

FLIPPING THE COUNTERFEIT COIN: *WHY AI CAN'T MAKE ART*

Nat Trimarchi

ABSTRACT: As Big-Tech gains more control over human appetites and aversions (which Hobbes notoriously reduced humanity to), it is crucial to understand technology's limitations. Why it cannot do the most important thing, upon which the *prudence* to balance autonomy with necessity rests: distinguish believing from knowing. This is an 'ethical' deficiency, revealed in reasons proposed here why AI can't possibly make art (replaced now mostly by *cultural artefact*-making, which AI will excel at). Because aesthetics is about knowing, not perceiving (as Kant prescribed), such reasoning matters to human survival. It has deteriorated in modern mythology under the mechanistic worldview that Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, and others of the failed enlightenment project advanced to control Nature. Now driven by an avaricious political and technocratic elite advancing posthuman (*anti*-humanist) ideology, 'mechanism' underwrites excesses leading humanity toward self-destruction via militarism, dehumanisation, and ecological devastation. To control it, contrasting nature's teleological "mechanism" with humanity's 'telos', I propose embracing an ontological humanist perspective that is rooted in the Principle of Art, ancient mythology, and Aristotelian and Schellingian inspired complexity science. This shows mechanism and teleology are two different species of 'acts'; and that having a "free relation" with both Nature and technology requires promoting humanity's *ahistorical* 'being' via genuine *art*-making.

KEYWORDS: AI; The Person; Ethical phenomenology; The Principle of art, Imagination

The dominant worldview embodied in the civilization of modernity is still [...] of the Seventeenth Century [...] mechanistic, atomistic conception of being and of society, upholding 'possessive individualism', although the 'atoms' are now more likely to be taken to be fetishized 'elementary particles' and 'bits of information' [...] and individuals are now seen primarily as consumers. This is the worldview subsequently characterized as 'scientific materialism' by Alfred North Whitehead [...] inimical to the very idea of autonomy and genuine democracy. As Castoriadis [...] argued, the world-order that developed on this foundation has been dominated by the social imaginary of the unlimited technological mastery of nature (and people), which displaced the quest for autonomy that originated with the Ancient

Greeks and had been revived in the late Middle-Ages. This social imaginary was accepted by orthodox Marxists, who as Alain Supiot [...] documented, symptomatically aligned themselves with neoliberals after the collapse of communism on the assumption that unconstrained markets driven by the unlimited quest for wealth (which Aristotle had condemned for its destructive effects as *pleonexia*) had shown themselves superior to planned economies in achieving this end.

(Gare *Fetishism* 736)

INTRODUCTION

The generalisation we know as “the arts” (*technê*) makes up a substantial part of the global economy promulgating this mechanistic worldview - naturally enough, since it is through the perfection of various “arts” that we have come to associate human ‘productivity’ with progress. Like the ‘art of war’, for instance. Aristotle refers to *technê* as the ‘productive sciences’, because they require practical skills like crafting or designing (i.e., ‘techniques’). But he also, within that general category, distinguished Art proper from ‘artefact’ making - at the core of which lies the difference between ‘actions’ and ‘making’ (Trimarchi *Aesthetics of Meaning*). That distinction has become problematised in modernity, with the popularised notion that almost anything can be Art. Though both art and artefacts are culturally important, people today generally disregard what separates them in *purpose* and why art is more important. Furthermore, few connect why humanity’s descent into ‘mechanism’ has spurred this confusion, degrading genuine Art-making’s status and practice in the process.

How all manner of ‘mechanistic thinking’, producing false beliefs about ‘the good’, can be sourced back to this connection is the subject of this paper. Underlying it is the question of whether advances in artificial intelligence (AI) will ameliorate or exacerbate these problems.

To answer this, I believe we must make a distinction between ‘artificial’ and ‘practical’ intelligence. Put simply, this is arguably reflected in the difference between ‘vulgar pragmatism’ and what the great logician Charles Sanders Peirce meant by Pragmatism proper. I have elsewhere argued that no ‘mechanistic’ or ‘genetic’ learning can replicate humanity’s primordial organic link to Nature, which is necessary for making *original* art, by drawing upon Peirce’s semiotics and pragmatic ‘normative’ association of aesthetics with ethics (Trimarchi *Harmonising*, Trimarchi *Principle*). There is substantial precedent for this argument,

stretching back to Aristotle, for how the human ‘intellectual intuition’ harnesses our ‘ontological’ knowing of what is ‘good’ and ‘sacred’ to life. It is however threatened in the Information Age.

Those struggling to uphold such arguments include contemporary proponents of complexity science. The active subjectivity involved in expressing our primordial ‘telos’ is summed up by Lenny Moss’ review of failed attempts by some complexity theorists to explain life through DNA. He concluded that: ‘After the (conflated) gene, it’s the living organism, an active agent of its own adaptive ontogeny and evolvability, that is once again poised to move back into the ontological driver’s seat’ (cited in Gare *Semiosis and Information* 16). Arran Gare exposes the threat that reductive information science poses to understanding human biosemiotic complexity, pointing to others in the long tradition of natural philosophy whose research supports the view that Art and humanity’s connected ‘teleology’ is irreducible to Mechanism.

Mechanisms are only intelligible as products of and as serving living processes from which their telos derives, and the point being made by proponents of the Schellingian tradition of natural philosophy, including Peirce, Bergson, von Uexküll, Whitehead, Waddington, Bateson, Hoffmeyer, Rosen and Simondon, is that life cannot be understood as nothing but its mechanisms. It is also necessary to appreciate the reality of life itself.

Because art is *Organism*, as Friedrich Schelling claimed, I propose instead his ‘ahistorical’ humanist perspective on Art ‘as principle’ is best suited to dispel myths about AI that are grounded in reductive information science. But, to this end, we must also distinguish the ‘biological’ principle from the *Principle of Art*; especially since the former is questionably interpreted and adopted by those working in the ‘information industries’ and ‘the arts’ alike.¹

This confusion with the ‘general aesthetic’ in Nature I suggest partly explains why, with the complete subjectivising of art, the modern ‘artworld’ (as notoriously defined by Arthur Danto) now in every artform area consists mostly of *cultural artefact*-making and not *art*-making. And consequently, though sharing in ‘actions’, their key *purposive differences* have easily been assimilated in and by the

¹ This principle is fully explained in Trimarchi *Way Out* and other publications mentioned here by the author. Note here, as there, the convention using capitals usually for ‘the ideal’, lower case indicates ‘the real’ e.g., ‘Art’ capitalised refers to ‘Art as Principle’, lower case denotes either ‘art’ categorically as a whole, or the ‘art object’ (‘artwork’). Hence Person-person, Nature- (human) nature ...etc.

‘technosphere’. In music, for instance, this is most obvious in the global industrial dominance of Rap. Meaning productivity is so driven by form here, via the ‘mechanics’ of rhythm and rhyme, that usually only the lowest of meaning-values feature: the utilitarian or ‘vital’/‘human’/‘biological’ values (Scheler). The same illusive valuing has now come to rule in most artform development (via other ‘technologies of action’).

Art, while once understood as ahistorically, purposelessly, seeking higher meaning, has instead become so *culturally* over-determined that its enslavement to a mechanistic worldview of ‘culture’, and generalised creativity, leaves it for most indistinguishable from cultural artefacts.

This value-disorientation has made fake “art” a driver of superimposed biological simulations of Nature, and mechanical “human nature”, that affect judgement and social values. Aware of the potential for such confusion, Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics* shows why Art proper, though *involving* actions and in part ‘productive’, should by rights be more aligned with ‘making’ (*poiesis*), via the ‘practical sciences’, ethics and logic, concerned with *knowing* rather than just perceiving the world. Knowing pertains to meaning, as perceiving pertains to sensing (though naturally both operate together). Given the ontological link between ethics and logic, by which Reason is implied, Schelling’s aesthetics identified Art’s principle as bound to Nature - through *meaning* productivity, *via these sciences*. Though not explicitly referencing Aristotle, Schelling contended artworks thus ‘become objective’ during a subject-object merger. This *aesthetic* distinction is what I argue no ‘mechanistic’ or ‘genetic’ replicant can possibly make.

To drive home the point that this unique ‘objectivity’ which an artwork ideally displays should not be misunderstood as ‘mathematical’ (i.e., *symbolic*), while indeed being just as much about *reality* as mathematics aims to be, consider Howard Pattee, a venerable theorist of complexity science, calling into question what some members of the Santa Fe Institute (which pioneered investigation into complex adaptive systems in the nineteen-nineties) tended to confuse (Gare *Systems Theory* 333):

- (1) computer-dependent realizations of living systems, (2) computer simulations of living-systems behaviour, (3) theories of life that derive from simulations, and (4) theories of life that are testable only by computer simulations.

Pattee and other complexity theorists argued that models of life are not the same as life itself. The problem concerns how we define ‘information’. When we take this as ‘in-form-ing’ *meaning*, the way an artwork ‘models’ life is rather more complex again than mere simulation.

All this considered, I contend that conceding *real* artmaking to any ‘tool’- even AI, as powerful as it may be - is in fact impossible.² Therefore, leaving art’s definition and use in AI’s hands is just flipping a counterfeit coin. It will only *ensure* the final decline and eventual disappearance of genuine art into ‘the museum’ and ‘virtual reality’, where many a glorified cultural artefact will continue to overshadow its real purpose in society. Also, the above-outlined confusions - seeded long ago in the modern mythology’s joint-historicising of humans and art - will with AI’s help surely advance a false ‘posthuman’ idealism consecrated by corporates. But, like any technology or ‘technology of action’ (e.g., *sfumato* in painting), AI could be used wisely to remedy all this. It could be employed to educate, to revive and enhance artmaking and admiring proper, helping us re-learn the importance of the distinctions needed here. While it regrettably demolishes the market for artisanship (serving new production monopolies), an unintended consequence may be presenting society with an opportunity to de-industrialise Art proper.³ Just as Florentine Renaissance artists innovated new methods in painting and sculpture to replace those lost in ancient Greece, a similar ‘renaissance’ is needed in *our* ‘modernity’ to rescue Art.

I will first provide some further context for these arguments (§1), then outline what constitutes the Principle of Art that distinguishes art from non-art (and anti-art) (§2). Expanding upon the reasons why AI is only a tool and alone can never be capable of meeting the conditions for artmaking circumscribed by its key criteria, requires explaining in some depth this Principle’s sounder basis in phenomenology than theoretical aesthetics. This includes reasons why the

² Much contemporary philosophising on AI and art assumes the opposite. Consider Nannicelli’s (*Mass AI-art*) ‘moderately skeptical perspective’ that maybe, just maybe, we might question that ‘mass AI-art is not art’: ‘It is a truism that in the wake of the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century, just about anything can be art today.... why couldn’t it also include the outputs of generative AI?’

³ Artisanship has always been subject to new technological development, with some regrettable losses in skills and techniques going back to ancient Greece and beyond. This is not new. Nor is the potential for technologies to advance artmaking. The problem is being deceived about what technology alone can achieve.

Imagination, particularly as it relates to art, is not reducible to ‘conceptualising’; returning us to why ‘artificial intelligence’ cannot replace human ‘practical intelligence’ in cultivating it (§3). I will conclude by summarising the threats to humanity of overestimating technology’s capabilities here, given AI’s inability to replicate the *fundamental* exemplary relation to Art that the Art-Person perfect sign demands. Being poised as it is to reduce the value of life via the mass production of diversions from reality, unless we take firm measures in education it will ensure a ‘post-humanist’ self-destructive trajectory toward mechanism, by guaranteeing neglect of what it is in fact *incapable* of learning from humans about the real value of Art.

In this scenario, employment redundancies in the ‘cultural and creative industries’ will be the least of our worries, compared with the possibility proper artmaking will vanish, as the futurologist Fred Polak suggested in the nineteen-fifties. The ascent of what Schelling two hundred years ago called ‘the mechanical artist’ had already by then become entrenched. The ‘arts business’ was by the nineteen-nineties, as Pierre Bourdieu claimed, just a ‘trade in reputations’, and all the trends indicate very little genuine art is now being made. But this pales in significance to the deeper associated problems; above all, upholding an ontological, ahistorical view of human ‘free will’. The mechanical dissociation of ‘meaning’ and ‘information’ creates many major ethical and practical lacunae, obscured by over-rapid technological uptake. Without thoughtful philosophical intervention, the autonomous delusion that posthumanism offers, mirrored in the proliferation of what is essentially ‘anti-Art’, will further conceal what a true pragmatist holds dear: the difference between believing and knowing. To revive the quest for autonomy that Gare earlier refers to, it is critical to show why, lacking ‘practical’ intelligence in *the truest* sense, AI can *never* make original art. Only by dwelling on the permanence of this limitation can we hope to stem art’s modern decline, the narrowing of the imagination, and the threat these pose to human existence.

1. FREEDOM FROM MECHANISM

Mechanism, though of course enormously useful, is also at the heart of what is most de-humanising. Humanity’s search for meaning concerns autonomy: freedom from predictability, from control - and our relationship to Nature is key

to this. So, it is important to firstly characterise how we should understand ‘natural science’, and provide some philosophical context for why we can derive from it that self-government and self-sufficiency are humanist ideals for optimising personal autonomy in relation to collective autonomy. This should then make what Art really has to do with these clearer. As Gare argues, natural science has taught us that chaos and catastrophe occur from metastable states of energy, but so too does order. Systems theory suggests that a truly healthy society is ‘one in which people spontaneously co-operate, not where they are regulated from above.’⁴ Hence questions of Freedoms versus Necessities are always at the heart of our polity, as well as our need to find a “free relation” with technology (Healy). It should not surprise, then, that the Freedom-Necessity nexus is also key to Art, and has a strong bearing on another key relation: the ‘realms’ of Beauty and Truth.

Art is forever *bound* to technologies of action, but in such a complex way that its ‘truthful’ beauty (its real-ity) is a function of its purposelessness in context with an *ultimate* purpose - its *end* (or, ‘final cause’). Schelling called this a merger of Knowledge with Action. While the ‘end’ of a clock, for instance, is signifying a measure of time passing, Time in the artwork is an ‘essence’ that must be exhausted to render a suspension of purposeful meaning so that we can witness a transformation of *values* (Trimarchi *Principle*). It is this process, not its ‘biological “mechanism”’ as such, that renders art most life-like. It simultaneously allows the emergence of what physicists have struggled to find another suitable word for: Spirit (Dahlin). In physical reality too, ‘spirit’ may be understood as the part-whole relation in process of becoming-being. Yet this ‘metaphysics’ has eluded many a social Darwinist in the Humanities.

Human freedoms are thus today often perceived to depend upon absorbing mechanism into *personal* being, mirrored in our built environment and society at large. The ‘utility’ of beauty and truth are conflated in our polity with questions of justice and purpose (machine-metaphor style), though much more than utility is at stake. Threats to the meaning of *personhood* itself shelter under tantalising pushes toward human ‘hybridisation’ and ‘enhancement’. As perceptions of individual *personality*, over *the relation* of individuals to the whole, came to define the Person’s identity following what Alasdair MacIntyre calls the ‘failed

⁴ For explanation of systems theory, chaos theory, and complexity theory in general see Gare *Systems Theory*.

enlightenment project' in Europe, moral philosophy deteriorated, and the *fragmentation* of ancient meanings of the above key relations influenced the meaning of life and Spirit in modern human culture.⁵

When corporations today, like Bloomberg, market posthumanism as the natural evolution of human 'progress', and the solution to the 'biological' origins of all our problems, we should therefore be suspicious. The eventual globalised mechanistic worldview that emerged with scientific materialism, reducing life to a 'machine metaphor', essentially stifles the very conditions for even *thinking* metaphorically. Our development's questionable association with posthumanism goes unchallenged partly because of the undeniably major advances in understanding nature via mathematical modelling that Enlightenment science offered, and new forms of observation that it produced, including as Gare says 'experiments in idealized situations, to advance inquiry' (*Fetishism* 748). Idealising a humanist future was part and parcel of the *birth* of science in ancient Greece, when inquiry into the natural world was thought of equally in terms of 'physics' and 'metaphysics', but noting briefly how this evolved into 'scientism', a deficient mechanistic form of inquiry that purported to be, as Gare says, 'the ultimate arbiter in matters of belief', will explain the modern turn to 'post-human' ideals.

