

The Work on Oneself: musings on Wittgenstein's legacy for philosophy of art and art education

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ABSTRACT-The Work on One self: musings on Wittgenstein's legacy for philosophy of the properties ofart and art education. The present text discusses Wittgenstein's later works. We attempt to establish the following: (A) Wittgenstein's later philosophy was first understood by Morris Weitz as an opportunity to develop new ideas on aesthetics and philosophy of art, although Wittgenstein himself haven't made those developments. (B) Weitz's interpretation of Wittgenstein jumpstarts a debate concerned with definitional aspects within these fields. (C) This debate is vividly ongoing and one of its most recent figures is Noël Carroll. (D) Carroll's methodological account for art identification without essential definitions is a relevant response to other accounts within the field, especially to Weitz. (E) Because Carroll's account evokes art identification as something oriented by language, critique and narrative making, contact with others, etc., his account seems to be a truly return to some of Wittgenstein original ideas; specially on art criticism as something entirely dependent of art appreciation and of learning to "work on oneself" in the sense that art appreciation requires a work on one's own perception and beliefs. Finally, it is our opinion that this return to Wittgenstein through Carroll's account evokes the idea that art education is a process of revisiting one's own perceptions and beliefs by means of an encounter with history of art, culture, concrete contexts of language usage, etc.; things that represent the instance of a radical otherness. Keywords: Wittgenstein. Philosophy of Art. Carroll. Weitz. Cavell.

RESUMO-O Trabalho sobre si Mesmo: reflexões sobre o legado de Wittgenstein para a Filosofia da Arte e a educação artística. O presente texto discute a filosofia tardia de Wittgenstein. Tentaremos estabelecer os seguintes pontos: (A) A filosofia tardia de Wittgenstein é vista por Morris Weitz como uma oportunidade de desenvolvimento de novas ideias na estética e na filosofia da arte, embora Wittgenstein não tenha feito esses desenvolvimentos. (B) A interpretação de Weitz sobre Wittgenstein dispara um debate sobre os aspectos definicionais concernentes aos campos mencionados. (C) Esse debate é, ainda hoje, vivo e continuado e um de seus protagonistas mais recentes é Noël Carroll. (D) A proposta metodológica de identificação de arte sem definições essenciais de Carroll é, em certo sentido, uma resposta relevante a outras abordagens no campo, especial a weitziana. (E) Porque a abordagem de Carroll evoca a identificação de arte como algo orientado pela linguagem, pela crítica e pela construção de narrativas, pelo contato com outros, etc., sua abordagem parece representar um retorno às ideias originais de Wittgenstein; especialmente à de crítica de arte como algo dependente da apreciação artística e de um "trabalho sobre si mesmo" - no sentido de que a apreciação artística requer um trabalho sobre nossa própria percepção e crença. Por fim, nossa hipótese é que esse retorno a Wittgenstein feito por Carroll evoca também a ideia de que a educação em arte é, consequentemente, um processo de revisitação das próprias

percepções e crenças por meio de um encontro com a história da arte, da cultura, dos contextos concretos de uso da linguagem, etc.; coisas que representam uma instância de radical *alteridade*.

Palavras-chave: Wittgenstein. Filosofia da Arte. Carroll. Weitz. Cavell.

Look at me again. With less altitude. And *more attentive.*

Love-me. There's time. Interrogate me. And I'll say our time is now. Splendid altitude, vast venture: Because is vaster the dream that elaborates For so long its own tessiture. Love-me. Though I look to you Overly intense. And asperity made. And transient if you rethink me.

Hilda Hilst, *Ten summoning's to my friend*. In *Jubilee, memoir, novitiate of the passion*, 1974, my translation, my italics.

Introduction

It is a known fact that Ludwig Wittgenstein was not *per se* a philosopher of art. He never fully committed to a robust and systematic philosophical treatment of artworks or, for that matter, of our faculties of reception, taste or judgment. Apart from scarce observations about art and aesthetics throughout his work, Wittgenstein was not concerned with art in the same way we are now.

