physical TOE are frequently debated. For example, if philosophical physicalism is true, a physical TOE will coincide with a philosophical theory of everything. Plato and Aristotle could be said to be early examples of comprehensive systems. In the early modern period (17th and 18th

centuries), the system-building scope of philosophy is often linked to the rationalist method of philosophy, that is, the technique of deducing the nature of the world by pure a priori reason. Examples from the early modern period include the Leibniz's Monadology, Descartes Dualism, Spinoza's Monism, Hegel's Absolute idealism, and Whitehead's process philosophy were later systems. Other philosophers do not believe its techniques can aim so high. Some scientists think a more mathematical approach than philosophy is needed for a TOE, for instance Stephen Hawking wrote in A Brief History of Time that even if we had a TOE, it would necessarily be a set of equations (David Edwards 1).

Scientific realism is, at the most general level, the view that the world described by science is the real world as it is independent of what we might take it to be. Within the philosophy of science, it is often framed as an answer to the question, of how is the success of science to be explained? The debate over what the success of science involves centers primarily on the status of entities that are not directly observable discussed by scientific theories. Generally, those who are scientific realists state that one can make reliable claims about these entities (that they have the same ontological status) as directly observable entities, as opposed to instrumentalism.

The Multiverse is the hypothetical set of multiple possible universes (including the historical universe we consistently experience) that together comprise everything that exists: the entirety of space, time, matter, and energy, and as well as the physical laws and constants that describe them. The term was coined in 1895 by the American philosopher and psychologist William James, In the many-world interpretation (MWI), one of the mainstream interpretations of quantum mechanics, is that there are an infinite number of universes and every possible quantum outcome occurs in at least one universe (Princeton 1). The structure of the multiverse, the nature of each universe within it and the relationship between the various constituent universes, depend

on the specific multiverse hypothesis considered. Multiverses have been hypothesized in cosmology, physics, astronomy, religion, philosophy, transpersonal psychology, and fiction. particularly in science fiction and fantasy. In these contexts, parallel universes are also called "alternative universes", "quantum universes", "interpenetrating dimensions", "parallel dimensions", "parallel worlds", "alternative realities", "alternative timelines", and "dimensional planes," among others (Princeton 2).

On a much broader and more subjective level, private experiences, curiosity, inquiry, and the selectivity involved in personal interpretation of events shapes reality as seen by one and only one individual and what is called phenomenological reality. . While this form of reality might be common to others as well, it could at times also be so unique to oneself as to never be experienced or agreed upon by anyone else. Much of the kind of experience deemed spiritual occurs on this level of reality (The Reality Files 2).

Phenomenology is a philosophical method developed in the early years of the twentieth century by Edmund Husserl. The word phenomenology comes from the Greek phainómenon, meaning "that which appears", and lógos, meaning "study". In Husserl's conception, phenomenology is primarily concerned with making the structures of consciousness, and the phenomena which appear in acts of consciousness, objects of systematic reflection and analysis. Such reflection was to take place from a highly modified "first experience" viewpoint, studying phenomena not as they appear to "my" consciousness, but to any consciousness whatsoever. Husserl believed that phenomenology could thus provide a firm basis for all human knowledge, including scientific knowledge, and could establish philosophy as a "rigorous science" (Princeton 3).

CHAPTER 2

HYPERREALITY

Virtual reality is a term that applies to computer-simulated environments that can simulate physical presence in places in the real world, as well as in imaginary worlds. The Virtuality Continuum is a scale ranging between the completely virtual, a virtuality, and the completely real: Reality. The reality-virtuality continuum therefore encompasses all possible variations and compositions of real and virtual objects. It has been described as a concept in new media and computer science, and also it could be considered a matter of anthropology. The area between the two extremes, where both the real and the virtual are mixed, is called, mixed reality. This in turn is said to consist of both augmented reality, where the virtual augments the real, and augmented virtuality, where the real augments the virtual. Cyberspace is the world's computer systems considered as an interconnected whole, can be thought of as a virtual reality (www.Wiki/Reality 4).

The above gave a basis to get a basic understanding of the meaning of hyperreality, which can be aided when taking a look at the roots of the word hyper and reality, where the term hyper is a word-forming element meaning over, above, beyond, exceedingly, to excess, from a Greek etymology giving a sense of over, beyond, overmuch, above measure, super-over. The word hyper is commonly referred to energy and excitement; for instance, for someone's behavior to be more active than normal. Hyper also is a prefix for many words. The word reality refers to the world or the state of things, as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them. So putting both 'hyper' and 'reality' together to form hyperreality, we are indeed blending reality and fiction. Hyperreality refers simply to an image that has been altered from the thing it's supposed to represent or a replica of something that never actually existed.

With the above mentioned, I generally define hyperreality as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are blended together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. Hyperreality can also be thought of as "reality by proxy"; simply put, an individual takes on someone else's version of reality and claims it as his or her own. I could also add that, for example persons who watch soap operas for an extended period of time may develop views of interpersonal relationships (reality) that are skewed by how the writers depict the characters and situations within the show. Individuals may begin to believe that these extreme dramatic relationships are authentic and real, and they may begin to judge social relationships and situations by this heightened lens of reality.

Hyperreality is a term used in semiotics and postmodern philosophy to describe an inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from a simulation of reality, especially in technologically advanced post-modern societies. Hyperreality is seen as a condition in which what is real and what is fiction are seamlessly blended together so that there is no clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins. It allows the commingling of physical reality with virtual reality (VR) and human intelligence with artificial intelligence (AI). Individuals may find themselves for different reasons, more in tune or involved with the hyperreal world and less with the physical real world (translation.babylon 1).

Some famous theorists of hyperreality include Jean Baudrillard, Albert Borgmann, Daniel J. Boorstin, Neil Postman, and Umberto Eco, among others. In this thesis, I am just focusing on French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard who researched hyperreality to note how humans were starting to accept simulated versions of reality. His work led him to see that as the line between what is real and what is an altered representation became blurred, and so he questioned if anything was truly real in the age of mass media.

The postmodern semiotic concept of hyperreality was coined by Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*., where he defines "hyperreality" as "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality ", it is a representation, a sign, without an original referent, he also believes hyperreality goes further than confusing or blending the 'real' with the symbol which represents it; it involves creating a symbol or set of signifiers which actually represents something that does not actually exist, like Santa Claus. He also suggests that the world we live in has been replaced by a copy world, where we seek simulated stimuli and nothing more. Baudrillard borrows, from Jorge Luis Borges' "On Exactitude in Science", the example of a society whose cartographers create a map so detailed that it covers the very things it was designed to represent. When the empire declines, the map fades into the landscape and there is neither the representation nor the real remaining – just the hyperreal (wiki/hyperreality 1).

Hyperreality is closely related to the concept of the simulacrum: a copy or image without reference to an original. In postmodernism, hyperreality is the result of the technological mediation of experience, where what passes for reality is a network of images and signs without an external referent, such that what is represented is representation itself. In Symbolic Exchange and Death, Baudrillard uses concepts of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real to develop this concept while attacking orthodoxies of the political Left, beginning with the assumed reality of power, production, desire, society, and political legitimacy. The author argues that all of these realities have become simulations, that is, signs without any referent, because the real and the imaginary have been absorbed into the symbolic.

Baudrillard presents hyperreality as the terminal stage of simulation, where a sign or image has no relation to any reality whatsoever, but is "its own pure simulacrum". The real, he says, has become an operational effect of symbolic processes, just as images are technologically

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generated and coded before we actually perceive them. This means technological mediation has usurped the productive role of the Kantian subject, the locus of an original synthesis of concepts and intuitions, as well as the Marxist worker, the producer of capital though labor, and the Freudian unconscious, the mechanism of repression and desire. From now on, says Baudrillard, signs are exchanged against each other rather than against the real. So production now means signs producing other signs. The system of symbolic exchange is therefore no longer real but "hyperreal." Where the real is "that of which it is possible to provide an equivalent reproduction," the hyperreal, says Baudrillard, is "that which is always already reproduced". The hyperreal is a system of simulation simulating itself (plato.stanford 6).