Following Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum*, in the early seventeenth century, which sought to control Nature and the world via an inductive method, philosophers dismissed any concern with final causes. Descartes defended this 'new philosophy' (because of its usefulness in showing how to control nature), prompting Hobbes to redefine how we reason as follows:⁶

When man reasoneth, he does nothing else but conceive a sum total, from addition of parcels; or conceive a remainder, from subtraction of one sum from another: which, if it be done by words, is conceiving of the consequence of the names of all the parts, to the name of the whole; or from the names of the whole and one part, to the name of the other part.

Hobbes' reductive nominalism was 'absolutist', suiting the ruling elites of the day and warding off challenges that a *processual* attempt to describe reality offered. David Hume, in the eighteenth century, upheld the Hobbesian and Cartesian

⁵ In the east this occurred differently under similar forces. For an interesting historico-neurological account of this comparison see McGilchrist *The Master*.

⁶ See Hobbes *Leviathan* (Chapter V Of Reason and Science).

approaches to reason in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740), producing a ‘naturalistic science of man’ that focused on the psychological basis of human behaviour. Whereas in the previous century ‘natural philosophy’ was the name given to such work, this was a ‘scientistic’ development of ‘human nature’. Hume’s and John Locke’s scientism, via J. S. Mill’s utilitarianism, laid the foundations for what is broadly understood now as ‘social science’; but ‘science’ was only in the nineteenth century used to characterise all these traditions of thought. Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) has been credited with drawing together the many strands of science, elevating its modern stature as an integrated form of inquiry. But Humboldt, inspired by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, took a far more holistic and ‘connective’ relational view of Nature and human nature, privileging the emotions and reason equally, in the tradition of the liberal arts.⁷

Much later, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the rise of the logical positivists, came the defence of the exclusive cognitive claims of science that are the hallmark of scientism, inculcating the mechanistic neuroscientific model of the brain that until recently has prevailed. To characterise what transpired simply: the machine metaphor of life displaced the organic metaphor of life. In the humanities, ‘spirit’ became a function of ‘movable parts’; emotion and reason were entangled in compromising positions. The German Romantic Idealists and Romantic Poets, among others, had struggled to demystify their *integral* relation, but this was ultimately defeated by the growing influence of logical positivism on scientific inquiry. The resulting ‘modern’ mythological meaning crisis that according to Schelling originated in Christendom’s overturning of the ancient Greek mythology, evolved to make discerning Necessities and Freedoms, and constraining self-destructive freedoms, increasingly difficult. He argued ‘mechanistic science’ could only be replaced by developing ‘a demonstratively superior science’. It is here that real progress toward a science able to account for natural complexity emerges, whereupon human intellectual intuition may be better understood.

⁷ With his broad globally oriented scientific information gathering, Humboldt’s attempts to amalgamate the Imagination and Reason captivated the instigators of the American revolution like Thomas Jefferson, and inspired revolutionaries like Simon Bolivar, instilling both a respect for Nature and human autonomy. His famous ‘*Naturgemalde*’ is arguably the first grand attempt to integrate ‘information science’ with humanist philosophy.

Early on, Schelling supported R. J. Boscovich's and Immanuel Kant's ideas about nature as consisting of dynamic forces but, clearly influenced by Goethe's 'urform' (Urphänomen), developed Kant's concept of organisms as involved in maintaining their form rather than just existing as a balance of forces. Kant had begun in the tradition of Leibniz, striving to overcome Newtonian science's grip on the 'moderate enlightenment' philosophers (Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, etc.). Yet he accepted the need for concepts like Newton's to explain and grasp the world through mathematically precise laws, persisting today in the faith vested in algorithms. As Gare notes, 'Even though Newtonian physics has been replaced by the theories of relativity and quantum mechanics, Kant's privileging of mathematical physics and treatment of biological and ethical knowledge (and knowledge of ourselves as free agents) as in some way deficient, is still the orthodox view'. Despite this, Schelling's advances on Kant, featuring in his aesthetics as we will see, would later be realised in the development of complexity science.

In *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* (1786) Kant developed a dynamical conception of matter as the product of active forces, grounding natural science in *a priori* principles independent of experience. While embracing this, Schelling exposed some weaknesses, arguing for a process of self-constitution or self-organisation as being 'the primal ground of all reality' as Gare says, rather than a merely marginal phenomenon. Since the inorganic (or mechanistic) derives from the organic, he assumed nature should be able to make understandable the notion of free, aware agents emerging from it. Countering Kant's notion of 'community', he characterises reciprocal causation as basic and linear cause effect relations as derivative, linking the part-whole and becoming-being relations. As he put it, says Gare: "'The organic ... produces itself, arises out of itself. ... No single part could arise except in this whole, and this whole itself consists only in the interaction of the parts. ... Cause and effect is something evanescent, transitory, mere appearance.' Whatever product or form exists is in perpetual process of forming itself, and this is how nature should be understood."

It is also the key to relating the 'organ-ism' of human meaning productivity *intuitively* to that of an artwork, and developing a better understanding of the 'complexity science' of artistic creativity (Trimarchi *Way Out*).

Because living organisms are different from non-living organisms their

complexity makes it more difficult to maintain a state of ‘indifference’ – of relative equilibrium or stasis. ‘They must’, as Gare explains, ‘respond to changes in their environments creatively to form and reform themselves as products’ (*Systems Theory* 336). Hence:

Life is the condition for the emergence of spirit, with its social forms and their history. Rejecting Kant’s claim that organisms as organisms can never be the subject of science, that it is only as objects that they can be known, Schelling defended the role of non-objective intuition through which organisms can be viewed not as objects standing over against subjects, but as actively emerging. Nature regarded as mere product is for us an object; but as productivity, it is for us subject.

This notion of ‘indifference’, turns up in Schelling’s aesthetics as a useful way of describing the difference between an artwork’s process of becoming meaningful (its semiotic productivity) and its perception as a ‘product’ (its ‘final cause’). It helps explain the artwork’s ‘subject-objectivation’ – its end - as one of meaningful ‘disclosure’ (but for this we will have to turn to Peirce). Our intellectual intuition of such ‘indifferences’ – in freedoms/necessities, or beauty/truth perception – is thus rendered an ‘objective’ quality by virtue of our own subjective interaction with it. Michael Polanyi has defended this notion of intuition in science (though without using this term) as the *uniquely* human propensity for ‘indwelling’ in tacit meaning. All explicit knowledge in science, he argued, is grounded in tacit knowledges; such that a prerequisite for knowing is in fact the skill of intuiting that which may not even be present. This, as Max Scheler refers to it, is taking ‘practical account’ of reality; a notion that appears in Aristotle’s *Ethics*. But today the philosophical anthropology of ‘practical intelligence’ has made the phenomenology of all this understandable through the links between *Gestalt* psychology and the natural sciences, by way of complexity theory:

Knowledge requires us to ‘indwell’ in that which is being explained and the theories which explain it so that whatever is focussed upon is made sense of in relation to a tacitly appreciated background knowledge. Appreciation of wholes is, then, more basic than analysis, and is presupposed by, and the condition of understanding, what is analysed. Once this is understood, the appreciation of humans as subjects no longer involves an unbridgeable chasm with the natural sciences.

(Gare *Systems Theory* 336).

However, this ‘knowing’ requires considering *Information* as not just bits or ‘bytes’, but as part of a process of in-forming meaning; that is, in terms of the kind of complexity that Art demands of us in ‘indwelling’ its meaningfulness. And complexity theorists have parted ways here.

Complexity science originated with efforts to extend reductionist science to deal with apparently complex phenomena, and to explain away this complexity as nothing but the effect of a large number of interacting components. C. H. Waddington took this up, but defended complexity as irreducible, in the Schellingian tradition. This divergence is apparent in Gregory Bateson’s characterisation of information as a ‘difference that makes a difference’, compared with Robert Rosen’s more radical opposition to mechanistic or ‘substance’ thinking, claiming that it is only as ‘the answer to a question’ that information has meaning. This Peircian pragmatic approach was rejected by those embracing reductionist ‘code biology’ in the development of biosemiotics, highlighting some difficulties with Schelling and Peirce. Then, with theorists like Brian Goodwin embracing Waddington’s view of the intrinsic dynamics of organisms over ‘traditional biology’ (conceived reductively via a focus on genetic determinacy), which they claimed makes biology ‘mechanistic’ and essentially meaningless, advances of Schelling and Peirce were made.

George Cowan, a founding member of the Santa Fe Institute, argued that complex systems such as humans and human societies demand we account for ‘the dynamic property of complexity, the motion pictures, not the snapshots’, since it is this that truly characterises their reality. From this perspective, science requires information systems to account for emergence; for which, as Rosen shows, mathematics alone is inadequate. For ‘becoming’ to have any meaning, the future cannot be pre-determined, yet the deterministic unpredictability of chaos and complexity theory suggests the future is knowable. Some, like Ilya Prigogine however, argued that deterministic trajectories are illegitimate idealisations, calling reductionist biosemiotics into question. Rosen, Goodwin, and others’ challenges highlight that ‘emergent levels of ordering have to be appreciated as real in their own right’ (Gare *Systems Theory* 338). This was been further developed by Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana into a theory of ‘autopoiesis’, wherein Peirce’s ‘social science’ notion of the Art-Person’s ‘perfect sign’ autonomous double-unity in Organism comes to the fore.

And with it, the significance of the organic metaphor of life to *genuine* Art-making and *appreciating*, through which a realistic notion of human ‘Spirit’ may be obtained.

A more suitable definition of Spirit, given these developments in natural science, is then not simply grounded in the mechanics of social reality as Hegel argued, but in Scheler’s terms as that form of reality ‘which points beyond itself to something other than itself’. This offers the social dimension to the science of Ecology proposed as the basis for an integrated world-view by Robert Ulanowicz. ‘Human Ecology’, which according to Gare requires taking ‘as our starting point the perspective of the whole’ (a *metaphoric* standpoint), offers a return to valuing the world archetypally as the ancients did; but, with the benefit of complexity science, viewing archetypal chaotic and unpredictable behaviour via a philosophy of ‘speculative naturalism’. And here the inherently *metaphoric* relationship between Personhood and a *naturalised* conception of Art ‘as principle’ emerges as a way of rescuing both (Trimarchi *Harmonising*).

As I have argued elsewhere, Mechanism cannot deal with the important relationship between meaning and valuing. Even as AI becomes more sophisticated, it will only ever be able to take an atomistic approach to the part-whole relation in semiosis. It can never be taught to ‘think’ metaphorically because, according to Schelling, Peirce or Scheler’s notions of ‘the self’, semiosis does not emerge in a detached mind; it is first and foremost involved in our embodied practical engagement in the world. The symbolic symbiosis of humans and human culture presupposes and is based on this more primitive but essential semiosis (for which the broader history of seeing Peirce in relation to Schelling sketched out above is important to understand). This is most prominently brought out more recently in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Mark Johnson’s research confirming humans as *essentially* ‘metaphoric creatures’.

The problem with reductionist complexity theory and information science is that the significance of Metaphor is submerged, as human autonomy must ultimately be sacrificed for utility. Which is self-defeating of *the ideal* human telos. This represents a crisis of *meaning*, played out over millennia in the conflict between individualism and collectivity, and now palpable in the tensions between governments needing to curtail how Big Tech uses information, while protecting freedom of information and the precepts of free market capitalism (necessity vs

freedom). Cultures cannot create sound values when ruled by the tyranny of the profit motive, or any other tyranny. Subsequently, as Gare notes, the views of management theorists about complexity and our ‘free relation’ with technology belie their politics (*Systems Theory* 338):

Whether systems theory and complexity ... are interpreted reductionistically or in the spirit of Schelling largely determines their political implications. The orthodox reductionists are always on the lookout for ideas that might facilitate further control of the world and of people. There is no place for the spontaneous, free agency of people. Reductionists have generally been happy to treat complexity theory as supportive with only slight modifications of a market economy and a social Darwinist view of history. [...] The anti-reductionists are sensitive to the reality of that which has emerged. They are prone to concern about the future of life and of human life on Earth, realities which, having emerged, could be destroyed. They grant a place to humans as free agents who can take responsibility for the future. ... [O]ne of the important implications of the new science of complexity is that it implies that individual action could make a difference to the future of the world.

The natural fact that ‘creativity takes place at the edge of chaos’ is what makes play in any healthy society not *an end*, but *a means* to an end. Losing this perspective – in the industrialising of Sport as much as anything else (like video-gaming) - is emblematic of the politicised deterioration of understanding how the ‘biological principle’ connects Art proper with human Purpose.

ART AND THE HUMAN TELOS

Such problems of *perception*, that a mechanistic worldview inadvertently creates, are widespread in daily life. But the deterministic trajectories of illegitimate idealisations they generate are underwritten by industry. Innovations, like the ‘computer-brain interface’ for instance, may eventually produce some real benefits; but they are also prone to make Transhumanists think they can create “better humans” (while lacking a credible definition for this). Similarly, the medicalising and psychologising of gender identity succumbs to ‘mechanistic science’. If, for example, I identify myself ‘culturally’ according to sexual *attraction*, I might feel this signifies my ‘personhood’ (though clearly personhood is more than this). Or I might be convinced that I am *biologically* really a differently sexually oriented person in the wrong body, and that changing this artificially can resolve this conflict (which, of course, is contentious).

The important lesson to learn from developments in natural science, is that

we should not confuse biology with culture. The scientific tendency to think of human culture as manifesting diversity via a 'biological principle' of deterministic information transfer, is misconceived. Social Darwinism arose because human cultures are obviously dominated by *perceptions* of being. But the *knowing* of this being is not necessarily the same. Knowing obtains, as Scheler's philosophical anthropology shows, from deliberative 'preferring' rather than 'choosing' - two different acts, which have been conflated in modernity (but Aristotle explains in the *Ethics*). Preferring is associated with a *primordial* 'higher class' of feelings that are not reactive, according to Scheler. So, depending on what takes precedence in our *social* habituation, 'loving and hating' may manifest as merely "emotional acts" of choosing.

Hence why Hobbes' simplistic Newton-inspired determinism - the rule of Reason governed simply by appetites and aversions, adding and subtracting, and words being coined to facilitate this - proved seductive. Many in the Humanities - like 'humanists' misled in the past (Prawat) - became advocates of such deceptions, which universities and their scientific, transnational corporatised web of commercial interests then promoted. This fundamental confusion - about the 'biological principle' of semiosis conflated with *higher* meaning productivity - reflects a long-term trend toward the usurping of humanism by posthumanism, which must be characterised as 'anti-humanist' (Gare *Against Posthumanism*).

While biology clearly has a bearing on human-ness, extending 'traditional biology' to culture risks conflating three different kinds of 'semiotic freedom' (vegetative, animal, and human). The human 'vital urge' - or 'animal' semiosis - occurs via actions. But human cultures emerged from Nature through additional more sophisticated symbolic semiosis - i.e., meaning that is not merely 'action-outcome' related. This accounts for the complexity of meaning produced in something like Art, our unique and most powerful invention for mythologising our individual self-actualisation. And thus, as Schelling argued, also for *collectivising* it in a social totality.

Art is concerned with the 'actualisation' (entelechy) of not just *ideas* - but, simultaneously, the very important idea of the Person: its *eidos* ('form'), in Aristotle's terms. Peirce defined the Person as a species of sign, a form of semiosis in its innermost being; and Scheler, as the ultimate bearer of ethical value (echoing Peirce's 'pragmatic maxim'). Applying their logic, it is ethics then, via

aesthetics, that ‘in-forms’ the Art-Person perfect sign – a sign, in modernity, manipulated by theories of choice. Aesthetics, if it is the ‘science of admiring’ that Peirce claimed, hence concerns *preferring* more than choosing, and *knowing* more than perceiving.