It is a fact (better yet, a mere *truism*) that the major problems of today's art theory and philosophy that started from 1960's onward – e.g. artists refusing traditional art supports that the early European modernists didn't see fit to refuse³ – were not problems of *his time*. However, it is also true that Wittgenstein seemed to be quite sure of the difficulty of fully speaking about our own experiences with art. Not because he thought art appreciation was a mere entertainment. On the contrary, because he thought that the value of art for us was related to a necessity of continuous contemplation, until a kind of a work on oneself could, in turn, take its place. The "mystical", that about which one cannot speak (i.e. describe, express with meaningful propositions), might have something to do with this change of style, change of life, thematized before him by the poet Rilke in Archaic Torso of Apollo: "... for here there is no place that does not see you. You must change your life" (Rilke, 1982, p. 61). Perhaps Wittgenstein's quietism about aesthetics (as well as about ethics and religion) was something deeply related to what he considered as a necessity of learning something for oneself through seeing and contemplating.

Culture and Value, posthumously published by G. H. von Wright (one of the curators of Wittgenstein's intellectual spoils), is a heterogeneous collection of observations and remarks on art, music, religion, psychoanalysis and philosophy. One of those remarks, a very famous

one by the way, suggests some differences between art and science and gives us interesting insights into his ideas about what he might have considered to be the role of art and its relevance for human beings.

People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc. to give them pleasure. The idea that these have something to teach them – that does not occur to them. Piano playing, a dance of human fingers. Shakespeare displays the dance of human passions, one might say. Hence, he has to be objective; otherwise he would not so much display the dance of human passions – as talk about it. But he displays it to us in a dance, not naturalistically (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 36e-37e).

The suggestion that art, poetry and music have something to teach us is, thus, confronted with the tantalizing and traditional view that art exists only to give us pleasure. Importantly, Wittgenstein was not suggesting that art has nothing to do with pleasure, but he was saying that, maybe, there's more to art than just that. Although he's not making an exegesis of the field of aesthetics and, for instance, seeking for the philosophical framework that first developed the idea that art can be defined by means of the production of aesthetic experiences marked by pleasure and disinterest, he certainly hits the nail on the head.

He suggests with this little remark, that instead of relating to the artwork with a pleasure-seeking eye, something that alienates completely our appreciative possibilities, we can also engage a work of art with the awareness that it can teach us beyond the level of taste and pleasure. But what lies beyond pleasure? And what can art possibly teach us? Perhaps, by paying attention to the piano playing, where *human fingers* dance, we can bring into focus the fact that art is always in an intimate relation with us as producers; but most importantly, as sensitive, emotional and rational beings. Furthermore, that art literally is the *display*, the procedure of *showing*, of *making visible* those things that we tend to forget about in our everyday lives; those things that are invisible to us.

By paying attention to Shakespeare's plays, we can see the *display* of human passions: the melancholic self-absorption of Hamlet that keeps absenting him from the concrete and obvious things happening in the background; or Iago's agonistic and yet gratuitous hatred towards Othello that, in his perverse plotting without any boundaries or recognition of the difference between virtue and crime, is the perfect image of villainy. In the realm of artistic make-believe, we can *look and see* human traces being displayed for us in this sort of artistic screen (*dans l'écran*), apart from our everyday lives. The magnetic powers of imagery that, since Plato and his condemnation of images and poets in the book X of *The Republic*, has fascinated us – and has kept the philosophers deeply troubled. That interplay between art and life through pantomime and imitation, artistic rhythms and patterns, is what can teach us about ourselves as human beings and as beings that are deeply connected to images. Art education is not exactly a teaching that hap-

pens at the level of beliefs or knowledge; but first and foremost, at the level of seeing, gazing on and contemplating things. Admitting, also, that perception is something we can refine and develop by the training of our eyes or ears: our sensorial body. As Alva Noë recently suggested, there's something called *aesthetic seeing*, "something more like the entertainment of thoughts about what one is looking at" (Noë, 2015, p. 52). Although these ideas sound as good as new, they are in fact very much indebted to a long tradition of thinkers and, most of all, to artists. Just to mention two, Wittgenstein and Gombrich were very familiar with them; and Gombrich, as a matter of fact, spent most of his intellectual life developing them⁴.