Italian author Umberto Eco explores the notion of hyperreality further by suggesting that the action of hyperreality is to desire reality and in the attempt to achieve that desire, to fabricate a false reality that is to be consumed as real. Linked to contemporary western culture Umberto Eco and post-structuralists would argue, that current culture's fundamental ideals are built on desire and particular sign-systems. An early description of the way contemporary culture is now full of re-creations and themed environments was provided by Umberto Eco. In a brilliant essay, Eco saw that we create these realistic fabrications in an effort to come up with something that is better than real, a description that is true of virtually all fiction and culture, which gives us things that are more exciting, more beautiful, more inspiring, more terrifying, and generally more interesting than what we encounter in everyday life. In his description of Disney, Eco also saw that behind the facades lurks a sales pitch. Put these ideas together and you have a succinct characterization of the age, which is forever offering us something that seems better than real in order to sell us something. That makes Umberto Eco one of the forerunners of contemporary thinking on this subject (www.prezi.com 3).

One of the early theorists of simulation Umberto Eco, went on a tour of America to get a firsthand look at the imitations and replicas that were on display in the nation's museums and tourist attractions. The essay that he subsequently wrote describing his trip, bore the odd title *Travels in Hyperreality*, which made it sound more like science fiction than the brilliant work of culture criticism it turned out to be. The essay, which is dated 1975, also had an anomalous quality to it. Looking at it, today, it reads like a strange combination of postmodern philosophy and something out of the Sunday travel section, full of sardonic descriptions and exaggerated denunciations that focus on the cultural shortcomings of America (transparencynow 1).

In my understanding, hyperreality is significant as a paradigm to explain current cultural conditions. For example; consumerism, because of its reliance on sign exchange value (e.g. brand X shows that one is fashionable, car Y indicates one's wealth), could be seen as a contributing factor in the creation of hyperreality or the hyperreal condition. Hyperreality tricks consciousness into detaching from real emotional engagement, instead opting for artificial simulation, and endless reproductions of fundamentally empty appearance. Essentially, fulfillment or happiness is found through simulation and imitation of a transient simulacrum of reality, rather than any interaction with any "real" reality. While hyperreality is not a relatively new concept, its effects are more relevant today than when it was first conceptualized. There are dangers to the use of hyperreality within our culture; individuals may observe and accept hyperreal images as role models, when the images do not necessary represent real physical people. This can result in a desire to strive for an unobtainable ideal, or it may lead to a lack of unimpaired role models. One needs to be cautions against confusing celebrity worship with hero worship, we come dangerously close to depriving ourselves of all real models.

The concepts most fundamental to hyperreality is that of simulation and the simulacrum. The two terms are separate entities with relational origin connections to Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality. Simulation is characterized by a blending of 'reality' and representation, where there is no clear indication of where the former stops and the latter begins. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. Simulation no longer takes place in a physical realm; it takes place within a space not categorized by physical limits i.e., within ourselves, technological simulations, etc. The simulacrum is often defined as a copy with no original, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance. It can be argued that a simulacrum is not a copy of the real, but becomes truth in its own right, aka the hyperreal.

Both Umberto Eco and Jean Baudrillard refer to Disneyland as an example of hyperreality. Eco believes that Disneyland with its settings such as Main Street and full sized houses has been created to look "absolutely realistic," taking visitors' imagination to a "fantastic past." This false reality creates an illusion and makes it more desirable for people to buy this reality. Disneyland works in a system that enables visitors to feel that technology and the created atmosphere "can give us more reality than nature can." The fake animals such as alligators and hippopotamuses are all available to people in Disneyland and for everyone to see. The "fake nature" of Disneyland satisfies our imagination and daydream fantasies in real life. Therefore, they seem more admirable and attractive. When entering Disneyland, consumers form into lines to gain access to each attraction. Then they are ordered by people with special uniforms to follow the rules, such as where to stand or where to sit. If the consumer follows each rule correctly, they can enjoy "the real thing" and see things that are not available to them outside of Disneyland's doors.

In his work Simulacra and Simulation, Baudrillard argues the "imaginary world" of Disneyland magnetizes people inside and has been presented as "imaginary" to make people believe that all its surroundings are "real". But he believes that the Los Angeles area is not real; thus it is hyper-real. Disneyland is a set of apparatus, which tries to bring imagination and fiction to what is called "real". This concerns American values and way of life in a sense and "concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle" (transparencynow 2).

The book Simulacra and Simulation, is most known for its discussion of symbols, signs, and how they relate to contemporaneity (simultaneous existences). Baudrillard claims that our current society has replaced all reality and meaning with symbols and signs, and that human experience is of a simulation of reality. Moreover, these simulacra are not merely mediations of reality, nor even deceptive mediations of reality; they are not based in a reality nor do they hide a reality, they simply hide that anything like reality is relevant to our current understanding of our lives. The simulacra that Baudrillard refers to are the significations and symbolism of culture and media that construct perceived reality, the acquired understanding by which our lives and shared existence is and are rendered legible; Baudrillard believed that society has become so saturated with these simulacra and our lives so saturated with the constructs of society that all meaning was being rendered meaningless by being infinitely mutable calling this phenomenon the "precession of simulacra". (transparencynow 3)

Baudrillard theorizes, that the lack of distinctions between reality and simulacra originates in several phenomena: contemporary media including television, film and the internet, which are responsible for blurring the line between products that are needed (in order to live a life) and products for which a need is created by commercial images. Exchange value in which the value of goods is based on money (literally denominated fiat currency) rather than useful-

ness, and moreover usefulness comes to be quantified and defined in monetary terms in order to assist exchange. (prezi 3)

I am in agreement with theorists that argue that more and more people in modern culture exist in a state of hyperreality, often becoming more engaged with the hyperreal world than with the real world. Media images, the Internet, computer games, and virtual worlds are taking people out of the real world more often and for longer periods of time than ever before. As a result, their connection with the real world becomes blurred with the unreal, and it may become more important to take on the symbols than to achieve the reality; some people, for example, may believe that they can be rock stars or celebrities just by acting as if they are.

One can also say that Hyperreality is exploited in advertising for almost everything, using a pseudo-world to enable people to be the characters they wish to be. Advertising sells the public through strong, desirable images, and many consumers buy into the brand's point of view and products. If the consumer wants to be seen as a sex icon, he or she should buy the most expensive jeans as worn or designed by his or her favorite celebrity. Although the clothing itself has limited actual value, they symbolize a state of being that some consumers want. Every time a person enters a large shopping area with a certain theme, he or she may be entering a hyperreal world. Theme parks such as Disneyworld or the casinos in Las Vegas are hyperrealities in which a person can get lost for as long as his or her money lasts. There is no reality in these places, only a construct that is designed to represent reality, allowing the person to exist temporarily in a world outside of what is real.

CHAPTER 3

ART AND HYPERREALITY

Following on what was expressed in the prior chapter, one could say that we are now in the era of postmodern hyperreality, where images are no longer different from reality, but generate our sense of reality by making us think that the stuff inside the frame is the real thing. The very purpose in this situation is to hide the fact that there is no true authentic reality, only the simulation of reality.