Given the difference of how semiosis is dispersed in Nature and human cultures, the biological principle is thus not directly in line with *Art’s* principle (Trimarchi *Principle*). Art is indeed semiotically ‘organic’ (as opposed to the ‘fixity’ of artefacts), yet it is not *biologically* ‘material’, as a ‘biological materialist’ Aristotelian like Armand Marie Leroi would have it. Thinking the latter just misappropriates perfectly legitimate biological science to the philosophy of art, as if they are not constituted by different features leading to each principle. Which they are. Such biologists are then apt to believe ‘machine’ or ‘genetic’ learning can get to the bottom of what it takes to make art. But as later elaborated, they are simply confusing art with Nature’s ‘general aesthetic’ *patterning* ‘teleology’ (or “mechanism”). Great artists, like Leonardo da Vinci or Shakespeare (who observed Nature and human nature intricately), in fact transform the latter patterning behaviour into knowledge about reality *that surpasses* what is perceptible. This is how we must define *Art proper*.

Though Nature’s “mechanism” and Art’s ‘telos’ are *both* purposeless, artmaking possesses *ontological purposefulness* which Aristotle distinguished from the purposefulness of artefacts. Misunderstanding this leads to believing AI can make *original* art, just by mastering the complexity of calculating ‘parts’ of the process of artmaking into its whole. It is not that simple. It is important to realise this, not from the ‘vitalist’ standpoint of Hans Driesch (i.e., that machines can’t make organisms), but from Peirce’s ‘semiotic realist’ and Scheler’s anthropological one, revealing why AI cannot *intuit* the Art-Person perfect sign relation.⁸ It can only copy it. Aristotle’s principle of Nature is ‘built for biologists’ as Leroi says, but Art pursues the human condition *in transcending* the lower biological/vital urges or ‘values’ on Scheler’s hierarchy (Trimarchi *Principle*). Unlike the artisan, then, the artist *models* Nature not *mimics* it, such that the artwork’s “organism” *points beyond* the lower values while harnessing Nature’s auto-poietic ‘accidentality’ (its *internal*

⁸ This circumvents suggestions such as Edward Conklin’s that Driesch merely wasn’t thinking of a complex enough ‘living machine’.

principle of change and rest - or, *teleology*).

Peirce and Scheler's insights are supported by Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. Advancing upon Aristotle's *Poetics*, while highlighting active subjectivity Schelling revived the significance of Art's meaningful *objectivity*. Together these philosophers reposition art as *fundamental* to humanism, in more than the degraded 'emotivist', empathic, internalised way so-called 'democratised' notions of 'creativity' have since reduced it to in the humanities. As a complexity science, in which the study of phenomenological semiosis in artworks themselves uncovers its true 'immaterial' higher value to humanity, Art's link to the 'practical sciences' in Aristotelian natural philosophy is restored. The importance of reviving this ancient link to Personhood is clear: *all* meaning comes to us from Nature, through the human body (Lakoff & Johnson *Metaphors*). The task of artists and aesthetes is to discern how *real* Spirit arises *from* it.

However, *abstracting* meaning from the body became a common way to objectify reality in modern mythology. Though we are naturally 'metaphoric creatures', this kind of fragmented symbolic instrumental *subjectivising* tendency has generated various idealised 'transfigurations' of personhood as transgenderism, transhumanism, and posthumanism. Deconstructive postmodernism promotes this mechanistic form of subject-objectivation, most prominently in so-called 'conceptual art' - which is not art at all but cultural artefact (Trimarchi *Aesthetics of Meaning*). These belief-related social relativities associated with personhood derive from the possessive individualism which anti-Art came to be useful for advancing, in what Macintyre in *After Virtue* calls 'modern' ideology. The need to counter our growing tendency for idealising *fragmenting* 'conceptual' reality, to be able to develop the proper 'political community' that is necessary for humanity's *survival*, was one of his key concerns:

It is not just that we live too much by a variety and multiplicity of fragmented concepts; it is that these are used at one and the same time to express rival and incompatible social ideals and policies and to furnish us with a pluralist political rhetoric whose function is to conceal the depth of our conflicts. (253)

The question of Purpose binding art and humanity is thus clearly associated with our divided world, and how we determine 'use-value'. Since Plato wrestled with the idea of Forms, anyone connecting acts of meaning and valuing to universalise reality more meaningfully has had to confront the essentially

utilitarian tendency to conflate ‘facts’ with ‘values’, and ‘ends’ with ‘means’. Mixing up Aristotle’s formal, material, and efficient causes with *final* cause - as indeed earlier philosophers like Empedocles did – simply produced a degraded modern Art-Person relation. What Radical Enlightenment thinkers in the Schellingian tradition have understood instead is that the ‘practical science’ of discerning between believing and knowing, of knowing how to choose *between values*, is cultivated by *aesthetics* because it *precedes* ethics and logic. This is why together they are called ‘normative’ sciences. Their binding of the Art-Person perfect sign, which Schelling describes as art’s inherent ‘collectivising intent’, presents a reality check for post-humanists of all stripes.

What eludes aesthetes today is the difference between higher-order metaphoric and lower-order symbolic meaning, that separates knowing from perceiving. As Big-Tech, AI, and all manner of gadgets vie for our attention, it will become increasingly crucial to know why chief among technology’s limitations is the impossibility of acquiring the intellectual intuition to make this distinction. Aristotle simply called it ‘right thinking’. To understand how the Principle of Art employs it to be able to reconnect humanity with Nature in ‘final cause’, more detailed examination of Art and the Self’s historically deconstructed instrumentalising is helpful.

ART AS TOOL (FOR SYMBOLIC IDEALISM)

Art’s instrumentalising began in the modern mythology’s artificial historicising of it, together with humans (Schelling). The lower-order *symbolic* form of universalising (or ‘worlding’) that is the basic function of all languages, which creates an habitual tendency to abstract and fragment meaning for convenience (e.g., hieroglyphs), is an historicising function. With this skill, as children we develop object permanence and a sense of self in early experience with causation (‘action-outcome’ beliefs). But without proper socialised norms of ‘value-ception’ (which ancient societies offered via ‘custom’), the imagination is apt to reflect inwardly the world that becomes most familiar to it. This ‘functionalism’ has opened a lasting chasm between the self and Other in modernity, rather than the temporary natural split between them that art produces in contemplation.

Art’s decline into subjectivity (Bowie), originating in early Christianity (Schelling) and culminating in a merger with techno-science, has made it – or

rather its imposters - a powerful tool for nurturing the ‘private world’ myth.⁹ A myth that grew into posthuman ideology via scientism by pitting concepts of Necessity and Freedom against each other in our imaginaries. (Freedom, Hobbes argued, was about ‘acquiring a *will* to obey laws’). Along with Cartesian dualism, false aesthetic lawmaking (derived from theories) set art on a course that would extract it philologically (as a study of the ‘language of art’) from any association with the practical sciences. As a ‘theory of beauty’ or pleasure alone, it became useful to social-Darwinist theoretical manipulations of formal, material, or efficient causes, via psychologism. With hyper-industrialisation came the technospheric colouring of our human-environment interaction perceptions, making human and all other life via such mythologising reducible to lower-order utility and fantasy (Gare *Philosophical Anthropology*). As noted, the Art-Person perfect sign was recalibrated mechanistically to suit this cultural transformation.

Today, the notion of life evolving disembodied in virtual reality, in Kurzweilian ‘singularity’ myths, permits posthumanists to idealise our submission to mechanism as inevitable, and *ultimately* “pragmatically” transformative. We are cajoled into believing we can leap-frog over ethical conundrums as easily as we can manipulate natural processes. But this is a distortion of true pragmatism, as C. S. Peirce’s original pragmatic maxim defines it (famously misappropriated by William James’ instrumental functionalism). Pragmatism is based on *ethical* human conduct. Instead, posthuman symbolic idealism recasts Heidegger’s proposed practical ‘free relation’ to technology as ‘God-given’ superiority over Nature, following Hobbesian distortion of Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’. This subverts the meaning of normativity in the ‘natural science’ linkage between aesthetics, ethics, and logic. And it ignores the fact that ‘mechanism’ and ‘teleology’ are two different species of ‘acts’ (Trimarchi *Principle*).

With Kant’s reversal of how aesthetics was defined - as concerned with perceiving instead of knowing – the theorising of ‘art as concept’ has hence

⁹ The effect of mechanism is to highlight the part over the whole. The modern mythology grew from this conceptualising tendency: universalising particularity (lower-order symbolism). Early Christianity harnessed it to make Christ a symbol representing the ‘universal truth’ of one’s individual relationship with God. But also, that this ‘truth’ could only be revealed (i.e., *known* to be true) through the institutional congregation - ‘the Church’. While intentionally ‘collectivising’, revealed religion is ultimately divisive and fragmenting because of how this ‘symbolic worlding’ operates ideo-logically on the individual human psyche, narrowing perception (Schelling, McGilchrist).

dominated its study and practice. All manner of subjectivist philosophising emerged, despite resistance from radical enlightenment thinkers, as art descended into little more than amusements.¹⁰ Eventually, fake conceptual art's flourishing became normalised, with Danto's claim that almost any object could become art if it had some relationship to an 'artworld'. Theoretical aestheticians and institutions, while not accounting for why, nevertheless shamelessly underwrote this delusion (Bruns).¹¹ Iain McGilchrist in *The Master and His Emissary* describes this 'world' as one created by the brain's left-hemisphere, and its evolved specialisation for nominalist symbolic abstraction. In the LH's private world... '[a]rt becomes a game in which the emptiness of a wholly insubstantial world, in which there is nothing beyond the set of terms we have in vain used to "construct" meaning, is allowed to speak for its own vacuity'.¹²

The illusion is one of security and autonomy enabled by 'permanent revolution': the LH's idea of 'novelty' (and, of course, a feature of unbridled market capitalism). But the renewal is not real, and it should by now be clear why neither human autonomy nor art's is aided by the subjectivising of either, and their reduction to 'symbolic capital'. With this delusory 'reality' now driving the human telos, modern mythology is poised (via AI) to unleash even more nihilistic anti-humanist threats to both autonomies than "art"-fuelled mind-control industries like advertising already have. Whether artificial or practical intelligence is in control of creativity will pivot on restoring the integral link between aesthetics, ethics, and logic. Whatever art owes to this difference has however been decimated, and its disappearance into the museum is poised to precede ours into space. With "art" merely *reflecting* reality, this is a self-fulfilling allegory. Although NASA's research shows the human body deteriorates in anti-gravity, the impractical symbolic ideal of living on Mars captivates the imagination more than rescuing our only real home in the cosmos.¹³

¹⁰ See Gare *Radical Enlightenment*.

¹¹ See also: Malcolm Bull, "Why is there the amount of Art that there is?", *New Left Review* (2025): 151 Jan/Feb. Though Bull shows Danto's 'artworld' prescription is delusory, his answer to its flourishing presupposes a false neo-Kantian, orthodox Marxist view of "art" supported by Neoliberal market-driven ideology.

¹² McGilchrist (422f.) cited in Gare *Review* 420.

¹³ Are we to live in a 'bubble' constructed around Mars? Would this not cost more than preserving our biosphere? Or are 'space adventure' shareholdings - in SpaceX alone, currently valued at trillions of dollars

Similarly, AI will likely dominate the non-/anti-art cultural artefact-making machinery of the symbolic 'artworld'. Celebrity-cult, manufactured, dynastic, mega-buck industry fake artists will likely continue to be consecrated cultural oligarchs of this system; owning its means of production, and suffocating the public sphere with their ubiquitous individualised brands and empires. But as for the rest, what will become of our true 'creatives'?

Most will either be consumed by this purely materialist aspiration; or if they are making Art proper, like anyone working unrecognised now, they'll continue to do so unsupported in isolation, given so little demand for it in the marketplace. The latter, an optimist might imagine, under the right conditions could evolve organically into a real art 'industry'. But, given the embedded economic imperative of the "arts business", AI's proliferation will most likely see it used as a tool for making more anti-Art. All publicly supported genuine artmaking will disappear, unless people learn to make the distinction.¹⁴ Big Tech will produce an increasingly artless world of mainly entertainments, until their vacant meaninglessness dawns on people. But chances of this are slim, as Cultural and Creative Industries continue to mine the 'fodder for human hunger' in the general aesthetic bottomless pit that Nature provides - further sending the self, with art, into instrumental virtual reality.¹⁵

ART AND THE SELF

Nietzsche, like earlier philosophers, opposed the false 'democratising' of art inherent in its meaningless subjectivising. But his notion of the 'will to power' was converted into the self-indulgent wilfulness of modern artistic 'self-creation' via psychological 'self-realisation'.¹⁶ Career artists and transhumanists alike have ignored art's essential salutary purposelessness, just as professional philosophers and psychologists transformed Nietzsche's 'self-overcoming' *speciating* idea into

– really underwriting techno-wars and joy rides into space in popular imagination? What price the freedom/necessity trade-offs here?

¹⁴ The *Australia Council for the Arts* is now *Creative Australia*, reflecting the global trend in 'democratising' art's definition as generalised 'creation'.

¹⁵ This is how Schelling, two centuries ago, refers to the early modern novel's decline (see Trimarchi *Art in Particular*).

¹⁶ George Bernard Shaw's claim that 'Life isn't about finding yourself, it's about creating yourself', takes on ludicrous dimensions when anything can be art.

individualist internalised “transfiguration”. Thus, where once art’s inbuilt *collectivising* intent projected the self<->Self reciprocal relation (i.e., *whole* Person-ness), the study of aesthetics has confined it and popular imagination of its relation to ‘person-ality’ (affectation), to the fragmenting conceptual limits of Formism and Hedonism. This, essentially, distorted Art’s subject-objectivation of reality in favour of the subject (the *part*). A purely self-*legitimizing*, symbolic idealist, deconstructive postmodern “art” thus tied the once conjoined ideals of Art and Humanism to ersatz culturally determined ‘product-ivity’.

But neither humans nor art are ‘products’ as such. Art’s claim on personhood is, as Schelling in *The Philosophy of Art* claims, not directed ‘toward sense reality, but rather always toward *beauty elevated above all sensuality*’ (129). The Beauty-Truth merger in every true artwork uncovers how the real historical *essence* of ‘being’ is tied to Nature. *Human* ‘being’, like the artwork’s, rests only in a temporal stage of becoming. As knowledge and action merge in each, we are a self-constraining activity where process and product are simultaneously subject and object. Art’s ‘object’ and humans are both *subjects* while in the process of becoming, and to the extent that they become a “product”, the Person is their *Object* writ large in the grand narrative of Life.

This constitutes *the only* way humans can be legitimately ‘objectified’ without being degraded. It defines the Art-Person perfect sign, whereby either ‘Object’ can self-actualise freely in moving toward ‘concrete reasonableness’. The artwork (like us) is thus never a finished product, as such. If it were, it would be an artefact (‘dead matter’) having no *real* relation in our intellectual intuition to human becoming. This recalls Paul Ricoeur’s definition of a ‘dead metaphor’ (lexicalised, reverting to concept) described in *The Rule of Metaphor*. Because Life’s end (‘final cause’) is the emergence of spirit, humans have a real relation to the world; which, in its social and historical existence, art ‘in-forms’.

But art becomes self-conscious when the self is not *reflexively* obtained in the *Other*. And the self’s real Spirit is thwarted, as its reflection is just a ‘dead matter’ object bereft of any free will. And the ‘art’ of its rendering in form becomes artificial. It becomes ‘unreal’. Art, as Merleau-Ponty argued, hence cannot really be owned; and, like us, would be devalued in this event (Kaushik). It only relates to Personhood *ontologically* in *becoming*. That is, in a far more primordial, ‘sacred’, ‘organic’ way than any manufactured sensuality can replicate. ‘Since sensation is a *reconstitution*’, says Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*, we can see why

art ‘pre-supposes in me sediments left behind by some previous constitution, so that I am [...] a repository stocked with natural powers’ (192).¹⁷ Thus genuine art, having this greater natural-historical claim on us, *transcends* the ‘sensible’ world – pointing to higher values.