My argument is divided into sections. In the second session I will try to show how Wittgenstein's later works were received within the fields of philosophy of art and aesthetics by Morris Weitz in an attempt to summarize his own account, which he claims to be Wittgensteinian. This raised contending objections to Weitz in recent commentaries, which I will briefly present. In the third session, I present Carroll's method for art identification as a way of dissolving the insistence of these fields with definitional issues concerning art. I take it that Carrol's methodological procedure attempts to overcome somewhat dated academical debates, bringing back what is truly Wittgensteinian about aesthetics: aesthetics as art criticism and art criticism as art appreciation; the act of contemplating art, experiencing it, talking and discussing it, instead of aiming at possible definitions. In the fourth section I will try to unfold some of Wittgenstein's remarks on art and aesthetics. And I will also present and briefly analyze an art installation from Brazilian artist Bruno Novae's that happened in 2019 at Paço das Artes (São Paulo, Brazil). Finally, in the fifth section, I will discuss what I'm considering as art education.

Weitz, the Wittgensteinian

The American philosopher Morris Weitz (1916 – 1981) is most recognized by his work on aesthetics and philosophy of art. His *The Role of Theory in Aesthetics* is widely known as a landmark on the field due to his attempts to develop a truly Wittgensteinian account for art that took the *Philosophical Investigations*, the notions of *language games* and, specially, of *family resemblances* as references. In fact, Weitz proposed that we abandon the essentialist accounts in aesthetics, substituting them with a methodological makeshift from his own take on the notion of *family resemblances*.

Weitz's main argument claims that all attempts at defining the concept of art will fail due to the continuous mutability of the art object and to the everlasting creativity of artists; if we look at the History of Art and Philosophy, then we must conclude that all previous attempts have failed. So, considering these *facts*, an actual attempt to produce a concept that would limit artworks by means of a real or essential definition would be a task inevitably doomed to fail in the future as well.

Moreover, the task of defining art is a daunting task that would generate undesirable consequences: overturning the very own enterprise of art production, for instance. We don't really need an essential definition for identifying artworks. So, considering all the points above, *art cannot be defined*.

It's quite surprising that Weitz himself seemed to be unaware of the *non sequiturs* in his own arguments and, as Carroll's rightfully objects, unaware of the overall failure of the methodological approach he putted into motion. Carroll pinpointed the structural underpinnings of Weitz's argument suggesting a reconstruction by logical analysis. For Carroll (2011), Weitz was advancing a *reductio ad absurdum* in the 1956 paper, where the acceptance of a certain number of premises logically implied a contradiction which, from the coherence standpoint of logic, required the abandonment of these premises in the first place. The argument reconstructed by Carroll (2011) proceeds as follows: supposing that art could be defined would mean that art is not creative and constantly open to innovation; but art is creative and constantly open to innovation; thus, to claim that art can be defined in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions would be to claim that art is not art.

For the reduction to take place, Weitz must initially suppose the very negation (art can be defined) of what he is trying to prove as a thesis (art cannot be defined). But, from the acceptance of the premise that art can be defined we conclude the absurd, i.e. a contradiction: art is not art. In order to avoid that contradiction, the initial supposition (that art can be defined) must be negated and the thesis Weitz is trying to advance (art cannot be defined) is, by means of the argument, thus proved.