In the 1940's Postmodernism was considered to be impossible to define, simply suggesting that it was a modern movement of architecture. Since the theory of Postmodernism was founded, it became considerably popular within the academic system, besides solely being interlinked with literary criticism and architecture It now finds itself overloaded with meaning and connected with social theory, cultural and media studies, visual arts, philosophy and history. That postmodernism is indefinable is a truism. However, it can be described as a set of critical, strategic and rhetorical practices employing concepts such as difference, repetition, the trace, the simulacrum, and hyperreality to destabilize other concepts such as presence, identity, historical progress, epistemic certainty, and meaning.

The term "postmodernism" first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition* by Jean-François Lyotard.

In the interest of providing some sense of the range of the debate surrounding postmodernism, a debate which is central to much current thinking on hypertext, here is a definition provided by James Morley. It appears here as it was posted on the Postmodern Culture electronic conference list. What is postmodernism? Firstly, postmodernism was a movement in architecture that rejected the modernist, avant garde, passion for the new. Modernism is here understood

in art and architecture as the project of rejecting tradition in favor of going 'where no man has gone before' or better: to create forms for no other purpose than novelty. Modernism was an exploration of possibilities and a perpetual search for uniqueness and its cognate--individuality. Modernism's valorization of the new was rejected by architectural postmodernism in the 50's and 60's for conservative reasons. They wanted to maintain elements of modern utility while returning to the reassuring classical forms of the past. The result of this was an ironic *collage* approach to construction that combines several traditional styles into one structure. As *collage,* meaning is found in combinations of already created patterns.

Following this, the modern romantic image of the lone creative artist was abandoned for the playful technician (perhaps computer hacker) who could retrieve and recombine creations from the past--data alone becomes necessary. This synthetic approach has been taken up, in a politically radical way, by the visual, musical, and literary arts where collage is used to startle viewers into reflection upon the meaning of reproduction. Here, pop-art reflects culture (American). Let me give you the example of Californian culture where the person--though ethnically European, African, Asian, or Hispanic, searches for authentic or rooted religious experience by dabbling in a variety of religious traditions. The foundation of authenticity has been overturned as the relativism of collage has set in. We see a pattern in the arts and everyday spiritual life away from universal standards into an atmosphere of multidimensionality and complexity, and most importantly, the dissolving of distinctions. In sum, we could simplistically outline this movement in historical terms: 1. Premodernism: Original meaning is possessed by authority (for example, the Catholic Church). The individual is dominated by tradition. 2. Modernism: The enlightenment-humanist rejection of tradition and authority in favor of reason and natural science. This is founded upon the assumption of the autonomous individual as the sole source of meaning

and truth--the Cartesian cogito. Progress and novelty are valorized within a linear conception of history--a history of a real world that becomes increasingly real or objectified. One could view this as a Protestant mode of consciousness. 3. Postmodernism: A rejection of the sovereign autonomous individual with an emphasis upon anarchic collective, anonymous experience. Collage, diversity, the mystically un-representable, Dionysian passion are the foci of attention. Most importantly we see the dissolution of distinctions, the merging of subject and object, self and other. This is a sarcastic playful parody of western modernity and the "John Wayne" individual and a radical, anarchist rejection of all attempts to define, reify or re-present the human subject (The Electronic Labyrint 1).

It is in the contextual transitional evolvement of modernism and postmodernism that a new state of culture is engendered. In 1975, Eco pondered on a new state of culture; hyperreality, within which the notion of original and copy or replica, cease to exist; or wherein which the common notions of real and fake, which imply a hierarchy between two objects – are no longer valid. Indeed, sometimes, the fake is more "real" than the original, given the specificity of the context in which it may be experienced.

Taking the cue from Eco's conclusions, I could say that, whereas the notion of original and replica no longer can be sustained in our post-industrial society, the notion of art as representation may have to be reconsidered.

With the invention of the Ready-Made, Marcel Duchamp put the notion of artistic intent at the core of the art-making practice. Questioning the very notion of art as object, he may in fact be the first to have enacted this shift into hyperreality. The bottle holder or the urinal, once displaced, may appear more real than when relegated to their purely utilitarian function, in the kitchen or the toilet. Since then, art-making has more often consisted in the staging of various

cultural fragments, and/or in the production of objects that borrowed from mass production, either as process or as objects (or a combination thereof). To produce artworks for an exhibition today, one needs electricians, bricklayers, sign painters, carpenters or engineers, in addition to the registrars and installation crew. The works on view will more often than not be built or staged for the purpose of a specific exhibition and possibly destroyed thereafter, to be rebuilt elsewhere.

The process of art making has hence become much closer to "reality" than when artistic practice was predicated by the mastery of painting, etching, drawing or sculpture. That shift is of course seminal, in understanding how contemporary art differs from more classical counterparts. Indeed, even classical forms (drawing, painting, or sculpture) have been affected by these shifts, if only because choosing to stick to these more canonical ways is in itself a conceptual statement. Meanwhile, reality has become increasingly complex by the advent of multiple virtual extensions. Time and space vary according to new parameters, and the multiplied forms of communication and experience sharing in today's world call for a continued re-thinking of what such words as "now", "then", "here" and "there" may in fact signify. Increasingly, one's daily routine is mediated, and so are human relationships, which can be developed and maintained without people ever meeting in the "real" space. This pre-eminent mediation of experience has progressively re-mapped one's notion of space, time, as well as one's notion of the real. One spends an enormous amount of time in front of a screen switching between spreadsheets and chat windows.

On screen, the hierarchy of information changes, as well as the perception of it. One may for instance have a more acute sense of what is happening thousands of miles away than down the street, and it is fascinating to think that one may in fact learn about what's around the corner

only when it becomes juxtaposed to a world summit or a natural catastrophe on the other side of the planet.

In that sense, Hyperreality could therefore be a useful recourse, to describe the current state of culture, in which art may in fact be more "real" than the reality to which it relates to. In truth, one may recall Oscar Wilde's famous quote, that proposed that "Life imitates art", over a hundred years ago. Yet it is really the Twentieth Century that has demonstrated that Wilde's quote has actually proved to be more than just a prophecy (bookrags 1).

We are entering (have entered) an amnesiac zone of 'postmodernity' which should be called hyper modernism. the meaning of so called postmodernism turns out to be a technological hyper-intensification of modernism. Technology and economics merge and are disguised by alternative labels- post-industrial electronic, services, information, computer economy, each of which contributes to hyperreal processing and simulation, including hyperreal finance.

The term Cyberspace was coined by science-fiction writer William Gibson in his novel Neuromancer and defined as consensual hallucination. The term came to be applied to the 'room' or any space generated by software within a computer that produces a Virtual-Reality experience. VR is a computer-mediated, multi sensory experience, one designed to trick our senses and convince us that we are in 'another world'. In the VR world, the computer takes complete control and guides the way of sensing, feeling , and thinking of the participants. More generally, cyberspace is the 'nowhere space' in the telephone line between you and where all things on-line happen. The artificial landscape on internet, with, computer networks that connect millions of users throughout the world, through which one can move, download information, talk to other users, visit special discussions, forums, shop, make airline and hotel bookings, is cyberspace.

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The culture spawned by cyberpunks and cybernauts is cyberculture. The civilization springing up on-line is, Cyberia (Appignanesi 128).

In the meantime, while the cyber-changes were being implemented, what happened to art? We can mention here the first truly modernist painting, Picasso's Les Demoiselles d' Avignon, 1907. Those angular deformities and staring african mask faces depict prostitutes, more importantly proclaiming a new anti-representational model.

Some art historians have argued, to an extent correctly, that the invention of photography ended the authority of painting to reproduce reality. Painting pictures od 'reality' had simply become obsolete. Technological innovation of the infrastructure had outstripped the superstructural traditions of visual art. Mass production (photography) replaced hand-crafted originality (art). The crisis runs deeper than this crude but effective scenario suggests. The doctrine of 'realism' was coming to an end. Realism depends on a mirror theory of knowledge. essentially that the mind is a mirror of reality. Objects existing outside the mind can be represented (reproduced by a concept or work of art) in a way that is adequate, accurate and true (Appignanesi 13).