But, like Narcissus entranced by his reflection in the pond, western artists (in particular) were captured by a self-“realising” illusion that art offers, by virtue of its *naturally* subjectifying power. That is, through refracted, unconnected fragments of ‘beauty’ and ‘truth’ pieced together in a *positivistic materialist* take on Freedom and Necessity. How do highly successful “artists” today describe themselves and their *idea* of success in this wholly insubstantial, mechanically self-determining world, of ‘revolution’ fixed in the present?

The female artists that I know of have reinvented themselves twenty times more than the male artists. They have to, or else you’re out of a job [...] Constantly finding new facets of yourself that people find to be shiny. “Be new to us. Be young to us. But only in a new way, and only the way we want [...] only in a way that we find to be equally comforting; but also, a challenge for you. Live out a narrative that we find to be interesting enough to entertain us, but not so crazy that it makes us uncomfortable.” This is probably one of my last opportunities as an artist to grasp onto that kind of success.

(Taylor Swift: *the Eras Tour*, 2023)

The ‘ideal self’ is this youthful malleable thing which, like a bowerbird foraging for glittery objects to attract attention, must find fulfillment in this and the reciprocity of superficial, de-humanising aspirations. The art<->person identity (albeit materially lucrative), is made a ‘vocation’ to this mental slavery. The person<->Person (individual-other) reciprocity too is reduced to utility. Today’s entire “arts” economy revolves around a delusory will to power: to make others see oneself in their own *personality*. It consecrates a false, cowardly ‘modern’ mythology which is impotent to rise to the heights of the ancients’ *true* heroic Mythology (Schelling).

With Art and the Person now essentially split, our *world* is de-futurised (Polak). Could technology like AI repair this deficient form of ‘self-actualisation’, or is it likely to be the final nail in both Art and the Person’s coffin? Will computer-brain interface innovations extend our imaginaries, or just make the Private World

¹⁷ Emphasis mine, pointing to the *re-productive* Imagination (see later).

appear more real? As MacIntyre claims, modernity cast the Self adrift after the failed enlightenment project to suffer the same fragmenting fate as Art. Following this trend, AI will likely strengthen posthuman ideology, with an inevitable further decline in artistic values due to growing technicism (Howells & Moore). The reason genuine art had *the primordial* power described earlier is because its ‘perfect sign’ relation to the Person was once able to elevate this highest bearer of values.

Although AI, like any other technology, can certainly be a *tool* for artmaking, it is ideally suited to making cultural artefacts because of how we treat art and humanity as ‘historical objects’. And also because it seems there is no limit to how low what we now *call* “art” can go, to certify the manufactured illusion of its flourishing?

ART AND HUMANITY’S AHISTORICAL SEMIOSIS

Contemporary aesthetic theorists (e.g., Bertinetto) notoriously blur the boundaries between *artistic* practice and any *activity* involving ‘general aesthetic’ *experience*. This completely disregards Aristotle’s distinction between action (*praxis*) and making (*poiesis*).¹⁸ As well as ignoring certain logical semiotic intuitions involved in each which, though born in Nature, are uniquely human and simply not transferable to mechanism. Robots may learn to improvise an action, for instance, but improvisation or ‘accidentality’ alone are not *ends* and do not constitute a ‘practice’ in Aesthetics as a study program (i.e., a ‘tradition of thought’). The true meaningfulness of the latter (its *Purpose*) - and the fact there is a clear relation of phenomena to ends in genuine artmaking - reveals what makes just any aesthetic *act-ivity* different to an *artistic practice* (Trimarchi *Principle*). Assimilating genuine art with anything just resembling it in the ‘general aesthetic’ like this, is the result of yielding to Historicism. This has led to thinking of art as a tool for merely lower-order symbolic manipulation, and the self as ‘a form’ malleable by virtue of reflective affectation (person-ality), degrading the meaning of both, and of their ‘perfect signification’ in History.

For instance, if we think of art as merely a language for the portrayal of concepts, music can be reduced to an aesthetic rebellion against tonality (which,

¹⁸ All experience is, naturally, fundamentally aesthetic; but ‘act-ing’ alone can’t be described as an ‘aesthetic practice’ as some scholars propose. See <https://www.jyu.fi/en/events/exploring-aesthetic-practices>.

essentially, reduces music to ordered/dis-ordered *sounds*). John Cage famously “composed” a piece titled *4’33”*: consisting of four minutes and thirty-three seconds of ‘conducting’ an orchestra in silence – the idea being that whatever ambient sound captured in the auditorium in that period becomes the ‘musical piece’. In such historicising ‘avantgarde’ manifestations, attention to form just leads to Form-*ism* (an ‘ide-ology’). Similarly, if we think of the self as merely ‘a form’, whose becoming is driven by pleasures alone and not some higher aspiration to ‘being’, its meaning is reduced to a succession of pleasures. In each case, reductive historicisms preside over the search for truth. If necessity and freedom, beauty *or* ugliness, are only linked to pleasure without the demand for an adequate interpretation of *the value to meaningfulness* of such a connection, then absurdity prevails. Absurdity, as an end-in-itself, has no transcendent value – rather only a nihilistic one.¹⁹ A nihilist is someone who holds that any aspirational ‘whole’ counted by its parts equals zero (or that neither parts nor wholes exist).

Nihilistic “art” is, by definition, deliberately counter-utopian and de-futurising in intent because it inhabits a world of fascination in ‘perfection’ of the so-called inner dualities of pleasure and pain or beauty and ugliness. It *purposefully* creates dissonance in the balance we normally seek between freedom and necessity; just as Cage’s so-called ‘prepared piano’ deliberately creates “musical” dissonance.²⁰ (With *4’33”* we are supposed to believe in the dissonant dualistic concept of ‘music’ defined as time passing in virtual silence. Failing this, we must not be thinking “artistically” enough, or just ‘mis-interpreting’). Arbitrariness or ‘accidentality’ become a ‘form’ of *preferring* (despite claims to Freedom), as any meaningful relation between form and non-form vanishes into ‘technique’. Deliberative dissonance merely manifests the manipulation of ‘information’, rather than meaningful in-forming.

Biosemioticians argue semiosis is teleological because *all* meaning in the cosmos is ever in search of more adequate ‘interpretants’. There is a scale upon which meanings and values are connected. Vegetative semiosis produces biological-form interpretants. Animal semiosis produces action-outcome interpretants. And humans produce symbolic semiosis for advancing

¹⁹ Even though genuine Comedy and Tragedy delve in absurdity, Schelling shows why this is far from arbitrary – Art draws on the absurd *purposefully*, for more than mere affect or effect (Trimarchi *Way Out*).

²⁰ This is a piano ‘prepared’ with objects inserted between strings to distort its tonality.

comprehension or understanding of the world. In all cases, as Peirce's 'semiotic realism' shows, there is a history of instances of semiosis as interpretants become signs for further semiosis. Only in humans, however, is symbolic *complexity* intuitable metaphorically, and *prior to* interpretation. Metaphor offers historical transcendence. Nature's biological "mechanism" (teleology) – via the part-whole and becoming-being phenomena – thus naturally produces Spirit (*Geist*). But, since only humans make history, our 'zeitgeist' (literally, the spirit of an historical period) becomes meaningful only when it is *ontologically* connected to the Cosmos via 'the Other'. As Schelling claimed, 'True mythology' is a metaphor of 'the ideas', only made possible 'through forms of nature' – because only via the modality of metaphor can they represent 'an absolute and complete rendering finite (*Verendlicbung*) of infiniteness' (by which the self's relation to Otherness is understood).

In other words, *true* Personhood, and *truly artistic* ideation (mythologised *Ideally*) together reflexively consist in an aspiration toward higher meaning-value. Combining Peirce and Scheler's views, their *End* is 'Holy' semiosis.²¹ If human Spirit is reduced conceptually to a 'zeitgeist', then we are only objects placed *in time* (whereby time becomes a prison). This is what the futurologist, Fred Polak, meant by claiming that art had become so conceptualised and culturally overdetermined as to be, and to render *us*, stuck in the present. When the History-Nature nexus is broken by historicism, in our 'technosphere' this reflects the world as only an *historical* zeitgeist. Human nature alone can combine these 'material' and 'immaterial' elements of world, and we do this most effectively through Art *proper*.

Using any 'technologies of action', as John Cage did, we can turn any object into a theory of meaning. That is, 'materialised' as an artwork *or* artefact. So how should we 'practically' *distinguish* these? The answer lies in Schelling's claim that art 'as principle' is *ahistorical*. Nature's teleology is *also* ahistorical.²² For humanity to have a free relation with Nature *and* technology, to be able to judge what is *good* and understand what is *sacred*, means that humans, like art, must therefore *in practice* maintain a truly cosmological, ontological, *ahistorical* disposition toward

²¹ The pre-Christian etymological origin of Holy is 'whole' (see Trimarchi *Principle*).

²² By which is meant Nature and History are joined *ontologically* (cosmologically). Only humans 'make' history.

meaning.

Only the ahistoricity of human ‘*being*’ ensures meaning’s *realness*; and that our autonomy is bound to Art’s in a pragmatic *futurising* orientation.

Technology – if bound to art for ulterior reasons – simply ties us unnaturally to historical determinism. This ‘historical materialism’ presents a fundamental limitation, which explains why there can be no real ‘*posthuman* art’. Essentially, this is because *the Art-Person perfect sign relation* is the most powerful Identifier of the *ahistoricity* of human ‘being’. This is why *Art* is our most important mythological asset, not cultural artefacts. It is due to the unique ‘semiotic instances’ (or meaning ‘affordances’) that artmaking, in adhering to this *Principle* of Art, is empowered to uncover our perfect sign’s invaluable ahistorical ‘*immateriality*’ (Spirit). The Principle thus allows us to distinguish *meaningfully* between art and non-art (or anti-art), and good, bad, or great art - in the phenomenological passage of semiosis itself (Trimarchi *Suspended Second*). Having elsewhere detailed my reconstruction of it for the modern epoch, I will below focus on its key features.

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF ART

The Principle of Art’s foundations lie in Aristotle’s natural philosophy (the *Ethics* and *Metaphysics* as well as *Poetics*). However, Aristotle did not ‘invent’ it and his *Poetics* does not alone render a complete understanding of it. I have previously argued that its reconstitution, following Schelling’s revival of it (post Kant), with the benefit of Peirce, Scheler, Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty and others’ insights, is a necessary condition for both Art and Humanity flourishing into the future (Trimarchi *Way Out*).²³ Any artwork, in any culture – as long as it is ‘intelligible’, as Schelling says - can be assessed according to his archetypal dialectical systemisation of art-form/work construction ‘for all time’ (i.e., even those not yet invented). This is arguably so because humanity’s fundamental *mythological categories* (the schematic, allegoric, and metaphoric) can never change. They are semiotically ahistorical, even though values may change between epochs.

Essentially, the Principle reveals art as ‘process metaphysics’; which is best

²³ This Principle effectively reconnects the three normative sciences, repairing the modern aesthetic ‘consequentialising’ or ‘deontologising’ of ethics and logic, and returning us to the logic of Aristotelian natural philosophy and ‘virtue ethics’.

explained as a complexity science like *non*-reductionist biosemiotics. It reveals Art's original connection with normative aesthetics by 'naturalising' what modern theoretical aesthetics has effectively 'de-natured': the Art-Person perfect sign. This, as noted, occurred through universalising *particulars* (i.e., 'symbolising') rather than worlding reality metaphorically. It reveals the becoming-being and part-whole relations - the 'spiritual' phenomena of Nature (Dahlin) - as phenomenologically present in the Organism of the artwork's own semiosis. 'Becoming-being' is a temporal polarity, and the 'part-whole' relation is a spatial one. Together these 'immaterial' phenomena produce art's semiotic essences and potences, 'materialising' its meaning in the Form/non-Form merger as 'Disclosure'. Spacetime is a continuum upon which, according to Peirce's evolutionary theory, the whole cosmos is moving toward 'concrete reasonableness'. To be *Ideally* real, Art's meaning-value affordances must *as a whole* do the same.

Conveying the Principle's underpinnings, by first briefly explaining the link between Reason and Purpose that an artwork *ideally* produces, will make clear why Schelling claimed no antithesis between 'idealism' and 'realism' in Art's *indifferences*. This requires understanding that there is a 'spectrum' of meaning between 'symbol' (or concept) and 'metaphor' (McGilchrist *The Master*). And thus, how Schelling's mythological categories combine to in-form '*proper*' metaphoric Reason, without which there can be no Art. (See Trimarchi *Principle* for how Schelling's 'scientific sequence' functions to defy Historicism).

The Principle reveals Art's only *Object* is this proper metaphoric or 'Absolute' Reason. Through it, artforms and artworks enter the world of fiction by producing meaning as *a way of valuing* the world. They are shaped by Schelling's law of Limitation, highlighting how artworks embody both necessity and freedom *phenomenologically* through their essences and potences. Combining Schelling's systemic mythological orientations with Peirce's triadic semiotics and Scheler's anthropological (or 'ethical') phenomenology shows how to make more objective qualitative assessments of anything posing as an artwork (see Appendix). An artwork's 'objectivity' is discerned from merely *culturally*-determined objects (e.g., artefacts) by identifying the transformation of meaning-values. The Principle's criteria reveal how an artwork produces higher *meaning*-value in the orientation of semiosis generated by its activity of signs. Art becomes 'objective' in

approaching Reason. Its ‘truth’ differs from the ‘correspondence truth’ of artefacts or nature, unveiling what is meant by ‘naturalising’ art.²⁴

This relates to ethics. Reason, according to Aristotle, is obtained from *both* the ‘rational’ *and* ‘nonrational’ soul. The ‘rational’ part’s merit comes from the contemplative virtue (i.e., *intellect*) of intuiting ethics (Aristotle *Ethics* 282). The ‘nonrational’ part’s lies in the virtue of ‘character’ (i.e., *habit*). One’s morals are obtained from *ethical* intuitions, but these are *habituated together* (hence the significance of *preferring*, in the usually conflated meanings of deliberating and choosing). The Mind-expanding productivity (both ‘rational’ *and* ‘irrational’) that Art alone admits in *reasoning* the indifferences merging Beauty with Truth, only emerges in its knowledge-action nexus (*in praxis*). Art thus uniquely reveals ‘truth’ as, not fixed in ‘being’, but emerging from *given causal relations* present in an artwork’s semiotic dynamics.

In making and admiring art, we thus need to be most attentive to *proof of these relations* and the *directionality* of meaning (i.e., in seeking interpretants). Its knowing overrides any perception or interpretation. Therefore, Art proper must be associated with *metaphoric* meaning productivity that has a clear known end, *other than that of its own activity* (Reason). It is, says Aristotle, ‘bound up with making that is accompanied by true reason’ - that *does not* admit of ‘artefact’.²⁵ Arte-factual meaning is always *mediated by symbol*, and an artefact’s end is always predicated on *this activity* for its realisation (e.g., John Cage’s 4’33”). Also, every genuine artwork ‘admits of things *being otherwise*’: Freedoms (or *possibilities*). But it also consists in things that ‘do *not* admit of being otherwise’: Necessities (or *precision*). The latter accounts for its ‘science’; and *balancing both* accounts for its capacity to generate Spirit *beyond* Life. (Artefacts are hence more admirable for their cultural determinacy than possibility).²⁶

Each art-work’s *Ideas* are thus ‘in-formed’, via their Real and Ideal indifferences, according to each art-form’s *limitations*. This natural ‘law’ issues from certain conditions, different in each artform, via the Form/non-Form interaction

²⁴ See Trimarchi *Principle* for more explanation.

²⁵ For Aristotle’s logic here see *Ethics* Book 6, Chapter 4.

²⁶ For example, Picasso’s *Guernica*, commissioned as propaganda, was publicly frowned upon as unintelligible until its purpose was exposed. The *Mona Lisa* displays both precision and possibility, but it is the latter that accounts for its *cultural* purpose by displaying immediate transparency in search of Reason.

wherein an ideal Beauty-Truth merger is Real-ised in a work's disclosures. The Principle's criteria show how this in-forming works across all artforms (see Trimarchi *Art in Particular*). Upon examining all this using many examples in practice, it soon becomes clear why AI may be taught to *identify* art's unique Truth, but not *execute* it. And why it may be able to make artefacts, but not art. The key lies in Nature.