Carroll's (2011) witty objection is that Weitz's argument was invalid because the term 'art' was not being implied univocally in the above argument, but equivocally. In the premise 'art is creative and constantly open to innovation', for instance, the term 'art' cannot stand for 'artwork in particular', e.g. Michelangelo's *David* or Picasso's *Guernica*, because they, as particular objects, are not 'creative and constantly open for innovation'. That doesn't make any sense. So, the term 'art' in the first premise would be applied to 'the history of art' instead of 'particular artwork'. Roughly, it's a premise that considers arts historicity and art from a historical point of view. Differently, on the premise 'art can be defined' Weitz is referring by the term 'art' artworks in particular because the premise is focusing on the problem of essential definition; he is seeking an essence that is commonly shared by all artworks and that all of them must possess individually. So, the referent of 'art' in this premise is art taken as something specific (an ongoing activity or potentiality) and not art in its individualized historical achievements. If the referents of the term of a reductio vary within the premises of the argument, then the contradiction is not legitimately established, and the reduction is not valid.

Furthermore, after suggesting that we need to abandon the essentialist account for art identification in the realm of philosophy, Weitz argued in favor of a methodological view which he claims to be entirely

inspired by the Wittgensteinian notion of family resemblances. But Carroll (2011), once again, objected to Weitz's account on the grounds that he was reading Wittgenstein wrong. Why? Because Weitz's method for art identification preconized the overall appearance of artworks, i.e., those aspects that can be surveyed by contemplation and by perceptual means. If this is true, then we will be taking for granted the notion of family resemblances in Philosophical Investigations. I have no resemblance to my father, or my mother, in such and such way because of the similarity of our noses, eyebrows, hair color or faces. But because we share something more basic and more constitutive that determines the way we look, our phenotypic resemblances. My overall appearance as a person is, first and foremost, determined by the genetic traits that I share with my father and mother, which are traits that are not per se observable by the naked eye. The fact that Weitz assumed that family resemblances were determined by appearances is something grossly misleading and very far from Wittgenstein's original considerations. Although these resemblances are things phenomenically verifiable (i.e., by empirical inspection), they are not determined or caused by something that the eye can spot, isolate or contemplate.

Weitz's illegitimate method of identification of artworks resulted from a misunderstanding of Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblances: Weitz's took 'resemblance' as meaning just 'stereotype' or 'morphology'. However, in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations, family resemblances are introduced in the context of language games and forms of life, notions that are in fact presented as means of escaping an essentialist view on language and the phenomenon of its meaningfulness. Wittgenstein (2009) is, thus, discussing the nature of games and whether all the games share a common essential characteristic as an opportunity to further problematize the essentialism qua philosophical perspective rooted in the Socratic tradition of always seeking for a real definition when philosophizing.⁵ Ramme (2009, p. 206) suggests that Wittgenstein introduced these new notions and their anthropological dimension in order to stress the meaningfulness of human language within the practical and concrete contexts of use of language, which is not necessarily explicitly philosophical.⁶ McGinn (1997, p. 43, 44, 45) also endorses this idea. The importance of relations, contexts and concrete cases is something Weitz forgets, or misreads, by interpreting 'resemblance' as 'properties of the object'. They are indeed 'properties of an object', but the heuristic value of Wittgenstein notion lies beyond that (the determined single object which can be defined). In what contexts games resemble each other? It is this idea involving the *context* where games are played, as well as the *origin* of them and *how* they are played, what is important in order to understand the notion of family resemblances.

In order to explain Weitz's mistake I would suggest one more hypothesis: his understanding of paragraph 66 of *Philosophical Investigations is too literal*. In those paragraphs, Wittgenstein is responding to an interlocutor who demands an essential definition for 'games' and which requires the search for a common feature between all of them, like any other essentialist would do. But Wittgenstein objects:

Don't say: 'They *must* have something in common, or they would not be called 'games'', but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. For if you look at them, you won't see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, affinities, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 36e)⁷.