With *Cezann*e the view contains the viewer, He did not scrap realism but revised it to include uncertainty in our perception of things. Representation had to account for the effect of interaction between seeing and the object, that is, the variations of viewpoint and possibilities of doubt in what one sees. Impressionism has shown how appearances change with the light and are affected by rapid movement, but, that's not enough! We don't see things as fixed but as shifting. A tree changes if my gaze slightly shifts.

Cezanne was not interested simply to reproduce a fragmented subjective view of reality. He sought after a basic foundation, a 'unified field ' theory that must underlie the variability of perception, and this he got from elementary geometric solids.

Then there came Cubism, developed by Picasso, Georges Braque and others between 1907 and 1914. A typical Cubist painting. Picasso's Girl with a Mandolin (1910). takes Cezanne's theories of variability and stability to an astounding logical conclusion. The human figure simplified to geometry, interacting on a par with the space around it and treated like architecture, might be said to be dehumanized. Cubism agreed with the modern physics in rejecting the notion of single isolated event - the view contains the viewer. This is not necessarily a dehumanizing limit but a recognition that the human is non-exceptional to reality.

The end of original art started when, reproducible reality' was left to photography, while art took a quantum leap in a new Cubist direction. Cubism rescued art from obsolescence and re-established its autonomy to represent reality in a way that photography could not. But photography threatened both traditional and avant-garde art in another sense not recognized until later. In 1936, when the Marxist critic Walter Benjamin published his essay, *"The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"*. he argued that this aura -this fetish of sacred uniqueness- would now be eliminated by mass reproduction, essentially by the photographic printing of original works of art in widely distributed books, posters, postcards, and even postage stamps. The mechanical reproducibility of original art must inevitably have a disintegrating effect on originality itself.

The Russian artist Kasimir Malevich (1878-1935) who, in 1915 presented the unrepresentable Sublime, by painting a white square on a white background. In his manifesto of suprematism makes plain that he knew he was representing the sublime. The paintings of Piet Mondrian show clearly the radical modernist evolution of a tree from representation to minimal pure abstraction. Mondrian's abstract art attempted to purge itself of all representational references - to

banish any 'illustration' of reality. It seems to me that what is meant here is that to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life.

Malevich, Mondrian and other pioneering abstractionists were self-consciously solving the "crisis of representation'. The concept - inadequate to represent reality - is rescued by elevating it and eliminating all traces of 'reality' from the re-presentationof the unpresentable. The concept itself becomes Sublime Reality, (one is tempted to say, hyper reality, but this is postmodern lingo).

The *De Stijl* group, Cubism, the Bauhaus, Italian Futurism, Russian Constructivism, all embraced what is loosely called machine aesthetic, aiming to form a universal modern style, producible anywhere, and transcending all national cultures, named the International Style.

Americans turned to their domestic breed of abstract art: abstract expressionism. Jackson Pollock stands as its hero and tragic victim. Surrealism, one of Jackson sources, was the successor movement to Dadaism, which was also important for realizing Automatism. By 1912, direct incorporations of non-artistic materials in painting. Marcel Duchamp, was the first to realize that any 'readymade' non-art object on its own could be displayed as 'art' if disassociated from its original context. The aura and autonomy of the original work of art ends up transferred to the artist's own charisma value, including what is known as, 'event' and 'installations'.

Andy Warhol turned mechanical reproduction itself into art, under Warhol's treatments, aesthetics turns into an-aesthetics. Warhol's reproductions are not about producing art or even the artist but the ultimate commodity, a celebrity.

I would argue that postmodernism is recognizable by its agenda where the first item is the dilemma of reproducibility in the age of mass consumerism, whose aura now extends with a halo of the relic, and this is image consumerism. The reproduced is taking the place of reality or re-

placing it as hyperreality. We are living what has already been lived and reproduced with no reality anymore but that of the cannibalized as image.   It would seem that the superstructural traditions of art have shed themselves in the effort to innovate at a pace in rhythm with modernity's infrastructural advances in technology. When it comes to legitimation, the question is, how the difficult and avant guarde art become accepted as the institutional standard of taste? Whose taste is that? the taste of art galleries, museums, dealers and their art buying public, in short, the merchandize of art and its collectors, where not even the challenges of anti-art have succeeded to undermine the system. The price of an object is not what matters, but its installation as art.

It seems to me, the genealogy of postmodern art can only be disconnected from the modern in theory. Theory is not in this sense a culmination but a negation, literally, an 'end of art'. Let's look at the extreme postmodernist conclusion advanced by Jean Baudrillard, that the representational image-sign goes where, art has totally penetrated reality, I think what he means is that the border between art and reality has utterly vanished as both have collapsed into the universal simulacrum, which is arrived at when the distinction between representation and reality - between signs and what they refer to in the real world breaks down. Reality becomes redundant and we have reached hyper-reality in which images breed incestuously with each other without reference to reality or meaning.

CHAPTER 4

BAUDRILLARD AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Jean Baudrillard strongly states that: The adventure of modern art is over. Contemporary art is contemporary only with itself. It no longer knows any transcendence either towards past or future; its only reality is that of its operation in real time and its confusion with that reality. Nothing now distinguishes it from the technical, promotional, media, digital operation. There is no transcendence, no divergence any more, nothing of another scene: merely a specular play with the contemporary world as it takes place. It is in this that contemporary art is worthless: between it and the world, there is a zero-sum equation. Quite apart from that shameful complicity in which creators and consumers commune wordlessly in the examination of strange, inexplicable objects that refer only to themselves and to the idea of art, the true conspiracy lies in this complicity that art forges with itself, its collusion with the real, through which it becomes complicit in that Integral Reality, of which it is now merely the image-feedback. There is no longer any differential of art. There is only the integral calculus of reality. Art is now merely an idea prostituted in its realization (Baudrillard 105).

Baudrillard emphatically criticizes most of present art dynamics. Before reviewing the author's assertions, I consider pertinent to this discussion to include generalizations about, what is Contemporary Art? This is an excellent question, and one that perhaps isn't asked often enough. Presumably, talking about contemporary art is another one of those art definitions we are all supposed to know, because (heaven forbid) you wouldn't want to ask a "stupid" question at some art world function. The answer is simple. Contemporary just means art that has been and continues to be created during our lifetime. In other words, it refers to recent decades.

It can be expected that a certain amount of overlapping between "Contemporary" and "Modern" art happens in one's lifetime. A good rule of thumb is: Modern Art: Art from the Impressionists (say, around 1880) up until the 1960s or '70s. Contemporary Art: Art from the 1960s or '70s up to now. 1970 is the cut-off point for two reasons. Firstly, because it was around 1970 that the terms "Postmodern" and "Postmodernism" popped up -- meaning, we must assume, that the art world had had its fill of Modern Art starting right then. Secondly, 1970 seems to be the last bastion of easily classified artistic movements. If you look at an outline of modern art, and compare it to an outline of contemporary art, you would quickly notice that there are far more entries on the former page. This, in spite of the fact that Contemporary Art enjoys far more working artists making far more art. It may be that Contemporary artists are mostly working in "movements" that cannot be classified. While it may be hard to classify emergent movements, Contemporary art, collectively is more socially conscious than any previous era has been. Much of art from the last 30 years has been connected with one issue or another: feminism, multiculturalism, globalization, bio-engineering and AIDS awareness all come readily to mind as subject matters.