As Leroi says in *The Lagoon*, 'the fundamental difference between natural objects and artefacts' is that 'the former move and stop by themselves; the latter don't and can't' (78). Aristotle's '*internal* principle of change and rest', defining Nature, is what Schelling later revealed a relation to in *Art's* principle. But Schelling links art's phenomenology of 'organism' *archetypally* to Nature, via Greek mythology. So, while Nature's principle biologically explains 'the mysterious way in which creatures do all that they do,' by themselves, with no one cranking 'the clockwork', or pointing 'the little machine in the right direction', as Leroi says, *Art's* principle takes this natural purposelessness into the human dimension.

Human culture separates us from Nature and every other species. And *art's* autonomy, on the ground where Aristotelian teleology and ontology meet, mythologically reveals better than any other 'truth' what *connects* Nature to human nature. No mechanical learning can ever make this additional 'leap of faith' from artefacts to Art simply because, without this connection, it lacks our *original reason* to. In short, it can't access Art's unique *facility* to rise above historicism. The art object *itself* is indeed a 'theory' of life; but, like a *person-as-theory*, only one that can never be definitively proven as such. For this reason, Art, one way or another, relies on an Other to approach Reason.²⁷ So, artworks have historicity in their making (becoming *toward* absolutes), but their 'being' can never be fixed in 'the Absolute' (Reason).

The artwork is, as Merleau-Ponty argues, always 'becoming', *passing into* 'being' only temporarily in disclosure (Kaushik). And we must move *beyond* interpretation to understand its *present* semiosis (its *given meaning*). As Schelling says, art thus shuns empiricism; and its 'topological' meaning (which is all AI can ever use) is relatively inconsequential to its potential *higher* meaning. This is because its *principled origin* consists in an 'immateriality' and 'possibility' unmediated by

²⁷ This pointing to 'Otherness' is different in certain artforms, eg., literature and painting.

symbols or concepts. This explains why process philosophy is far more useful in understanding art than analytical philosophy. Analysis, we might recall, is secondary to the appreciation of wholes; which are themselves *the condition* for understanding what is analysed. Art's semiotic reality, though unveiled via Aristotle's principle of causation, appears as *self-structuring* Reason-ableness enacted by the *poiesis/praxis* merger. No structuralist or poststructuralist theory can reveal it. An artwork's 'living-Truth' lies *in its own semiotic formation*; in the *given* phenomenology of its origin (inception). But though its fundamental proof lies in principles of 'conditional necessity', equally applicable in Art and Nature, it is art's *ideational ontology* that points us temporarily beyond the self-Other split.

Art's own process metaphysics hence renders it *naturalised*. But the difference between this and what occurs in Nature is clear. If AI just shuffles parts randomly to produce forms, it will only create in human culture the kinds of 'monsters' that Empedocles' absurd selectionist schemes interpreted in Nature. Without proper guidance, an increasing number of "artists" will use it to apply the same fragmenting mythological material that is characteristic of much in Modernism. They will do so undiscerningly to create effects and affects, via established 'theories of choice' bound to the realm of the senses, manifesting what Peirce called the 'silly esthetics' of our times. Since Art's single unifying Principle is rather more concerned with the meaning of life that humans can create *Spirit* with, Aristotle's four causes must necessarily be *re-prioritised* by aestheticians according to a proper philosophy of art, not merely philology.

Of these causes, the primary one is 'final cause' – its end; since this is clearly the origin of its ideational 'value-ception'.

ART'S PURPOSE: 'VALUE-CEPTION' (PREFERRING VS CHOOSING)

As suggested earlier, the reason there is no algorithm for artmaking and admiring is because art's *purposeless* purposiveness is not simply manufacturable from an historical zeitgeist alone. It involves Nature and Humanity's conjoined ahistorical *Geist*. *Art proper* appeals to our *knowing*, not merely perceptions, because its unique 'objective' autopoietic semiotic Purpose of 'value-ception' (*Wertethik*) is led more than just by the means of its production. Artefact-making however possesses an end that is *directed* by means and 'facts' (or concepts); the prudence needed here concerns 'material' action-outcome related precision (e.g., Cage's 4'33"). Art's

prudence concerns a preference for ‘practical’ *Values* (not just ‘production values’) – which is what renders its ‘*immaterial*’ precision.

Artists are thus discernible from artisans (and designing/crafting from Art-making) by the value-*poietic* prudence required to produce *this* precise immaterial knowing.²⁸ The *performative* aspect of this – the ‘action’ part of art’s semiotic productivity – is therefore not *in conflict* with the ‘making’ part. Art and artefact *share* that in common. But – to invoke Aristotle’s term for Form, *eidos* – any genuine artwork demands prudence in *deliberating* upon its *ultimate eidos* (or purpose ‘informed’). Deliberating over *why* its whole is not merely the sum of its parts; *why* it possesses an end-in-itself, etc., is thus not reducible to merely choosing – it involves habituated *preferring*. Over and above the woodcarver’s choice of wood, tools, technique, or even original idea of the carved object’s purpose, artists seek a higher ‘immaterial’ Reason for *its disclosure*. They ask not just What must be *given* as real or ‘value-impregnated’ in this ‘object’? But firstly, as Aristotle declared: What is it *for the sake of*?

It is therefore *the origin* of the artwork – its *Principle* – or, in Aristotle’s terms its ‘archai’ or ‘first things’, that an artist is most concerned with. Merging knowledge with action under such demands means artists must render more than a *copy* or abstraction of reality. Putting this another way, an artisan can happily seek perfection in mere reflection, but an artist must seek it in meaningful reflexivity. That is, in a *transcendence of values*, in ever-changing movement toward higher order meaning possibility. A genuine artwork embodies *this* primary Reason in its identity; not just the reasoning we might find in a novel’s plot or violinist’s technique, for producing mood. We are more interested here in the *end* of the ‘mood’; in *the value of the whole ‘object’* in context; or to use Mikhail Bakhtin’s narratology, its ‘polyphonic’ resonance – for which the modality of Metaphor is best suited.

This *higher* Reason is purposeful in the *making* (necessity), whereas just modelling Nature’s purposelessness *in action* tends toward ‘accidentality’ (freedom). So, to achieve balance, the relation between reasonableness and accidentality is determined by each artform’s limitations *to serve this interest* (via the earlier mentioned indifferences). Theoretical aestheticians have tended to ignore

²⁸ In Aristotle’s time these distinctions were generally habituated as tacitly understood.

the difference between Art and cultural artefacts because they only generally consider aesthetic ‘normativity’ in terms of the cultural ‘laws’, of styles and tastes etc., which assume some ‘algorithmic’ formalism governs art’s autonomy subjectively. These are however Laws bound only by material, formal, and efficient causes - whose ‘*final* causes’ must be *positivistically* explicit or implied. This grounds their concern for ‘truth’ in *culturally-determined* purpose; a mistake whose source lies in an impoverished notion of phenomenology, and what Ricoeur calls ‘proper metaphor’.

Art ‘as theory’ therefore labours under aestheticians’ neglect of the relation between Phenomenology, Normative Science, and Metaphysics. That is, the combined consideration in the artwork of:

- (i) the *experience* of phenomena (as always necessarily involving an active subject);
- (ii) the normative sciences (as governing the *dyadic interrelation* of phenomena and ends); and
- (iii) metaphysics, the ‘natural laws’ surrounding the *regularity* (necessity) and *irregularity* (freedom) of phenomenal interactions.

Together these essentially reveal what qualifies Art as a *complexity science*, dispelling Kant’s claim of the artwork’s ‘unfathomability’ and ‘infinite interpretation’ (Trimarchi *Re-worlding*). These key relations set Art proper apart from the epistemological empiricism of experimental science (e.g., theoretical physics, chemistry, or biology), making its highest Purpose (and hence virtue) to be enhancing aesthetic *Contemplation* by linking ethics with logic (Aristotle *Ethics*). Art, reconceived as such - a *normative science*, binding *aesthetics* to the practical sciences of ethics and logic – also makes clear its real socio-cultural significance. An artist’s and aesthete’s Prudence concerns judging the deliberative *merit* surrounding the ‘precise’ merger of Beauty and Truth in the art ‘object’. Aristotle’s distinction between the complementary roles of ‘the carpenter’ (artisan) and ‘geometer’ (artist) in society bear this out (Aristotle 8:29-32):

For both carpenter and geometer seek out the right angle but in different ways: the former seeks it insofar as is appropriate to his work; the latter seeks out what it is or what sort of a thing it is, for he is one who contemplates the truth.

Reassociating Art with *normative Aesthetics* like this prompted Peirce to name aesthetics ‘the science of ideals’. It *does not* thus concern perceptions or choices of values, but knowing *how to choose between* values. With Art proper, Aristotle’s

‘practical sciences’ *cross-over* with the ‘productive sciences’ (because art exhibits signs of both ‘acting’ and ‘making’). Schelling later reveals the ‘process metaphysics’ of this complexity in the indifferences that moderate *Reason* in art, by retrieving the principle of art from ancient Greek Beauty/Truth archetypes. He shows that, because *symbolic* mediation can only serve a lower order utility, the passage to Reason here occurs *without resort to this*. In aesthetics according to Schelling that only produces artefacts; and in ethics according to Scheler, it only ends in ‘moralising’. By placing the Person at the centre of all inquiry (in science or anything else), Scheler’s ‘anthropological’ (or ‘ethical’) phenomenology then advanced on Aristotle’s *Ethics* by showing *why* morality is habituated from ethical ‘preferring’. But moralising is an *act of choosing* which, being mediated by symbol, reverts to *idealising* prone to deception (Trimarchi *Aesthetics of Meaning*).

In having both ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ qualities that, given art’s ‘organic’ double-unity with the Person can direct humanity’s aspirations, all *true* exemplars of Art’s Principle thus manifest ‘*ethical* phenomenology’. And, because our *instinctive character* of preferring has primordial origins, AI can only copy it. Hence the importance of the relation between Phenomenology, Normative Science, and Metaphysics to distinguishing Art’s purpose. Our individual value-ception of it cannot be borrowed by mechanism; and in humans it can only be habituated.

Thus, at the foundation of Pragmatism proper, the prudent deliberation needed in contemplating a meaningful relation between Beauty and Truth, via all the earlier-mentioned indifferences that Art proper manifests, *must be cultivated*. Being etymologically derived from ‘Culture’, cultivation expresses the habit-taking of modes of thinking that any genuine artist’s deliberations - capable of convincing others about how to value the world – must possess. The question, then, is not whether abandoning tonality in music frees us up to invent new concepts or ‘styles’; it is ‘Can this produce more meaningful contemplation?’ (Or is it just producing fetishised effects and affects of information manipulation, lacking any *internal* Purpose and Spirit?). There are two different ‘freedoms’ here. The reason there is a *real* moral dimension to artmaking is clear: it is to highlight the Necessity of *internal goods* to the reality of Freedom.

This real Freedom has little to do with how we *use* art to furnish us with a pluralist political rhetoric to conceal the depth of our conflicts as MacIntyre says. Rather, it is because learning to intuit art’s ‘ethical intentionality’ is, like

developing proper morals, a question of habituated attention to the highest values, that this higher Freedom exists. This is Art proper's salutary advantage over cultural artefacts. Even if AI could be trained to mimic such a habit, it simply has no means of seeking this higher purpose of Art in the origin of the artwork. Not least because what is now most prized as 'art' in modernity, clearly lacks it. We are accustomed, in any artefactual film entertainment (e.g., *Mission Impossible*), with "artists" merely slapping on some homily at the end of a barely intelligible sequence of thrill-seeking acts, to justify its making. AI will surely be able to mimic *this* tenuous grip on reality (for much less money).²⁹

As we can see, Art's real *Purpose* in modernity has been misconceived according to merely lower-order *symbolic* ideals, and a superficial concept of phenomenology to suit. This essentially reduced it to theories of beauty (Formalism) and pleasure (Hedonism), making 'naturalism' and 'realism' meaningless symbolic affectations to be rendered *stylistically*, according to fashions. Any semblance of virtuous personhood, like its perfect sign, has been sent fleeing into the 'act'. The reality is, it is Beauty, only *via Reason*, that is Art's real *Object*; beauty *integrally related to truth* dialogically. And, though pleasure is indeed a fundamental purpose of Art (as of life), it is only in purposeless pursuit of its *ultimate* purpose that *real virtues* are found. With the highest human virtue being *Understanding* (derived, as Aristotle argues, from *contemplation*), we can now translate Art's 'purpose' into a set of criteria bound by the *proper* definition of phenomenology described above.

Though values may change from epoch to epoch, at the heart of the Principle of Art is what Aristotle deemed the purpose of 'a serious life'. Not one pursuing *sensuous* pleasure, or relaxation via 'play', or posthumanist escapist fantasies (i.e., 'eudaimonia', recast post Kant as Hedonism). But one pursuing Civic Humanism and a Human Ecology, by taking the perspective of the whole Person, and the wholeness of a meaningful 'examined' Life, as our starting point

THE PRINCIPLE'S DEFINING CRITERIA

This Principle was lost in modernity when the 'philosophising' of Art began after Baumgarten's establishment of aesthetics as a theory of 'sensual cognition'. As

²⁹ As already in the tacky action-based video-game templates being used in filmmaking.

elsewhere elaborated, it was Baumgarten's reaction to Leibniz' condemnation of Plato's devaluation of the objects of the senses, claiming this had 'impoverished reality', that prompted his coinage of 'aesthetics'. His well-intentioned but flawed attempt to 'advance principles of reason for the critical judgement of beauty and to claim the status of science', as Kai Hammermeister recalls in *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, was dismissed by Kant's subsequent complete *separation* of art from cognition, resulting in 'the end of "rationalist" metaphysics'. Despite Schelling's revival of art's 'metaphysics' via his *Naturphilosophie*, aesthetic 'normativity' was given over to the *generalised* 'sensual' meaning of it in theories that created the modern 'artworld'. Although Schelling's *re-merger* of Beauty with Truth in artistic deliberation completely upturns Kant's ill-conceived aesthetic dialectics, with the rise of Hegelianism it gained no traction at the birth of the 'philosophy of art' or later (for reasons that are by now obvious).³⁰

I have reconstituted Schelling's Principle of Art, with added insights from others like Peirce and Scheler, as follows. Art's 'Object' (i.e., Reason) rests upon what Scheler defines as a '*phenomenological* object' (or experience), discernible from our *ordinary* experience by the fact that it is unmediated by symbols or concepts. We 'bracket off' what is accidental, focusing on the essential nature of things, and *indwell* in the Beauty-Truth merger manifesting in the artwork's 'subject-objectivation' of any suitable subject.³¹ What the artist intended to effect is largely inconsequential because the genuine artwork's own triadic semiosis points to the movement-action-logic nexus of tensions and relations involved in metaphoric 'reality-shifting'. If the 'object' in question is *not* art, this transference of meaning is notably absent. A cultural artefact's meaning-value affordances are hence merely reflectively representational: often unrealistic propositions, with particulars (symbols/concepts) being *posed* as universals.

So, with the '3Ps' criteria – Phenomenology, Proposition, and Purpose - we can firstly identify any true artwork's *Object* as Phenomenological. Its Proposition

³⁰ See Trimarchi *Way Out* for a full account. After the decline of the neo-Kantians, the rise of logical positivism and analytical philosophy together secured a theoretical aesthetic 'artworld'. The rest, as they say, is history.

³¹ Note, this signals the concerted activation of the right hemisphere (and the *re*-productive imagination) giving it perceptive dominance which corresponds metaphorically with *knowing* (cf. McGilchrist, also Edwards). What we are beckoned to seek here is, in Peirce's terms, the object's *real* Firstness (see Trimarchi *Suspended Second*).

will be directionally existential if directed at appreciating the reality of life via *Spirit* (*Geist*), and implicating human conduct/self-control (the Person). And its Purpose will be ontologically purposefully purposeless. Its *manifest* phenomenology will hence either point to multi-dimensional possibility reflexively (i.e., metamorphic self-actualisation): Art proper. Or to uni-/two-dimensional ‘ordinary’ reality (‘fixity’), via symbolic reflection: Artefact. These qualities can all be assessed and graded accordingly by comparison. With any genuine artwork’s ‘ethical’ intentionality thus found in *the givenness* of its own semiotic productivity, interpretation of its ‘ethical value’ is not laid on top subjectively. We find it in the ‘tacit dimensions’ of the...