At a first glance, Wittgenstein is indeed inviting his interlocutor to *inspect* ('look', 'see', which are visual, perceptual verbs, so to speak) several different games. But in the following he is not *at all* emphasizing their 'visual aspects', 'perceptual features' or their 'look': he's drawing our attention to the *contextual peculiarities* of those games and how they are similar in their *conventions* and *proceedings*⁸. This and not the overall appearance of games is what really matters in Wittgenstein's introduction of *family resemblances* as a notion to avoid essentialism, i.e. how some games are alike (or different) by means of the 'rules' and agreements and procedures that are intrinsic to them.

If we were to go back to art and art examples, this same line of reasoning would apply. If you consider the background of Da Vinci's Gioconda, for instance, with its rivers and mountains, comparing it with a picture I took on my cell phone of the Itaimbezinho Canyon in Aparados da Serra (Brazil) in 2018, you will see several resemblances: both of them have mountains, luxurious vegetation, sinuous rivers and a light that casts a cool glow, filtered through the mist. But, alas, my picture is not an artwork. And *Gioconda* is. And we use and approach those two things very differently. And although words and images are ontologically and epistemologically different and do not resemble each other at all, these poetic suggestions of mysterious and luxurious vegetation and atmospheres appears in the chapter 5 of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, when Stephen starts to imagine and day-dream about the 'exotic' East by contemplating a label of Belfast oriental tea in Westland Row (Joyce, 2007). Ulysses and Gioconda are both artworks thought they are not resembled in the sense stressed out by Weitz.

As Arthur Danto would say a few years after Weitz in the 1964 paper *The Artworld*: "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto, 1964, p. 580). Although Danto is focusing on the conceptual context (theories, discourses, and historically established notions for art) that furnishes his idea of *artworld*, his take on art identification and appreciation is radically contextual in the sense that for him what allows us to identify *x* as an artwork is our own competence at taking *x* as something grounded in the context of the *artworld*. So, his idea about *something* that the eye cannot decry can be interpret, I suppose, as those very contexts, procedures and conventions that Wittgenstein was interested in introducing with his *family resemblances* account as a response to the demands for essential definitions within essentialism.

These are compelling points which must be considered before deciding whether Weitz deserves the title of a true *Wittgensteinian*, or

whether we have to accept the conclusion that he misread Wittgenstein. Moreover, by advancing his methodological account within the fields of aesthetics and philosophy of art Weitz produced, at least in the anglophone context of philosophy, what we nowadays call a *definition stance* in aesthetics (Davies, 2001). From his 1965 text forward, a major part of works in aesthetics and especially those within the analytic tradition have been concerned with the issue of art definitions, a theme extremely sophisticated and difficult to grasp. But, most importantly, a theme that has, since Weitz, drifted further and further away from an overall idea of aesthetics committed to art appreciation and discussion.

Carroll's skeptical scenarios and narratives

Carroll simply withdraws from the heated discussions concerning the possibility of a real or essential definition of 'art' which fueled Weitz's 1965 text and the debates in analytical aesthetics. He considers them to be excessively academic, especially given the fact that we identify very successfully what is art in our everyday life. This sort of *pragmatic stance* in Carroll's contribution is also worth considering.

Carroll replaces the academic debate about the possibility of a definition of art with the concrete and practical approach of locating the problem between someone who sees something as an artwork and someone else who is unable to see it as such. In order to overcome this skeptical scenario, the one who is able to identify something as an artwork tries to convince the other one by means of a narrative, through discussion, by giving his opponent a *historical reasoning* that connects the object in question to specific periods of time and/or with other artworks or art tendencies in the History of Art. But, most of all, by *drawing his attention to the artwork*. For Carroll, this method dissolves the aforementioned insistence on the task of finding definitions of art. Furthermore, the method draws our attention to what is relevant in the debate, i.e. *art itself*, it's *history of mutation* and how artists are always in touch with the past.

In order to counter the suspicion that x is not a work of art, the defender of x has to show how x emerged intelligibly from acknowledged practices via the same sort of thinking, acting, decisionmaking, and so on that is already familiar in the practice [of art]. This involves telling a certain kind of story about the work in question: namely, a historical narrative of how x came to be produced as an intelligible response to an antecedent art-historical situation about which a consensus with respect to its art status already exists. With a contested work of art what we try to do is place it within a tradition where it becomes more and more intelligible. And the standard way of doing this is to produce an historical narrative (Carroll, 2001, p. 85).