I would say that Baudrillard has paid attention to art as an important and distinctive mode of objects since the beginning of his work in the 1960s. In his early studies of The System of Objects and The Consumer Society, Baudrillard analyzed art objects as important artifacts in the system of objects which constitute everyday life. For Baudrillard, Pop Art represents the dramatic transformations of art objects in the early 20th century. Whereas previously art was invested with psychological and moral values which endowed its artifacts with a spiritualistic-anthropomorphic aura. By the 20th century art objects no longer live by proxy in the shadow of man and begin to assume extraordinary importance as independent elements in an analysis of space (cubism, etc). Soon after the moment of Cubism, art objects exploded to the point of ab-

straction, were ironically resurrected in Dada and Surrealism, and then were de-structured and volatilized by subsequent movements that led toward abstract art, yet today "they are apparently reconciled with their image in New Figuration and Pop Art".

An abbreviation then of his main points is as follows: First he says that Modernity was the golden age of a deconstruction of reality into its simple elements opening it to all the aspects of perception, of sensibility, of the structure of the object and the dismemberment of forms. In this he finds what he calls "The paradox of abstraction" in that, by 'liberating' the object from the constraints of the figural to yield it up to the pure play of form, it shackled it to an idea of a hidden structure, of objectivity more rigorous and radical than that of resemblance. It sought to set aside the mask of resemblance and of the figure in order to accede to the analytic truth of the object. "Under the banner of abstraction, we moved paradoxically towards more reality, towards an unveiling of the 'elementary structures' of objectivity, that is to say, towards something more real than the real. Conversely, under the banner of a general aestheticization, art invaded the whole field of reality.

The result was that the banality of art merge with the banality of the real world; according to Baudrillard also mentions Duchamp's act, (Dada) with its automatic transference of the object, being the first in this process of the transference of all reality into aesthetics. All this under the banner of a simultaneous liberation of art and the real world. The transference of art becomes a useless function, into a reality that is now integral, since it has absorbed everything that denied, exceeded or transfigured it.

Another important point expressed by Baudrillard is the impossible exchange of this Integral Reality for anything whatsoever. Given this, it can only exchange itself for itself or, in other words, repeat itself ad infinitum. What could miraculously reassure us today about the es-

sence of art? Art is quite simply what is at issue in the world of art, in that desperately self-obsessed artistic community.

The 'creative' act doubles up on itself and is now nothing more than a sign of its own operation, the painter's true subject is no longer what he paints but the very fact that he paints. He paints the fact that he paints. At least in that way the idea of art remains intact. This is merely one of the sides of the conspiracy. The other side is that of the spectator who, for want of understanding anything whatever most of the time, consumes his own culture at serving. He literally consumes the fact that he understands nothing and that there is no necessity in all this except the imperative of culture, of being a part of the integrated circuit of culture. But culture is itself merely a secondary symptom of global circulation. The idea of art has become rarefied and minimal, leading ultimately to conceptual art, where it ends in the non-exhibition of non-works in non-galleries – the apotheosis of art as non-event. As a corollary, the consumer circulates in all this in order to experience his non-enjoyment of the works. At the extreme point of a conceptual, minimalist logic, art ought quite simply to fade away. At that point, it would doubtless become what it is: a false problem, and every aesthetic theory would be a false solution. And yet it is the case that there is all the more need to speak about it because there is nothing to say. The movement of the democratization of art has paradoxically merely strengthened the privileged status of the idea of art, culminating in this banal tautology of 'art is art', it being possible for everything to find its place in this circular definition.

The unmasking of contemporary art by Baudrillard continues by stating that the revolutionary idea of contemporary art was that any object, any detail or fragment of the material world, could exert the same strange attraction and pose the same insoluble questions as were reserved in the past for a few rare aristocratic forms known as works of art. That is where true de-

mocracy lay: not in the accession of everyone to aesthetic enjoyment, but in the trans-aesthetic advent of a world in which every object would, without distinction, have its fifteen minutes of fame (particularly objects without distinction). All objects are equivalent; everything is a work of genius. With the transformation of art and of the work itself into an object, without illusion or transcendence, a purely conceptual acting-out, generative of deconstructed objects which deconstruct us in their turn. No longer any face, any gaze, any human countenance or body in all this – organs without bodies, flows, molecules, the fractal. The relation to the 'artwork' is of the order of contamination, of contagion: you hook up to it, absorb or immerse yourself in it, exactly as in flows and networks. Metonymic sequence, chain reaction. There is no longer any real object in all this: in the ready-made it is no longer the object that's there, but the idea of the object, and we no longer find pleasure here in art, but in the idea of art. We are wholly in ideology. And, ultimately, the twofold curse of modern and contemporary art is summed up in the 'ready-made': the curse of an immersion in the real and banality, and that of a conceptual absorption in the idea of art. That absurd sculpture by Picasso, with its stalks and leaves of metal; neither wings, nor victory, just a testimony, a vestige, the idea, nothing more, of a work of art. Very similar to the other ideas and vestiges that inspire our existence, not apples, but the idea, the reconstruction by the pomologist of what apples used to be, not ice-cream, but the idea, the memory of something delicious, made from substitutes, from starch, glucose and other chemicals, not sex, but the idea or evocation of sex, the same with love, belief, thought and the rest.

Art, in its form, signifies nothing. It is merely a sign pointing towards absence. What becomes of this perspective of emptiness and absence in a contemporary universe that is already totally emptied of its meaning and reality? Art can now only align itself with the general insignificance and indifference. It no longer has any privileged status. It no longer has any other final

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destination than this fluid universe of communication, the networks and interaction. Transmitter and receiver merge in the same loop: all transmitters, all receivers. Each subject interacts with itself, doomed to express itself without any longer having time to listen to the other. The Internet and the networks clearly increase this possibility of transmitting for oneself in a closed circuit; everyone going at it with their virtual performances and contributing to the general asphyxia. This is why, where art is concerned, the most interesting thing would be to infiltrate the spongiform encephalon of the modern spectator, for this is where the mystery lies today: in the brain of the receiver, at the nerve centre of this servility before 'works of art'. What is the secret of it? In the complicity between the mortification 'creative artists' inflict on objects and themselves, and the mortification consumers inflict on themselves and their mental faculties. Tolerance for the worst of things has clearly increased considerably as a function of this general state of complicity. Interface and performance, these are the two current leitmotifs. In performance, all the forms of expression merge, the plastic arts, photography, video, installation, the interactive screen. This vertical and horizontal, aesthetic and commercial diversification is henceforth part of the work, the original core of which cannot be located. A (non-) event like *The Matrix* illustrates this perfectly; this is the very archetype of the global installation, of the total global fact: not just the film, which is, in a way, the alibi, but the spin-offs, the simultaneous projection at all points of the globe and the millions of spectators themselves who are inextricably part of it. We are all, from a global, interactive point of view, the actors in this total global fact.