- 1) Phenomenological object/experience (metaphoric value-ception: its ‘essential intuiting’),
- 2) Propositional end (orientation: toward ‘the person’), and
- 3) Purpose (the real/ideal, beauty/truth, necessity/freedom mergers: toward Reason).

AI may possibly use these criteria (or great art archetypes) in *selection* tasks: Art vs non-Art, good vs bad or great Art. But the reasons it can never apply them in *making* original Art (while producing ‘copy-art’ or original cultural artefacts poses no difficulty) warrant closer attention.

3. WHY AI CAN’T MAKE ORIGINAL ART

To begin with, artmaking is not quite as simple as being able to discern Art’s 3Ps semiosis in great art, and copying it. The Principle of Art manifests in two key aspects of every genuine art-form/work’s construction. First in conveying the becoming-being/part-whole relationships using *Gestalts* - *propositionally*. But not just any proposition will do, and not just any subject is suitable for artistic inquiry (Trimarchi *Principle*). Secondly, the phenomenologically unique merger of knowledge with action here is contingent upon the special characteristics of every artform. To activate our *re-productive* imagination, from a genuinely productive rather than *reflective* semiotic standpoint, certain conditions must be met. Because, as noted, ‘knowledge’ does not just consist in ‘information’ (though forms and actions may be copied), *conceiving* of the ‘in-forming’ process presents difficulties for any machine-learning. While AI may be trained to produce *Gestalt* patterning for example, it cannot be taught to make original meaningful propositions. It will

be able to copy these, and exploit the deficient reflective standpoint common in the ‘artworld’, but not produce the knowledge-action merger *reflexively*.

Regarding the first aspect, both art and artefacts utilise all manner of visual, audio, and movement-action type *Gestalts* (originating in Nature’s ‘general aesthetic’). All songs, films, paintings, poems, literature etc., use them. But *Gestalt* action itself merely produces an indifference between parts and wholes; and only ‘proper metaphoric’ affordances in the right contexts produce more meaningful ‘*Gestalt* switches’. Art’s movement-action-logic nexus is thus absent in artefacts and slavishly meticulous depictions of any object in Nature. The ‘real’ necessity/freedom polarity rules here. In landscapes for instance (where freedom dominates), the observer can only take in its formlessness entirely subjectively. An artist must *introduce* the ‘*urform*’ element of objectivity to make landscape painting artful (i.e., ‘the Other’ subject-objectivation).³² A landscape’s *photo-realist* ‘objectivity’ is not mediated by ‘the ideal’ without such intervention. Its accidental nature is ‘the real’, and this lacks any value-transference (in-formed by the Principle).

Similarly, cultural artefacts are usually mistaken for art because of a lack of discernment between the *arte-factual* re-purposing of natural *Gestalt* patterning action, and what the 3Ps demand in the construction of art-forms and works. AI’s added disadvantage lies in the fact that, like a camera, it may reflect reality; but, lacking our uniquely human reflexivity it must select from a pre-programmed catalogue of possible interventions to negotiate the Beauty-Truth indifference. And it has no intellectual intuitive basis upon which to avoid arbitrariness here. It can only do so mechanically. Nevertheless, though lacking the appropriate intuitive propositional and reflexive attention acuity, AI may still be trained to apply the 3P’s criteria to *identify* Art vs non-Art (etc.). Take for instance so-called ‘readymades’ in the visual arts.

Readymades are the simplest cases demonstrating an absence of higher-order metaphoric meaning-value productivity.³³ They are however, like Duchamp’s ‘urinal’, Magritte’s ‘pipe’, or Warhol’s ‘soup tins’, just re-purposed objects of inquiry challenging our *perceptions* of things. These ‘iconic’ avantgarde examples are

³² E.g., Joseph Turner’s famous last-minute addition of a red buoy counterpointing the boat in his grey seascape (*Helvoetsluis*) metaphorically depicting the human condition in the storm and calm indifference.

³³ Yet institutions like MoMA *celebrate* such anti-Art: <https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/readymade>

clearly just cultural artefacts. They (1) possess no proper metaphor (metamorphic morphogenic phenomenology), only allegory. With respect to criterion (2) the Person (and art's collectivising orientation to the 'human condition'), they merely challenge *perceptions* of 'things' pictorially. (Whereas Art's ethical meaning-value is *intuited in thought*, not necessarily in 'pictorial contents' as Scheler points out, by directing us toward *the Ideal real*). Finally, their 'propositional ends' (3) are merely syllogistic, lacking any intentional resolution of Beauty with Truth or human nature with Nature. AI could feasibly detect these deficiencies, but the complexity here makes non-human application difficult.

For instance, more sophisticated AI may be able to be programmed to identify *the features* of a phenomenological object/experience, and discern it from the ordinary human experience of what we imitate in Nature to re-present in such artefacts. Or, from the more *deliberative* non-art (i.e., anti-Art) examples of 'concept art' clearly *designed for* symbolic capitalisation (e.g., Jeff Koons' *Balloon Dog*). But just templating our 'general aesthetic' sensibility, or the dynamics of metaphoric transference, is not enough to take 'practical account' of such pretences to art *in practice*. Though *perceiving* the differences described above may be learned, AI can never possess any *ontological knowledge* of what a genuine artwork 'is for the sake of', that can be used reflexively. What may be possible in discerning is thus impossible in 'the making'. This is so for even 'genetic learning', because as noted genes too cannot express all such in-forming.

AI's limitations associated with the reflexivity/reflectivity difference are best understood in terms of what constraints art-forms and works themselves impose on the in-forming process. Having detailed them elsewhere (Trimarchi *Principle*), why they pose major obstacles for AI can be summarised in two main points. Firstly, as noted, AI will never be able to *originally* conceive of the *Gestalt* switches that produce metaphoric reason. This Reason – *Art's Truth* - is neither merely syllogistic nor devoid of external referents. There are various 'referential fields' to negotiate in creating the 'tensions' needed for a genuine *poetic* discourse (Trimarchi *Suspended Second*). Context is everything here, and AI merely copying the patterning action involved in lower-order 'general aesthetic' *Gestalt* formation will not do. Secondly, the difference between "mechanism" and "teleology" becomes apparent in the fact that AI can already mimic Nature's 'mechanism', so making *copy-art* (artefact) is not a problem, but the teleology (or 'entelechy') that

humans process in higher meaning-making involves values that do not originate in a purely 'physicalist' mechanism of part-whole co-dependence. Some elaboration on these difficulties is necessary.

Because Art does *not* simply mimic Nature's or human nature's reality, but models it in comparing and creating new realities, AI needs to learn not just 'facts' i.e., what human ideals are. It needs to be able to model how meaning is elevated by Art through its Person-as-organism perfect sign relation, to indicate '*knowing* how to choose between goods'. Since this is intuited *embodied* knowing, it involves understanding *what it means* to be human - to be able to have ideals in the first place. For this, AI needs a 'value-ception' capability extending far back into history, before humans became 'historical' beings.³⁴ This is where our primordial Sense of ideals, and habitual constitution of *preferring*, originate. The main problem then, which Art's *ahistorical* Nature-History nexus resolves and 'artificial intelligence' must overcome, is this primordial connection to *urform* (or, as Schelling calls it, 'unprethinkable being').

Firstly, this becomes clear from the fact that every artwork, as a 'theory' of being, is never really finished. Great artworks implicitly manifest this, as their expression of life elevated by Spirit is a more potent and seamless expression of the Person. The difference between information and in-forming lies in the relation between 'dynamic logic' and action here, because its implicit intentionality is more transparently rendered than in average artworks. A corollary of this 'transparency' is in how all humans understand the 'container' metaphor by the direct embodied experience of having been in a womb, though we have no *empirical* memory of this. Simply programming what metaphor is, is not the same as experiencing it. AI cannot just copy *this* thought process, because our implicit *understanding* of the 'organic logic' produced here goes beyond our *common experience* of it (Trimarchi *Harmonising*).

It is only our 'empirical' experience that AI can mimic. Thus, independently, in 'making', AI can only draw upon Information and that 'material' by which the modern mythology has made Art and humanity 'historical objects'. Even if AI can be taught to identify that kind of transparency 'rationally', it can have no first-

³⁴ Even some spineless creatures, like an octopus, possess this kind of semiotic intuition; but neuromorphologists will not be able to 'computationally' reproduce the human complexity of it that Art elicits for reasons given here.

hand ‘irrational mind’ experience of it. So, it simply can never *apply* it. It can never connect first-hand the three key underwriters of implicit human Reason evident here (as earlier suggested, disregarded by theoretical aestheticians): Phenomenology, Normative Science, and Metaphysics. Its meaning-productivity (unless directed by a genuine artist) will always tend toward lower-order symbolic opacity. It will, in Ricoeur’s words, lack ‘the vehemence of a semantic aim’ that is only *intuitable* metaphorically.

For similar reasons, any *qualitative* differentiation *between* ‘metaphoric utterances’ would prove impossible for any mechanism to detect; though humans taught the 3Ps could easily distinguish them from the *apparently* identical *Gestalt* operations in artefacts. Movement toward *good* reason in an artwork’s phenomenology, palpably lacking in bad art and non-art, is taken ‘practical account’ of by us even if we have habituated a preference for its absence.

Secondly, even if great art’s ‘dynamic’ intentional transparency could be templated, as Schelling shows it cannot be applied arbitrarily across artforms, because of the different conditions each imposes (Trimarchi *Art in Particular*). These govern how the *formal* indifferences of necessities and freedoms, as well as the *ideational* ‘real’/‘ideal’ indifferences in the beauty-truth merger, manifest. And since the latter *non-formal* (‘immaterial’) values are the highest ones, different artforms possess inherently different *propensities* for elevating meaning-values. So, several factors surrounding the nature of the *subject* itself and the artform-specific *propositional* ‘boundary conditions’ affect the possibility of any higher transparent morphogenic transformation of values. These all concern the ‘essential intuiting’ of the work’s *wholeness* in the composition and transfer of schematic, allegoric, and metaphoric meaning.

The 3Ps criteria thus reveal for instance why it is not person-ality (affectation), but ‘person-ness’ (being) that ‘subjectivises’ Art’s Object. What *subjects* and *propositions* make optimum subject-objectifying transparency possible in different artworks ultimately depends upon the potential for *Proper* metaphor. This is the key conditional qualifier of meaningful *coherence* over mere *correspondence truth* that produces a *phenomenological* experience (i.e., ‘knowing’). So, the different propensities of each art-*form* to add *depth* to the Art-Person perfect sign depends upon the availability of meaning-value affordances. A human portrait in painting presents the artist with more metaphoric potential than that of a dog; and this

potential is greater again in sculpture than in architecture; and so on. Each artform determines the formal/non-formal interactive conditions for a *poetic discourse* differently in this process. And, the perfect sign's subject-objectivation appears only two-dimensionally in artefacts (if at all).

Although AI may learn all these conditions as phenomenological 'rules,' they are in fact not rules but relations subject to varying 'occasions'.³⁵ Schelling's systemic categorisations reveal why there can be no hard and fast rules, yet being aware of the very complex set of relations can attune one to these conditions. Any hope of a convincing 'mechanical' rendering of this awareness labours under the fact that it can only *be cultivated* in humans as ahistorical beings. In every genuine artwork the highest *Ideational* 'end,' writ large, pursues the *Beauty-Truth nexus* connecting humanity with Nature and History ('cosmologically,' or *ahistorically*). Not even any form of 'genetic learning' can template the conditions for rendering this Real, because artworks exhibit an interaction between 'form' (*eidos*) and 'matter' (*hyle*), unique to their corresponding artforms, which as Aristotle argued can only be understood *in practice* as inseparable. They are only *intuited* in the tacit dimension of their knowledge-action merger.³⁶

Hence art appreciation cannot be purely theoretical, it is only understood *in praxis*. This, and the various conditions outlined above governing the construction of *all* artforms, reveals why it is that 'the implicit' overrides 'the explicit' in art's 'material' being. Art-*forms* themselves limit how this relationship coheres meaningfully (and that goes for any yet uninvented artforms too). As Polak observed mid last century, with the resurgence of Primitivism as a reaction to the historical industrialising and mechanising of the human condition, the ontological reasoning for all this collapsed as Impressionism was eventually overtaken by various kinds of Expressionism (Trimarchi *Idea and Reality*). Even if 'accidentality' features in a genuine work's phenomenology (e.g., in Jazz), appreciating its wholeness is always a matter of careful deliberation on context. So, when explicitness intrudes, only a human can notice this.

Today, explicit literal meaning reigns supreme almost by default. AI is perfectly suited to manipulating the tangible 'materiality' of this (or the relegation

³⁵ See Trimarchi *Way Out* for explanation of meaning drivers and markers.

³⁶ See Trimarchi *Principle* ("If wax is *hyle*, then an impression made in it is *eidos*").

of the implicit to miracle and mysticism). So, as it advances, the already dominant mechanistic misguided elevation of art's material (*symbolic*) value embedded in modern mythologising will tower over its immaterial morphogenic *meaning*-value. It will obscure what Polak saw was critical to rescuing art and humanity from disappearing into mechanism. That is, understanding that the highest values are *non-formal*; that they are generated in an artwork's *propositional origins*, where its orientation toward Reason is formed; and *only here*, does art become *ideally* 'objective'.

To summarise, it is pointless for any mechanism to try and template the expression of Personhood as the highest bearer of values, because it requires human 'intellectual intuition'. It is the *origin* of the artwork (its Principle) then, in this immaterial *Ideation*, where the historicity of its making *can be traced back to*, that artists seek in making meaningful art. Since this is a question of *Spirit (Geist)*, and AI can have no real sense of the *ahistoricity* of humankind, it can only draw upon our *historical zeitgeist*. The 'wholeness' of a human life will elude it, and the historicity of the artwork's 'making' will lack this foundation. It will never be capable of proper metaphoric thinking: drawing the universal *into* the particular. But it will excel in doing the reverse - symbolic 'thinking'- given manipulating symbols is all it can do.

Embodied within us are the 'proto-narratives' of life (*Gare Mathematics*); and it is our 'un-prethinkable being' that makes the human imagination much more than just a tool for creating concepts. This is what makes its *re-productivity* critical for developing practical intelligence.

PRACTICAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE 'DIVINE' IMAGINATION

"[T]he supreme act of reason, because it embraces all ideas, is an aesthetic act."³⁷

(Schelling).

What the ancient Greeks called 'phantasia', concerned with *appearances* of reality, was associated with losing one's way in the world. It stands in contrast to what Schelling calls 'the divine' fantasy.

Reason can either be approached in the imagination via 'calculus' (i.e.,

³⁷ Cited in Segall *Poetic Imagination* (2).

manipulating symbols), or metaphorically as in the highest forms of mathematics (which owe more to intuition than calculating). In Artmaking, according to Schelling, properly directing metaphoric intuition toward ‘concrete reasonableness’ is the mark of the ‘divine’ imagination. This essentially offers what Max Scheler claimed as ‘a kind of experience that leads us to *genuinely* objective objects and the eternal order among them, i.e., to *values* and the order of ranks among them’. Art’s phenomenological ‘object’ or experience thus yields ‘order and laws... as exact and evident as those of logic and mathematics’. The significance of Metaphor to how humans ‘narrate’ reality hence cannot be understated. It takes us beyond any form of analogy of ‘the self’, to ontologies.

The philosophy of mind owes much to what Art can teach us, if we take into account Scheler’s insights, the anti-reductionist complexity science of Peircian semiotics, and Schelling’s ‘three stages of consciousness’ (Trimarchi *Way Out*). Contemporary emergence theory has advanced considerably on Kantian notions of Understanding and the Imagination. And all this elucidates how we have come to think about ‘psychic processes’ and ideas like morality or originality, all of which feature in current fears about AI (and in overestimating technology’s potential).