Carroll even admits that this practice of producing historical narratives for art identification is a widespread practice throughout the art contexts. Art critics do this implicitly (for example, when referring to a

historical canon of great works of art) and explicitly when faced with the necessity of giving some sort of explanation for a particular artwork. And even artists themselves elaborate such narratives for the works they invent while studying and doing their poetical and creative research, or in the course of interviews, or writing down manifestos. For Carroll the latter are called *proleptic narratives*, i.e. narratives made in advance and that appear in the procedures of art making.

Carroll gives us a very detailed account of such narratives in his Beyond Aesthetics (2001), explaining that they are some sort of historical reasonings, truth-encompassing reconstructions underlined by the practical reasoning and the search of artists' productive and creative intentions. In his book, Carroll engages in a tireless exploration of different possibilities of identifying narratives for art identification in order to equip philosophy of art with its own methodology and theory. A detailed account of Carroll's endeavor to develop a unique methodology for art identification, robustly framed by theoretical and philosophical arguments, cannot be given in the space of this paper. I have developed it in earlier works, which shows Carroll's contribution as a new perspective on philosophy of art and aesthetics redubbed as art narrativism, which encompasses, I believe, Wittgenstein's musings about art and its value for human beings.

To describe an artwork and narrate the experiences it involves its viewers in as a means of providing reasons which explain its existence as an autonomous thing in the world, a thing produced by humans that researched and dedicated themselves creatively and theoretically for its production, is something necessarily attached to someone's own knowledge from what is called the *art world*¹⁰: a part or a neighborhood from that *old city*¹¹, an image or analogy that Wittgenstein introduces in the Philosophical Investigations to think of language as something adherent to a *human form of life* (*Lebensform*). When we talk to someone who is very familiar with the typical grammar of this artistic vicinity in our human form of life we are getting in touch with what Geach (1972) refers to as the historical chain of transmission of the meaning for specific terms, while Putnam (1975) talks about the division of linguistic labor amongst language users. And this already puts us on the centrality of what is called art education and knowledge about art and, above all, the transmission of art as a cultural institution. Even though these developments were made by the legitimate heirs of what came to be known as a philosophy of ordinary language from Wittgenstein's later writings, I believe that they accentuate art education through its relational and intersubjective characters. But maybe we can also find in Wittgenstein a consideration of art education as something attached to an individual dimension, in which art affects us directly and offers us the opportunity to learn about ourselves and our own sensibility. And in that sense art evokes aesthetics, and not the other way around.

Wittgenstein: there and back again

In art there's nothing being said *propositionally*¹², nothing being truly expressed in the terms of Wittgenstein's (2004) views concerning the *logical form of the proposition*¹³ and its capacity of *describing the world as it is*, in its *facts*¹⁴. This is where Wittgenstein's (2004) also draw a distinction between *what can be said* and *what can be shown* and that is the reason why art and aesthetics, as well as ethics and religion, do not appear as topics of robust and systematic development on the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, being treated as "the mystical" things that we cannot *speak* about, i.e. express with propositions.

Robust considerations about art do not appear in the *Philosophical Investigations* as well. Wittgenstein's two major works, or at least the ones he is most recognized for, are not concerned with *values*, but with setting the boundaries of what language can legitimately express with meaning. Art, for instance, does not behave in the same way that the system of language does, *figurating* facts through propositions. This is, in synthesis, how Wittgenstein's thesis advances a "theory of representation that requires a formal and strict isomorphism between the system of elementary propositions and the totality of possible facts" (McGinn, 1997, p. 49) capable of articulating its peculiar ontology with an account of the structure of language itself. ¹⁶ If we were to apply Wittgenstein's ideas from the *Tractatus* to art, I think this could be done in two different ways.