Photography has the selfsame problem when we undertake to multi-mediatize it by adding to it all the resources of montage, collage, the digital and CGI, etc. This opening-up to the infinite, this deregulation, is, literally, the death of photography by its elevation to the stage of performance. In this universal mix, each register loses its specificity – just as each individual

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loses his sovereignty in interaction and the networks – just as the real and the image, art and reality lose their respective energy by ceasing to be differential poles. Since the nineteenth century, it has been art's claim that it is useless. It has prided itself on this (which was not the case in classical art, where, in a world that was not yet either real or objective, the question of usefulness did not even arise). Extending this principle, it is enough to elevate any object to uselessness to turn it into a work of art. This is precisely what the 'ready-made' does, when it simply withdraws an object from its function without changing it in any way, and thereby turns it into a gallery piece. It is enough to turn the real itself into a useless function to make it an art object, prey to the devouring aesthetic of banality. Similarly, old objects, being obsolete and hence useless, automatically acquire an aesthetic aura. Their being distant from us in time is the equivalent of Duchamp's artistic act; they too become 'ready-mades', nostalgic vestiges resuscitated in our museum universe. We might extrapolate this aesthetic transfiguration to the whole of material production. As soon as it reaches a threshold where it is no longer exchanged in terms of social wealth, it becomes something like a giant surrealist object, in the grip of a devouring aesthetic, and everywhere takes its place in a kind of virtual museum. So we have the museification, like a 'ready-made' of the whole technical environment in the form of industrial wasteland. The logic of uselessness could not but lead contemporary art to a predilection for waste, which is itself useless by definition. Through waste, the figuration of waste, the obsession with waste, art fiercely proclaims its uselessness. It demonstrates its non-use-value, its non-exchange-value at the same time as selling itself very dear. There is a misconception here. Uselessness has no value in itself. It is a secondary symptom and, by sacrificing its aims to this negative quality, art goes completely off track into a gratuitousness that is itself useless. It is the same scenario, more or less, as that of nullity, of the claim to non-meaning, insignificance and banality, which attests to a redoubled

aesthetic pretension. Anti-art strives, in all its forms, to escape the aesthetic dimension. Since the 'ready-made' has annexed banality itself, all that is finished. The innocence of non-meaning, of the non-figurative, of abjection and dissidence, is finished. All these things, which contemporary art would like to be, or return to, merely reinforce the inexorably aesthetic character of this anti-art. Art has always denied itself, but once it did so through excess, thrilling to the play of its disappearance. Today it denies itself by default; worse, it denies its own death. It immerses itself in reality, instead of being the agent of the symbolic murder of that same reality, instead of being the magical operator of its disappearance. The paradox is that the closer it gets to this phenomenal confusion, this nullity as art, the greater credit and value it is accorded, to the extent that, we have reached a point where nothing is beautiful or ugly any more; we passed that point without realizing it and, since we cannot get back to that blind spot, we can only persevere in the current destruction of art. Lastly, what purpose does this useless function serve? From what, by its very uselessness, does it deliver us? Like politicians, who deliver us from the wearisome responsibility of power, contemporary art, by its incoherent artifice, delivers us from the ascendancy of meaning by providing us with the spectacle of non-sense. This explains its proliferation: independently of any aesthetic value, it is assured of prospering by dint of its very insignificance and emptiness.

Just as the politician endures in the absence of any representativeness or credibility, so art and the art market flourish precisely in proportion to their decay: they are the modern charnel-houses of culture and the simulacrum. It is absurd, then, to say that contemporary art is worthless and that there is no point to it, since that is its vital function: to illustrate our uselessness and absurdity. Or, more accurately, to make that decay its stock in trade, while exorcizing it as spectacle. If, as some have proposed, the function of art was to make life more interesting than art, then

we have to give up that illusion. One gets the impression that a large part of current art partici-pates in an enterprise of deterrence, a work of mourning for the image and the imaginary, a most-ly failed work of aesthetic mourning that leads to a general melancholia of the artistic sphere, which seems to survive its own demise by recycling its history and its relics. Neither art nor aes-thetics is alone in being doomed to this melancholic destiny of living not beyond their means, but beyond their ends. In this same sense the painting only becomes an art object in today's art world with the signature of the painter, with the sign of its origin, which situates it as a differen-tial value within the system of signs, the series of works, which is that of the oeuvre of the paint-er. Baudrillard argues that copies or even forgeries previously were not as denigrated as in the contemporary world in part because art was more the collective product of artists' studios and because today art is supposed to be the "authentic" product of an individual creator as part of her or his oeuvre.

CHAPTER 5

MY PERSPECTIVE AND CONCLUSION

The breviary on reality in the first chapter of this thesis, is a brief description of the generalities of the main traditional philosophical points of view in our perception of reality, and when contrasted with the emphatic elaborations on hyperreality included in chapter 3, one can be inclined to say that hyperreality has surpassed traditional views. Within contemporary philosophical thought the concepts dealing with hyperreality can arguably be considered to be the most advanced. Using colloquial language, I would say that we are at a frontier, and not only in philosophy, but in every area of our human development, from science, to language, to metaphysics, to art, to everything, even to our mundane everyday lives. The phenomenon of hyperreality places us in the line with what is being called transhumanism, which is a class of philosophies that seek to guide us towards a posthuman condition. Transhumanism shares many elements of humanism, including a respect for reason and science, a commitment to progress, and a valuing of human (or transhuman) existence in this life. Transhumanism differs from humanism in recognizing and anticipating the radical alterations in the nature and possibilities of our lives resulting from various sciences and technologies. Transhumanism is the doctrine that we can and should become more than human, such as cyborgs, robots, avatars, etc (humanity plus 1).

What has happened to art in the transitional process since Picasso's Mademoiselles d'avignon, is instructive. After the de-emphasizing of realism, with the emergence of abstract art and abstract expressionism, art become on one hand, with Walter Benjamin, reproducible, and loses its "aura", while on the other hand, with Andy Warhol, reproducibility leads to the consumption of mass art, and elevates the reproduced commercial objects, to valued works of art.

Thereafter, art establishments are the only ones showing, holding onto art, ie, taken to be true art, and the only art is in galleries. What happens is that the image proliferation through technology takes over, and art seemingly disappears.

In the reconsideration of the notion of art in this thesis I explored Art and hyperreality concentrating on Contemporary Art, which takes us from hyperreality to what some authors call the end of art. French theorist Jean Baudrillard, one of the foremost contemporary critics of society and culture synthesized Marxism and Semiotics in prototypical postmodern theory. However his interest in art remained. He continued his speculations on the end of art in *The Transparency of Evil* (1994), where he projected a vision of the end of art somewhat different from traditional theories which posit the exhaustion of artistic creativity, or a situation where everything has been done and there is nothing new to do. He maintains both of these points, to be sure, but the weight of his argument rests, rather, on a vision of the contemporary era in which art has penetrated all spheres of existence, in which the dreams of the artistic avant-garde for art to inform life has been realized. Yet, in Baudrillard's perspective, with the realization of art in everyday life, art itself as a separate and transcendent phenomenon has disappeared. He calls this situation transaesthetics which he relates to the similar phenomena of transpolitics, transsexuality, and transeconomics, in which everything becomes political, sexual, and economic, so that these domains, like art, lose their specificity, their boundaries, their distinctness. The result is a confused condition where there are no more criteria of value, of judgment, of taste, and the function of the normative thus collapses in a morass of indifference and inertia. Although Baudrillard sees art proliferating everywhere, and writes in *The Intelligence of Evil* that talk about Art is increasing even more rapidly, the power of art, of art as adventure, art as negation of reality, art as redeeming illusion, art as another dimension and so on, has disappeared. Art is everywhere but there are

no more fundamental rules to differentiate art from other objects and no more criteria of judgment or of pleasure (Baudrillard 105).

I would say that Baudrillard emerges as a prophet of the end of art, whose Gallic world-weariness and pessimism, his obsessive repetition of previous ideas, and his nihilistic evacuation of value ends up disabling critical thought and inquiry. Consequently, it can be argued that although art and aesthetics are definitely changing in response to the mass media, new technologies, and innovative cultural forms, it is precisely these changes that require fresh theories and analyses. From this perspective, I argue that his dismissal of art and aesthetics blocks the necessary work that needs to be done. While his analyses are certainly a provocation to new thinking and practice, one must go beyond the claims of Baudrillard to make his insights productive for aesthetic theory and practice today. Then what makes this difficult is the fact that as I mentioned above, transhumanism is already here, and not just knocking on our doors, it is already a resident of our household. At this time it seems to be the case that there is no solution, no answer, and that we are almost completely gone into cyberworlds, and artificial intelligence is the new dominant paradigm.