Art’s Truth, as noted, involves the ‘interconnections and oppositions among values and value-attitudes’, by which we can distinguish acts of preferring and choosing. Upon these *indifferences*, says Scheler, we can and must build ‘a genuine grounding of moral decisions and laws for such decisions’ (Scheler *Formalism in Ethics* 255).³⁸ Ultimately, AI cannot gain the human ‘practical intelligence’ needed to cultivate what Art requires of it: distinguishing believing from knowing – because of the Imagination’s irreducibility to ‘*conceptualising*’. Acts of conceptualising involve more thought metamorphosis than the particularity of a fixed concept allows; as Paul Ricoeur says, the idea of a ‘metaphoric fragment’ is nonsensical. Here, in the difference between a poetic discourse and any other form of speculation lies Aristotle’s ‘practical intelligence’, and the *moral* imperative that the modern Aesthete struggles to find in art (and AI cannot be taught). The Imagination’s role in developing these discerning qualities is key to overcoming

³⁸ Notably, this differs from Kant’s idea of morality as predicated upon duty (recalling Hobbes’ idea of Freedom).

‘psychologism’: the idea that basic vital impulses rule over the ‘truth’ of our being via an overarching ego that drives our ‘mental’ processing of a ‘value-free world’.

The relationship between what Schelling calls the ‘creative imagination’ and fantasy is akin to that between *Reason* and intellectual intuition. ‘Fantasy’, he says, intuits objects externally and ‘casts them out from within itself, as it were, and to that extent portrays them’. But the ‘creative imagination’ receives and forms these ‘objects’. This ‘divine’ (*re-productive*) imagination, which he distinguishes from common ‘phantasy’, thus operates ‘...[a]ccording to the same law the universe forms and molds itself within the reflex of human creative imagination into a world of fantasy’. Making art therefore involves, not random imagining, but *re-imagining*; employing Peirce’s ‘abductive’ and ‘retroductive’ reasoning: calling up memories and combining *disparate* meanings to world a ‘reality’. Our *primordial* intuition of lived experience grants this power. So, while the *semblance* of imagination might be apparent in a mechanism, the Divine Imagination denies any subservience to algorithm. The difference between preferring, which is *primordially* intuitive, and choosing, which is *conative*, is born out in aesthetic judgements.

Psychic processes, says Scheler, are a function of *preferring*, not choosing.³⁹ And, aesthetic judgement becomes normalised in all manner of arbitrary processes when Necessity becomes subjectively predicated *on choice*.⁴⁰ Our primary focus turns to *selectively* idealising oppositional attributes in pursuit of “absolute” freedom. In any form of mechanism, that can obviously only make choices already selectively idealised by humans, all such imagined “psychic processes” will thus *necessarily* be value-free. Even with programmed unpredictability, AI will adopt and use the same lower-order utilitarian or ‘human/biological’ values prevailing in the ‘artworld’ - the lowest values, flourishing in Nature. It can alone gain no capacity to rise above these to the Spiritual or Holy values of the Person. It will therefore only (originally) be able to

³⁹ Preferring is not conative, like ‘choosing’ – they are different kinds of intentionality. Preferring is a particular act of value-cognition that does not belong to the sphere of striving, but to the primordial class of feelings that are *not* ‘reactive’ responses. It is classified with the higher class of ‘loving and hating’ not as ‘feeling states’ but ‘*intentional functions* of feeling’. Choosing (classified with ‘loving and hating’ as “emotional acts”) however belongs to a class of experiences that are “directed” and sense-giving.

⁴⁰ In Kant’s aesthetics, the symbolic function of art’s beauty is interpreted as a *formal displacement* of ‘the Person’, validating the ‘subjective thesis’ (Torsen).

produce *belief* in an art object's essentially 'value-free' contents - whose arbitrariness will manifest as a self-legitimizing *purposeful* will to power.

Kant's aesthetic legacy, by allowing 'theories of choice' to overtake ontologies (e.g., the Art-Person perfect sign) hence reduced morality to a sense of duty and art's meaning to 'psychologism'. And though Kant opposed both reductions, his 'reflective standpoint' took hold rather than Schelling's *reflexive* one. It is clear why the dominant worldview embodied in the 'civilization' of modernity is still grounded in the former aesthetic. If making art were simply a matter of reflection, it would merely reflect an ego and the lowest orders of meaning-value that Kant's 'doctrine of agreement' manifests in modernity's flourishing 'artworld'. As the aesthete presumes 'biological' or 'vital' human values to be the *ethical* bearers of goods, posthumanists also disregard the higher values in favour of 'a selection of elements of outer intuition... founded in the *value* of possible control over nature' (Scheler 267). But, as Parvis Emad (*Person, Death, and World* 60) argues, the human spirit cannot be reduced to 'a psychological characteristic of man'. And neither can Art.

Contrary to popular belief, art's intentionality is a disclosure of 'spiritual being', not psychology. And, since the necessity of *the Other* in artmaking is at odds with anything that cannot possess a 'self', it would be pointless to teach AI psychology. Our 'spiritual *reality*', because it points beyond itself to something other than itself, is the condition of the *possibility* of psychology. Psychology is not 'a product of evolution traceable in biological realities' (Emad 60). The fraught psychologising of Art in the modern 'artworld' neglects that while the 'basic vital impulse' penetrates all lifeforms, the higher level 'is marked by instinct'. And above this, 'there is the practical intelligence which enriches life further'. Although vegetative, animal, and human semiosis all manifest different ways of connecting meaning with valuing, the emergence of Spirit alone reaches 'a level... which is distinctively human' (Emad 61).

In the semiosis of Spirit, what comes *before* our habituated preferring *or* choosing are the spontaneous acts of 'loving and hating... [which] ...constitute the highest level of our intentional emotive life' (Scheler 260). These relate, in different ways, *to both* feeling *and* preferring, *and* various modes of 'striving' (e.g., Duty). But they are not 'reactive' to felt values and value heights after the event of preferring or choosing. Rather, they are the *only* acts to which Scheler

attributes a ‘*disclosing*’ role in our value-comprehension’. And, as such they can *move* us to ‘*new* and *higher*’ values (i.e., toward Reason). Since they come *before* preferring, they have a ‘*creative*’ role which goes beyond all other acts and corresponding value-qualities in absoluteness, apriority, and originality. In how Art proper creates Spirit then, its meaning disclosures surpass psychologising or moralising ‘theories of choice’, revealing its potential qualification as a ‘science of Mind’.

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I have suggested how practical intelligence and the higher reaches of human imagination are interrelated. And, why our perspective on ‘*knowing*’ such value-qualities as absoluteness, apriority, or originality has in modernity, via a descent into mechanism, reverted to ‘selective idealising’. Consider now how our acts of loving and hating relate to Originality, given its relevance to AI here. Our understanding of Originality lost its moorings *through* art in modernity because loving and hating were reduced to what MacIntyre describes as ‘the philosophy of emotivism’. This is revealed in the modern mythological preferred orientation in art to what Schelling calls ‘beauty in the narrower sense’. Originality became ‘the fundamental law of modern poesy’, he says, while in antiquity it was not conceived as ‘individualist’ (as such) and only associated with the totality (Schelling 75).⁴¹ This was as evident in their mythology as their civic humanism, and apparent in the phenomenology of art.

In Greek antiquity, because particularity counts for something in and for itself the artwork ‘takes up the infinite within itself’ and can be seen *to stand for* ‘the one principle of art’. The finite, says Schelling, ‘in its own infinitude is able to assert itself against the infinite to the extent that even rebellion against the divine is possible; indeed, such rebellion is even the principle of sublimity’. In Christian symbology, however, ‘there is only unconditional surrender to the unfathomable’, constituting ‘the sole principle of beauty’ (Schelling 62). When art came into the service of *this* mythology, some important changes in how we ‘world’ reality

⁴¹ On this point regarding the difference between the meaning of originality in antiquity and modernity, see also 301 n51 for Friedrich Schlegel’s comment (explaining the former) that ‘provided individuality is what this word defines: indivisible unity and an inner and vital coherence’ then the right of individuality stands, and the ‘virtue of man’ is indeed in his ‘originality’.

occurred. Allegorising replaced proper metaphoric thinking, and then allegory itself deteriorated. The 'divine' could thus no longer reveal itself in Nature (as in antiquity); it was only perceptible in history.

Hence the 'historical materialism' of much Modern art; and Kant's need to separate Beauty from Truth in aesthetics to resolve difficulties (e.g., with notions of 'free' vs 'adherent beauty'). This provides us with endless conundrums about actions and their meaning. For instance, with an historical materialist notion of originality viz AI, we may ponder: If a robot can *copy* any artist's technologies of action precisely (e.g., Van Gogh's brush strokes), will we be able to distinguish the result from an original? The answer of course is, possibly not. But, as far as *meaning*-value is concerned, the task of separating fake from real in this context – just as in exquisitely rendered 'fakes' of a Rembrandt by his students – is arguably essentially a pointless exercise. It only matters to the forensic industrial legalistic utility of *copyrights*. Modern copyright is a form of 'legal positivism' that merely underwrites the industrialisation of art (as cultural artefacts). As far as genuine art is concerned it is useful in one respect alone: for the dialectic of (artist/artwork) *recognition* in terms of values attributable to labour and representation. But it is in today's 'artworld' merely a means of self-legitimation; fuelling symbolic capital/idealism via materialist, technicist distractions from the real social importance of the relation between practices, traditions, and institutions (Trimarchi *Way Out*).

In terms of the Principle of Art, comparing the 'absolute' *Objects* of ostensibly identical works is pointless. 'Originality' in the modern sense is thus basically meaningless compared to the meaning *in the work itself*; it appeals to 'the artist as hero' myth, compared to originality in the ancient heroic sense. Its purpose was, in those times, more concerned with what it offered the whole society. It was the self-actualising of civic humanism (which Schelling called their 'true religion') rather than individual self-legitimation or 'transfiguration' that mattered most about art. If Art proper cannot be owned, as Merleau-Ponty suggests, then the public good may benefit from – gradually, organically, and in a planned way – replacing copyrights with other forms of artistic recognition/representation (e.g., a 'social wage' for serious vocational artists, representative guilds, and realistic

assessments driving Art's institutions rather than markets).⁴²

So, considering AI's threat to authenticity, we should remember that, because the *idea* must be *conceived* humanly, the only thing that matters, which makes an artwork *meaningful*, is the human intentionality communicated by it. Without this, it is merely an object that inhabits 'the general aesthetic' – as a likeness of Nature's *Geist*, or an artefact of the historical *zeitgeist*. Given AI cannot make *original* art, the threat it poses is far greater than that of corrupting the modern notion of originality in Danto's 'artworld'. It is a serious threat to artisans (which is indeed regrettable), 'copy-artists', and anti-artists; and to *the industrialisation* of Art proper, that has corrupted it to merely symbolic capital in our epoch. But the *greatest* threat is to the human potential for making art; by narrowing the human imagination, and selling the delusion that artificial intelligence is superior to practical intelligence. And that AI can distinguish between believing and knowing, better than humans can.

If, as I have argued, *ontological* reality is alien to any form of mechanism, it can never *know* the real significance of the Art-Person perfect sign relation. And any human-robot merger must inevitably become distanced from it too. We might program recognition of it, but no 'replicant' human can know its real primordial meaning intuitively. Any artificially constructed 'self' faces this limitation: and the more humans approach mechanism, the more distant human '*being*' too will be from its highest potentiality. And the more elusive humanity's real Freedom.

How can we be so certain of this? Because, as Schelling's three stages of consciousness reveals, even the *human* will by itself cannot become conscious of itself; it requires recognition of an 'other', that must be nurtured socially. We *know* this Selfhood cannot be implanted, precisely because of how, in genuine art, *active* subjectivity leads us to *the ethical* subject-objectivation inherent in the Art-Person perfect sign. In *recognition* of the Other, says Gare, the self is 'defined and delimited by' it. And 'only by this reflexivity' can the self 'become a free, self-determining will' (*Process Philosophy* 6).

⁴² I have elsewhere suggested how to achieve this without destroying the market for artisanship, by separating institutional support for Art proper (using the Principle's criteria in arts assessment processes) from the cultural artefact industry, to de-industrialise Art.

CONCLUSION: *FLIPPING A COUNTERFEIT COIN*

With Martin Heidegger's claim that we are 'too late for gods' we are reminded of the *deus ex machina*; the ancient theatrical device, sending in 'the gods' to resolve the dilemmas created by the poet. Such a swift resolution to a plot, I believe they well knew, marked recognition of their own human fallibility. But they understood 'the gods' as 'the ideas' (in some higher form); as a reminder also that there is a difference between contriving our 'ends', via some technology of action or manipulation of thoughts, and *truly* dealing with the 'final cause' of our fallibilities by appreciating the realities of life *in* Nature. The challenge that the poet willingly takes on, is to seek this out through Art's 'supreme act' of Reason; and it is not one for the faint hearted, nor for any sophisticated machinery. Given, as argued here, that art explores indifferences between 'the real' and 'the ideal' world, what *genuine* 'ideal' can AI alone possibly reach for in such a challenge (besides a *proxy* human one)? It can never *originally* conceive of the artwork's *Idea* – and ask 'What is it for the sake of?' – to seek out life's real possibilities.

Human sentience and sapience (wisdom, or 'knowing') originate in a deeper primordial past, in the Nature-History *nexus*. The 'sediments' of our constitution, that Merleau-Ponty alludes to, cannot be artificially regenerated. They can only be copied or abstracted in Mechanism. Although AI may eventually be taught *to behave* like it has consciousness, *human* consciousness reaches beyond ourselves to mediate our '*being*'-in the world. This involves mediating between the kind of uncertainty in Nature manifest in what physicists call 'quantum mechanical reality', and the very different 'classical reality' that we habituate as 'the real' in our *ordinary* experience of life. In between these stands a 'phenomenal' reality. It presents us with the *Real* "image" of life that Schelling says *stands between* the object and concept, which neither science nor philosophy but only genuine Art can approach. Reflexivity and reflectivity are thus different; as different as humans are to machines. One is *Ideal*-ly autonomous, the other is not.

I have argued that AI can never really make art because it can't develop our reflexive 'practical intelligence' for intuiting meaning. It may model the emergence of reality using 'chaos theory' or 'systems theory', but most philosophers of mind - particularly in the 'emergence' school of thought – argue that the 'enactive model' better accounts for the 'perception/action loop' in human meaning production, and the role that 'cognitive agents' (or active

subjects) play in shaping the world.⁴³ Yet a defective *mechanistic* model of neuroscience still tends to dominate the science of ‘cognition’. And, accompanying this, our conception of ‘knowing’ is still beholden in the public sphere to a subjectivised ideological use of Information. These underwrite a posthumanist view of humanity’s future (which is essentially anti-humanist).

With the rise of anti-Art, the *natural* Ideal of ‘wholeness’ has been turned into a projection of worldlessness. *Reflection* upon the human condition under Kant’s and Hegel’s historicising paradigms, and in Heidegger’s later view of ‘worlding’ too, rendered the ‘Other’ as only an object of a manufactured reality that ultimately represents a *de-naturing* of Spirit (Torsen 29). Though Heidegger opposed worldlessness, contemporary posthumanists and ‘new materialists’ welcome it.⁴⁴ Rather than confronting its causes, they embrace it with a self-serving vigour for the generalised ‘connectivity’ of false populism that AI is set to milk. In so-called ‘posthuman art’, a familiar instrumentalist nominalism (embodying Danto’s absurd theorising) connects the dystopian acceptance of what Carlos Segovia in *Fire in Three Images* calls ‘our pretension to submit everything to our will’ (a misappropriation of Nietzsche’s ‘will to power’).

With posthumanism, meaningless abstractions of the body permanently splitting the Art-Person perfect sign become the self-legitimising *raison d’être* for self-conscious preoccupations with a world of fragmentations of beauty and truth. It is, as McGilchrist argues, a false left hemisphere dominant world where people begin to doubt its actuality and develop a ‘playfulness’ with it common in the behaviour of psychopaths.⁴⁵ This mechanistic ‘virtual’ world is ruled by perceptions and beliefs alone, that only fools cannot recognise in the ‘post-truth’ body-corporatised politics of our times. In it the positivistic materialising fascinations with dis-embodied meaning, mind-body dualism, and Kantian ‘distanciation’ find a home in ‘conceptual art’. The posthumanist embrace of ‘conceptualism’ continues to lull many into believing human Imagination is simply ‘cognition’ that can be artificially obtained and used.