In the postmodern era, media, consumer society, everything becomes an image, a sign, a spectacle, a transaesthetic object, just as everything also becomes trans-economic, political, and sexual. This "materialization of aesthetics" is accompanied by a desperate attempt to simulate art, to replicate and mix previous artistic forms and styles, and to produce ever-more images and artistic objects. This dizzying eclecticism of forms and pleasures produces a situation in which art is no longer art in classical or modernist senses but is merely image, artifact, object, simulation, or commodity. In the sphere of art every possible artistic form and every possible function of art has been exhausted; art has lost its critical function. Art and theory became a playing with the

pieces of the tradition, a game with vestiges of the past, through recombining and playing with the forms already produced.

As part of my conclusions, I observe that the origins of simulation can be found in nature; fish do it, insects do it, and early humanity did it. They all simulate. History also through representation and misrepresentation. The caves of Lascaux reveal one of humanity's earliest efforts to create invented worlds. Many of our invented worlds can be used to enhance fantasy. We can also mistake fantasy for reality, and end up playing a role in other people's fictions. What is next in our human evolvement pertains to philosophy of the future, to futurology, and a series of questions: what now?, where are we going? Is it really and truly the end of art? Is it like god? God is dead? art is dead? Apparently all we are left with is artificial intelligence.

In my opinion, here is where Critical Theory has been laboring since Marx and the Frankfurt philosophers of emancipatory philosophy. Marx is dead, but we will always have his specter. We could get rid of the obsolete idea of the struggle of classes, but at least we need the specter of Marx to help us deal with the new dominating ordering of technology.

Given this state of affairs, it is not an easy task to elucidate about humanity and its art on what is going to happen now and next. After the eroding of the modern into the diffusion of the postmodern, what seems to me a viable option is the work presently being elaborated by some philosophers on what is termed Transmodernity.

The final years of the 20th century left us at a kind of impasse. Cultural relativism drowned the universality of principles, and the grand theoretical constructs turned into little more than models of understanding. In Hegelian thought, understanding is the characteristic form of deductive thinking, an analytic exercise appropriated for use in the sciences and the real world as a postulating force for axioms and rules that atomize and conceptually drain the flow of events. It

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constitutes but the first moment of philosophical thought, which was bound to be followed by a second: Dialectics, or the self-displacement of the finite judgments of the first. Dialectics puts order into a vast disarray of contradictory and complimentary abstractions, into a flow of inter-dependent notions that reflect in their dynamism the very movement of reality. Then we had the breakup called postmodernity, modernity therefore anchored us in the possibility and legitimacy of global discourse. The postmodern crisis has as its target precisely this very possibility and le-gitimacy. Lyotard proclaimed the end of the Grand Narratives. History can no longer be con-ceived of in the form of linear progress towards emancipation. According to postmodernists, we would embark upon the age of Post-history. Universal Reason, they claim, would have uncov-ered the manipulative side of instrumental rationality, and its utopian vision would have turned into a genuine iron cage (Transmodern 1).

The grand meta-narratives of modernity were the product of a theoretical enterprise, i.e., the will to be part of a system, and as such pertained to the sphere of knowledge. Globalization, by contrast, is the subsequent result of a technological revolution, i.e., the practical effects of the will to be interconnected, and thus pertains to the sphere of information. Whereas, the industrial society had modern culture and the postindustrial society had postmodern culture as their con-ceptual twins, a globalized society corresponds to a type of culture that Rosa Maria Rodriguez Magda have referred to for some time as transmodern (Transmodern 2).

Modernity, Postmodernity, Transmodernity thus forms the dialectic triad that, in more or less Hegelian manner, completes a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Let us now take a closer look at the triads: Modernity was based on the legacy of reality and aspired after its trans-formation. The semiotic sphere that fueled postmodern theory then transformed it into different types of discourse, whereby the signifier, far removed from its referent, finds its signified in the

kingdom of meanings, in eidetic construction work, and thus it is not surprising that there it en-counters simulacra rather than realities. This path towards self-destruction, however, then experi-ences an unexpected turn in the vision of transmodernity.

The real and the unreal are no longer opposed, as a new concept of reality emerges, one that is no longer bound to the material world but turns into fiction because of it. Reality and ex-istence are no longer synonymous, it is a type of reality that continues to "be" even when it may not exist and does not comply with the simple status of simulacrum, i.e., the virtual is the true reality. Even the physical world has seen transformations.

The oral, the work of art and the narrative gave way in postmodern culture to a reapprais-al of the written, the textual and the visual. Once again, the transmodern society carries out a synthesis that moves ahead to embrace both aspects, both transcendent in qualitative terms.

One single process streamlines the media, e.g., cinema, television, computers, etc. The Internet is now becoming the synthesis of the former print media and current forms of mass communication. We thus return to the uncertainty of looking ahead into the future, a vision of tomorrow tired of the tiresome wave of revivals. We now have posthuman mutants dressed up as transnational executives, a Final Fantasy. Globalization is the all-embracing Total, the chaotic and dynamic fulfillment of the dialectical imperative is the new paradigm that has been proposed to refer to as Transmodernity.

What does all this has to do with my thesis on art? What happens after the end of art? What does it mean in the transmodern paradigm to be a work of art? Renowned author and critic Arthur C. Danto addresses this fundamental, complex question. In his book: *What Art Is*, chal-lenges the popular interpretation that art is an indefinable concept, instead bringing to light the properties that constitute universal meaning. Danto argues that despite varied approaches, a work

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of art is always defined by two essential criteria: meaning and embodiment, as well as one additional criterion contributed by the viewer: interpretation. Danto crafts his argument in an accessible manner that engages with both philosophy and art across genres and eras, beginning with Plato's definition of art in *The Republic*, and continuing through the progress of art as a series of discoveries, including such innovations as perspective, chiaroscuro and physiognomy. Danto concludes with a fascinating discussion of Andy Warhol's famous shipping cartons, which are visually indistinguishable from the everyday objects they represent. Throughout, Danto considers the contributions of philosophers including Descartes, Kant and Hegel, and artists from Michelangelo and Poussin to Duchamp and Warhol in this far-reaching examination of the interconnectivity and universality of aesthetic production (Danto 51.52).

It was from Hegel that we got the idea that art could end, but I think the idea that art ended never meant that art has died or that people will not make art anymore. Similarily, Hegel did not mean by the "end of history" that the world was going to explode. "End" here means something more like "completion." The end of art means that the practice of making art has come to a historical culmination. The end of art means that art does not have a story, a narrative, anymore. After the end of art, there is no such thing as "Art"—there is only art. The basic meaning of the term "art" has changed several times over the centuries, and has continued to evolve during the 20th century as well, and needs to continue to evolve more with the changes dictated by hyperreality and tranmodernity.

In this way, we can describe the history of Art in own contemporary version of Hegel's dialectical history of art. We cannot claim that no one is making art anymore; nor can we claim that good art is not being made any more. I think that a certain history of Western art has come to an end, in about the way that Hegel suggested it would. The "end of art" refers to the beginning

of our modern era of art in which art no longer adheres to the constraints of imitation theory but serves a new purpose. Art began with an "era of imitation, followed by an era of ideology, followed by our post-historical era in which, with qualification, anything goes. In our narrative, at first only mimesis (imitation) was art, then several things were art but each tried to extinguish its competitors, and then, finally, it became apparent that there were no stylistic or philosophical constraints. There is no special way works of art have to be. That is the present and, I should say, the final moment in the master narrative. It is the end of the story.

When art became philosophical in the late spring of 1964, it crossed an invisible line. With Warhol's Brillo Boxes, there is no clear demarcation between art and reality. If the Brillo Boxes can look just like Brillo Boxes, and can still be art, then anything can be art. There is nothing inherent, nothing internal or necessary that makes something a work of art. This thought can be depressing at first. Art is not special anymore if it can be anything (Danto 49).

Thus I came to see the end of art as a great liberation, as I began to think of that day when perfect artistic freedom had become real. The fact that art had ended meant that any artist could be an abstractionist, a realist, an allegorist, a metaphysical painter, a surrealist, a landscapist, or a painter of still life or nudes. You could be a decorative artist, a literary artist, an anecdotist, a religious painter, a pornographer. Everything was permitted, since nothing any longer was historically mandated. It is then the post-historical period of art.

There is a phrase that appears and reappears in the essays of Arthur Danto. That phrase is "the miraculousness of the commonplace." Danto wanted to feel that miracle, but he realized that he was not going to feel it by pretending that we are still surrounded by objects of high aesthetic beauty.

The modern world does not make great cathedrals, stone temples, or paintings to be worshipped in chapels and shrines. The modern world makes cheap shit out of plastic, but this was not the end of the story. Warhol's paintings of Coca-Cola bottles are convincing that the world of plastic and junk could be redeemed. Pop art redeemed the world. How many times have any of us had the peace and acceptance to be able to look around us, confront the crap of daily life and say, this is just remarkable.

I argue that recent developments in the art world, in particular the production of works of art that cannot be told from ordinary things, make urgent the need for a new theory of art and make plain the factors such a theory can and cannot involve. In the course of constructing such a theory, we have to demonstrate the relationship between philosophy and art, as well as the connections that hold between art and social institutions and art history.

I also find the need to distinguish what belongs to artistic theory from what has traditionally been confused with it, namely aesthetic theory and offers as well a systematic account of metaphor, expression, and style, together with an original account of artistic representation. A wealth of examples, drawn especially from recent and contemporary art, illuminates my argument.

I found myself considering the drastic way in which art has changed over the course of the twentieth century, bringing us to a point at which artists not only create works of art to be hung on the wall, but flood the walls themselves.

There are often strong reactions to contemporary art. Some people (largely artists) offer a big hurrah for the way in which art has broken through conventions that have dominated it for centuries. Others lament that "true art" has been lost and all that remains are tattered remnants of what was once a vital and unique or auratic representation of the culture and intellect of man-

kind. Regardless of how one feels towards the art of today, it is difficult to determine why art has taken its current form and what this means for the future of art.

In this thesis I have attempted to explain this contemporary condition of art by examining the changing status of art in society, not only through art history, but also through the historical relationship between art and philosophy. This new emphasis on expression in art illustrates, in which art becomes a "communication of feeling." In such a view, art does not progress along a linear path, but rather is simply a discontinuous manifestation of each artist's independent attempt at self-expression. Artists do not generally proclaim their art to be a summation of all art, but rather are content to call their work mere pieces. Perhaps I am lending too much weight to pure semantics, but I believe the utilization of the word "piece" by the art community does have some significance.

A work of art is rarely, if ever, treated as the grand summation of all culture, providing an argument for all that came before and all that will come after. Rather, art is more a symptom of the greater culture, and also the personal expression of the artist. An artist may hope to discover truth in their art, but often art serves a more instructive purpose. Art is a form of communication, like language, through which an artist may speak to the viewer or the viewer to himself or herself, by using the work of art as a mirror of sorts. Philosophy, on the other hand, is not meant to give us a transparent picture of reality; rather it utilizes the communicative element of language to present questions about what humans claim to be solid truths.

One of my points to express is that we are dealing with a severe handicap in trying to predict the significance of art not merely in our current time, but also the significance of our art as it will be viewed in an historical context by future generations. Perhaps in fifty, one hundred, or a thousand years it will be possible to see whether there was any truth in the claim that art has

dropped out of the historical dialogue. Until then, we are subject to the limitations of our present view of art and cannot say whether we have hit upon the truth or not. Within such a web of assertions and theories about the nature of art, none of which can be ultimately proved, an artist is free to pick and choose what he or she believes and to make art under any pretenses that he or she chooses. That is not to say that all the theories in the art world are equally valid. I feel, however, that through the discussion in this paper, it has become clear that Danto's theory and the theories of the conceptual artists are all well-founded, intelligent conjectures about the nature of art.

It remains for time to tell what trajectory art is truly on, and it remains the task of artists, academics, and critics alike, to continue to make intelligent assertions about the nature of art. Since art is a process of discovery and dialogue, one thing is certain however: that as long as the debate continues, art will thrive, being propelled forward by the very theories that seek to question its validity and vitality.

I can add also, that it is true that since Dada, mundane, simple objects, when placed in a gallery environment, can become observed with a quasi-aesthetic approach, but is daily life stuff really art? One example of this approach to aesthetic perception can be corroborated by the Japanese ancient sense of *Wabi-Sabi*, where, random objects, some even showing natural decay, roughness, and aging, are respected and considered to have an aura of noble aesthetic presence.

I am inclined towards a pantheistic approach to life, and I have a certain liking for Zen philosophy, and with the speculations of modern science, about the unification of the universe, I am also inclined to see and apprehend reality from a quantum position. Saying this, I am saying that my perspective about the notion of life is informed by theories of quantum physics, including parallel universes, the multiverse, and the theories of infinites. In this sense perhaps then we

can find a compensatory correspondence for some understanding between conventional views on reality and hyperreality.

What comes to my mind is the old Latin adage, *Ars Vitae Largae*, which means: art enlarges life. In that sense it could mean that even after all the changes and transformations in our culture and realities, we must never forget that art is part of our make up, and our power of vision, something that gives us our sense of being, and *Raison d' etre,* and therefore essential for our viability and vitality, more so now that art has been democratized and demystified. Therefore for my personal concern, I would say that for my art I choose to include elements of Color theory, expression, Minimalist, abstract, sober, apolitical, hands-on, and *Wabi-Sabi* founded as everydayness.

Perhaps the material here studied can provide a panoramic view and can serve as sketch for a possible essay on the future of art at a later opportunity. Presently, as I have mentioned above, I believe that philosophical writing is primarily a task of journeying into more self-knowledge. Also as Jules Simon evoques, it is about deconstructing of the self in order to build anew, through this experience of writing this thesis, I can say, that I have been changed, transformed into a man who can see and understand the modern world around him. My eyes were open, but I felt I could not see. I needed to convert myself in order to live, to live long, to live in art.

Alfredo Martin-Perez

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Alfredo Martin-Perez is a United States of America citizen who was born on October 8, 1947 in Ciudad Juarez Chihuahua, Mexico. His academic background includes: High School Diploma from Chicago Illinois, and Graduated from the School of Law at the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez in 1981. Alfredo has also earned a B.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies, and a M.A. in Interdisciplinary studies, both at the University of Texas at El Paso, these degrees with concentration in Art, Creative Writing, and Philosophy.

His professional background include work in design and manufacturing, specializing in tooling engineering. He has consulted small business owners, and taught business seminars for 10 years as a counselor for the U.S. Small Business Administration. For two years, He taught International Trade in the Continuing Education Department at UTEP. In 1978, He founded and operated his own design and manufacturing business on both sides of the U.S. - Mexico border. He performed and consulted in Import-Export activities also. Alfredo served with the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, and as president of a specialized section with, *Camara Nacional de la Industria de la Transformacion*, en Ciudad Juarez, MX. Alfredo has extensively traveled abroad.

Alfredo is a semiretired *paterfamilias*, whose professional interests have turned to creativity in the arts. He is presently using his experience aiming to participate in the spiritual enhancement of our community, as well as continue building a legacy for his family.