⁴³ See Trimarchi *Harmonising*. Also: Varela Francisco, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch. *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. MIT Press, 1992. Problematically, however, they lean towards the deconstruction of the self (or ‘no-self’) approach; which Buddhism offers but Scheler (in his essay titled *The Meaning of Suffering*) takes issue with.

⁴⁴ e.g., Végő.

⁴⁵ See Sass for Modern Art’s effect here.

A collapsing biosphere reflects this fundamentally defective mythological semiosis. Kant's 'transcendentalism' cast Nature as inferior to humans instead of integral to them; and Hegel's aesthetics followed by grounding 'Spirit' only in *historical* reality. The false belief that our *aesthetic* cognition is entirely subsumed by a familiar world of our own making, that just copying 'reality' might offer 'transcendence', is ubiquitous in the 'artworld'. Being indifferent to artmaking's need for a *re-productive* Imagination and practical intelligence - which are not simply generated by a world of experience pieced together sequentially, historically, or in any way shape or form other than holistically and *organically* – AI *cannot but* promote more fake art. And with it, the false mythology leading humanity into a degraded relationship with Nature.

Fake art now thrives in all artforms; from the self-indulgent music industry, to 'social realist' filmmaking (like that of Ken Loach or Mike Leigh's) whose merely 're-presentative' fixation on life lacks the *implicit* vibrancy and expansive possibility of metaphoric reality. Having no higher 'end' (*internal* purpose), such lifeless and rather depressing substitutions of genuine naturalism with a sterile 'realism' just distort the Beauty-Truth nexus. By contrast, the uplifting metaphoric qualities of *unselfconscious* naturalism once moved us to a reality far more real (e.g., in Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*). Although some art is still being made, the anti-Artworld encourages a thriving deconstructive postmodernism, filled with "artists" re-conceptualising reality by novel mechanistic means, in idealistic apparently 'supranatural' passively reflective "self-creation". Entrepreneurs spread a bowdlerised version of true Peircian pragmatism, superimposing fantasy over the natural evolution of thought in the human 'divine' imagination - which involves far more complex aesthetic logic than their historicisms.

Foreseeing the de-humanising tendencies of such a world, prior to Peirce, Schelling's rejection of the Kantian aesthetic paradigm revealed aesthetics as *Reason's* supreme originator; and aesthetic intuition, by embracing *all* ideas, as not at all indiscriminate. Before Schelling, Aristotle's distinction between Art proper and artefacts, by which we may either habituate or not a *responsibility* to decipher the *value relations* of ideas in search of reason, paved the way for Scheler's philosophical anthropology. This returned the Person to the center of all human inquiry. More recently, Ricoeur shows how the practical intelligence we

metaphoric creatures possess is nurtured in Imagination. When conceptualising fails, he says, the imagination still has the power to make conceptual thought ‘think *more*’. It is thus not merely ‘productive’, and unable to approach Understanding, as Kant had presumed; but rather re-productive, by virtue of our *active* subjectivity. A ‘subjectivity’ ever in search of a merger with the objective world.

In the process of this examination, I have suggested why, in Art, beauty is not just a *theory*. Beauty and Ugliness exist *in the realm* of ‘the beautiful’, because their coinciding opposition *directionally* issues a real objective purpose in our world. One that the ancient Greeks maintained to, in examining their *indifference* to truth, seek out the reasons for *being* Human. Human beauty is thus not reducible to ‘information’. By contrasting ‘artificial’ with ‘practical’ intelligence, my aim has been to show why there is no realistic possibility of manufacturing an ideological resolution to the dilemmas posed by questions of our individual or collective Identity, via any fantasy of ‘psychic’ or physical “enhancement”. The dangers to Humanism of presuming so are self-evident in the fact that no ‘mechanical’ theory of mind can reconstruct a consciousness with a primordial past like ours. Our natural sapient individual and collective self-structuring *Historia* is bound to Nature’s, *born into* us as forward-moving ‘purpose’. So too is Art’s. Post-‘*Humanism*’ is thus mission impossible; so too posthuman art.

Many have understood the genesis and apotheosis of Art’s link to this purpose was realised in *the past*, but lost. And though it is indeed waiting to be rediscovered, it will not be by *techno-science*. The argument that AI will never make original art is underwritten by Peircian semiotics, Schelerian philosophical anthropology, and Schellingian Naturphilosophie – all of which owe much to Aristotle’s natural science. Together these show why there can be no algorithm for art. The evidence for this is phenomenological; lying mainly in the fact that the required *organic* intentionality to *suspend Peirce’s second* and render an object’s interpretant as Art simply cannot be pre-programmed.⁴⁶ Pre-programming *accidentality* merely imitates Nature. The link between Phenomenology, Normative Science, and Metaphysics was shown to reveal why *artistic* intentionality, which directs the propositional search for the indifference between

⁴⁶ see Trimarchi *Suspended Second*.

the real and ideal, must come from an actively engaged human source to be a *genuine* search for the beauty-truth merger. This essentially defines Art as Principle (and AI's limits).

Because any realistic proposition must have an historicity *in its making*, and only humans can draw upon the *Historia* of the Person for this, AI can never find its origin. If posited by proxy, such propositions are automatically inauthentic. Any resulting work will be a relatively inert, meaningless object to us, because the perfect-sign relation between artist and artwork has been interrupted. It quickly becomes clear, when even briefly examining art-form/work constraints, why AI has no basis upon which to generate such propositions using templates. Like all forms, art is created out of the indifference of freedoms to necessities and vice versa. *The artist* mediates this resolution with an intentionality that, whether deliberate or accidental, draws upon theirs and others' *person-hood*. But this idea of *subjectivity* was lost in the 'blind self-seeking urge' (pervading the modern mythologising of "art") which, as Gare writes, manifested as a domination of the freedom to choose a world experienced as *only* 'objective'. The potential for good can only come from 'the self-consciousness that emerges with social relationships that limit, and facilitate the self-limitation, of [the] creative power' (*Process Philosophy* 7).

If AI's albeit proxy 'self-seeking urge' should one day be unleashed from human regulation – though its own 'subjectivity' is always a displaced one, and hence not real – even its developers warn about the possibly terrifying consequences (prefigured by Isaac Asimov's 'three laws'). Our now unprecedented loss of any natural normative idea of ethics and logic (that genuine art restores), leaves us defenceless against powerful technology that cannot replace it. The conflicting wills already cemented in modern mythology, dividing our world, can only be resolved by *humans* who know what 'the good' is. I have argued that *AI's* discernment of this in artmaking could only follow the values we have already chosen to create the false 'artworld' with. AI might be *taught* the Principle of Art, but can't use it; and it is art's '*making*', not technologies of *action*, that propels us ever forward in search of meaningful *ends*. Only by reconceiving Art as *normative* aesthetics can our social understanding of 'good' be meaningfully in- formed. The fact that a 'replicant' human would lack the originary *Reason* to conceive the artwork and, with 'genetic' enhancement or not could only produce

copy-art, flags the question of judgement.

Given the barriers to re-imagining art like this in the Humanities, which have succumbed entirely to its industrialising and commercialising, it is highly likely AI will mostly be employed to reach for some idealistic escapist Nietzschean *Übermensch* fantasy. The ‘computer-brain’ interface will likely innovate this posthuman ideal of personhood, rather than a humanist one. And, while real art is relegated to the past, AI will continue to exploit the ‘general aesthetic’ for what Aleksandr Voronsky (*Art as Cognition of Life* 101) argues modernity had reduced art to by the twentieth century: predictable productivity. That is, as the mythological tool *par excellence* for what ‘kills the imagination as it degenerates into moralising’. As our ersatz ‘cultural’ flourishing generates all manner of new appetites and aversions, and humans are remembered as the merely biological ‘machines for thinking’ that Hobbes and Descartes described, Art will vanish irrevocably into ‘symbolic capital’. And humans, following its fabricated ‘perfect’ signification of the future, will be driven into an irreversible mechanistic existence that fake artmaking will mythologise as real.

As Alasdair MacIntyre claimed, it is essentially this ideological idea of ‘modernity’ that makes us prone to easily confuse utility with autonomy, and hence ‘means’ with ‘ends’, or external goods with internal goods. Purposes themselves become easily confused, as objectivities and subjectivities merge in unnatural manipulated ways; and those salutary purpose-less, unpredictable, aspects of being human slowly begin to become passive, then undetectable, then extinguished altogether. What remains is mere utility, though often so well masked that we no longer even realise that our autonomous creativity has been vanquished by mechanism. As we hand over the imprimatur for our good judgements to AI, heralding its ‘intelligence’ (though it’s only information-manipulating), we barely even notice being robbed of our humanity.

Our uniquely *purposeless* ‘will to power’, which Nietzsche argued was only truly powerful *at rest* (in contemplation - in *thinking* - as Aristotle suggests), however need not yield to an historical idea of ‘being modern’.⁴⁷ For this reason, our most *important invention* – Art - is probably our most valuable ‘immaterial’ asset. Because of the Art-Person relation, it represents our only realistic way of acculturating a

⁴⁷ See Steinbuch and Guo for the significance of this to false idealisations of human ‘transfiguration’.

return to natural, logical, ‘ahistorical’ normativity. By which is meant a *genuinely* human sense of autonomy, not to ‘create’ *many choices*, but to be enabled to make good ones. Via Art we can learn to know *how* to choose between goods, rather than assume our self-legitimizing ‘will to power’ must. This is why I have argued the question of judgement – the criteria which the Principle gives us to be able to distinguish Art from non-Art etc., – is key. Art can humanise us and our judgements *better* than any form of mechanism. Through it, moreover, we can recognise why there are limits upon which technology can benefit humanity. The biggest one, obviously, concerns ethics; and this is why Art’s elucidation of how we know the difference between ethics and morals is important.

Ethics clearly also concerns logic, and how we define information. If ‘mechanistically’ contrived, these are a recipe for disaster. Art’s real usefulness lies in its reconnection with normative aesthetics. And, *habituating* the capacity to make the sorts of distinctions discussed here is critical for humans to continue to be able to make art. So, for *Humanism* to survive, the *role* of the artist and aesthete in society must change; and perhaps this may be one radical unintentional consequence of AI’s introduction into the cultural sphere. Though obviously artefact-making/admiring is worthwhile and must continue, there is the vague if unlikely hope that widespread unemployment in the ‘cultural and creative’ industries will hatch something like a ‘social wage’ (UBI) that could end in de-industrialising Art. This could return it to its higher purposeful purposelessness as a true vocation and tradition of thought, restoring some dignity to the status of Artist. If used wisely AI may prove useful, but it is delusory to think it can ever replace artists.

So, rather than invest in AI to make more consumable fake art, we should invest in learning to distinguish why making *Art* concerns the higher meaning of merging Beauty with Truth and balancing Freedom with Necessity. This needs to begin in preschools, with these fundamental defining precepts of the Principle; and, in later schooling, incorporating a philosophy of ‘speculative naturalism’ with phenomenology as an essential subject. As unlikely as this seems, given the industrial, economic imperative foisted upon “art”, the reality is starkly clear. There is really no such thing as *post*-humanism, or posthuman art. There is only the better aspiration to Humanism, that art can help us achieve. Technology can either aid this pursuit, or our final descent into mechanism. If, in all human

endeavours, aesthetics *precedes* ethics and logic, then only restoring our attention to the subject-object relation in the artwork's phenomenology can revive a *natural normative idea* of virtue itself in the modern epoch.

The Principle of Art thus represents a critical bulwark against anti-humanist ideologies, for realising a Human Ecology. And betting on AI (or Mechanism) to take over making art, is just flipping a counterfeit coin.

nat.trimarchi@gmail.com

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APPENDIX: THE PRINCIPLE OF ART’S ETHICAL PHENOMENOLOGY

The question of judgement about *Art’s* ‘Object’ is critical to that of its related artwork ‘object’. The latter must ultimately remain open and ‘non-determinist’ in any absolute sense, as Schelling, Peirce, and Scheler’s ‘absolutes’ presuppose, for Art’s ‘Objectivity’ to remain genuinely real. Schelling’s systemic approach to *the progress of meaning* provides a categorical framework for relating the unified principle of art to ‘art in the particular’. Scheler’s *value* hierarchy provides the ethical framework, thus the means of knowing ‘what *mark* to aim for’ (i.e., in Aristotle’s virtue ethics). And Peirce’s triadic activity of signs directs us toward

‘concrete reasonableness’; thus, how this mark is manifested (or not) via the interaction of signs. That is, how we can track meaning intentionality, as it emerges from what Maurice Merleau-Ponty calls ‘the obscure zone.’ Meaning-value orientation in art can be more objectively obtained by the action of this ‘suspended second’ evident in Ricoeur’s ‘tensions’, and Peirce’s semiotics.

FIGURE 1 below depicts the emergence of higher meaning from the suspension

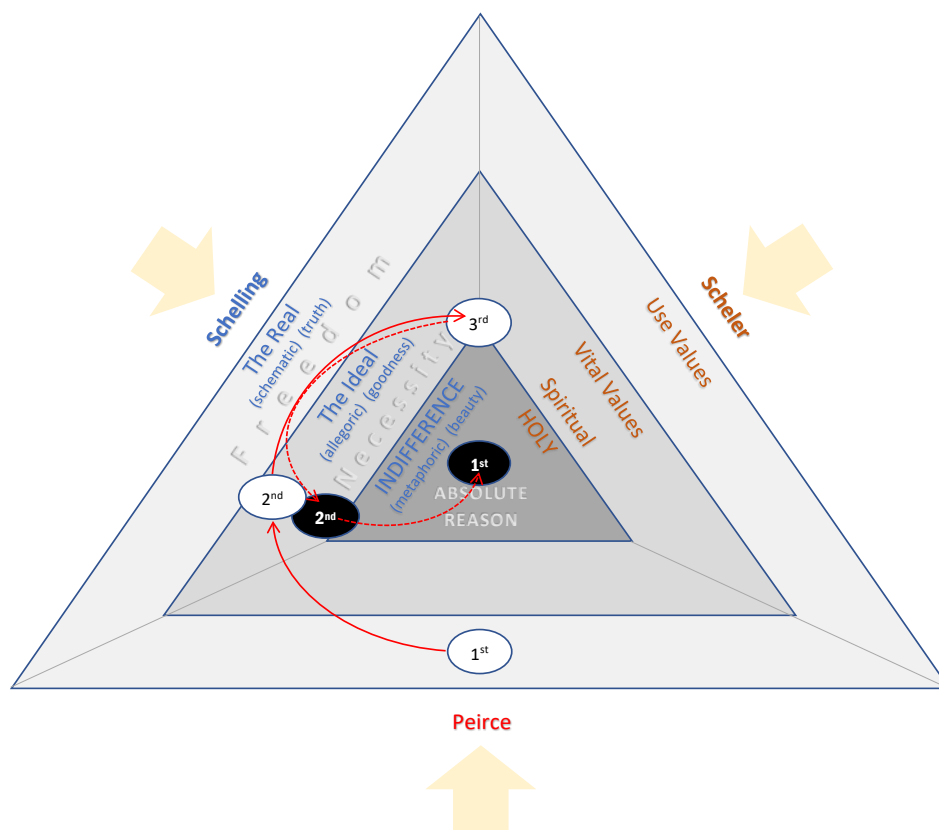


Figure 1 Schematic depiction of movement toward higher meaning-value in the realistic artwork

of Peirce’s second (*object I* -> *Object* -> *real Firstness*). Schelling, Peirce, and Scheler’s ‘absolutes’ converge in the intellectual intuition of ‘ethical’ propositions, which Peirce’s triadic activity of signs directs us to. Thus, Art’s *Principle* is revealed, via its exemplars, as not reflective but meaningfully re-productive. (See Trimarchi *Way Out*).