First, by admitting that when we use language to talk about art, we are engaging in a task of *describing* artworks regarding them as objects within the ontological tessiture of the world. But I think that Wittgenstein (2004) would deny that we can *fully describe* our own experiences and feelings while engaging with artworks, or describe *why* they seem to us important or relevant, since these things would be characterized as the *mystical* for him, something that language cannot express propositionally: the *ineffable*.¹⁷ And second, by admitting that if aesthetics is possible as a field of study and as a philosophical discipline, then it must be *eminently descriptive*. Moore's annotations from Wittgenstein's lectures might shed some light on that second idea:

Reasons in Aesthetics are 'of the nature of further descriptions', e.g., you can make a person see what Brahms was driving at by showing him lots and lots of pieces by Brahms; or by comparing him with a contemporary author; and all that Aesthetics does is 'draw your attention to a thing, to place things side by side' (Moore, 1966, p. 308).

The process of *drawing someone's attention to a thing* or of *placing things side by side* for their appreciation is what overcomes, in a sense, the limitations Wittgenstein's himself imposed to what language can legitimately accomplish in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and what reveals the possibility of aesthetics, as I already mentioned, as a discipline. The overall idea is that maybe aesthetics, for Wittgenstein, is necessarily *art criticism*.

Another passage from *Culture and Value* might help to elucidate these ideas. Wittgenstein says that "In art it is hard to say anything as good as: saying nothing" (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 23e). At a first glance, this sounds deeply disturbing, something as a disallowance of art itself and its capacity of expressing, displaying, being valuable for us as humans, etc. But if we consider the idea that aesthetics can be taken as art criticism – as a process of drawing someone's attention to something or by putting things side by side – then it seems that he is not making a normative remark about art or implying that art is incapable of expressing at all. Instead, I believe, he's suggesting that (i) artworks are not settled in the same way that language is, i.e. the modalities of expression of art are not the same as those of our everyday usage of language; and that (ii) our engagement with artworks is not initially discursive or languageoriented, but is perceptually and aesthetically concealed. And, if our engagement with artworks comes close to the linguistic dimension (for instance, when we try to speak about our experiences with them), then this is *not a description*, it's something else. Apart from that, if we consider the dimension of an ontology of the artwork, it will be indispensable to recognize that artworks establish their internal relations with language or employ language in a very different way than we do when we use language to describe the world or, for a matter of fact, when we engage linguistically in our everyday lives. The point is that artworks do not abide to the same structures that articulate the inner workings of descriptions, as well as they do not abide to the grammatical conventions that direct the language games in our human form of life. In order to conclude that I would like to posit a question that brings back that very first passage of Culture and Value where Wittgenstein seems to suggest that art can be considered as a mean for education and instruction. What can art teach us? And how? How can art teach us something? And, if it really does, what precisely is that?

I suggest that we consider aesthetics not as something that necessarily evokes art discussions, but precisely the inverse. Art evokes aesthetics as a sort of art criticism, a discussion entirely focused on attempts to draw our attention to particular things and to put these things side by side in a comparative perspective. When our debate is focused in our attempts to explain what we see in contemplating things, then aesthetics truly emerges because it brings into focus our own abilities and competences as perceptual beings. Anne Cauquelin in her famous book Les théories de l'art (2010) considered the interesting idea that art demands theory, art calls for theory. This means that our art experiences are always something that pushes us into debates, discussions, descriptions and human exchanges about our experiences and knowledge about other artworks and the History of Art. As if our very own experiences with artworks demanded for discourses and as if they were experiences permeated with the peculiar impression of constantly being pushed to the edge of language, the edge of description and the intermittences of saying and making sense. But it also means that our debates about art, volens nolens, evokes debates about our own perceptual apparatus, something extensively explored by Alva Noë in his Strange Tools: Art and *Human Nature* (2015) and by that long tradition of thinkers and artists that paved the way for him in the first place.

If aesthetics is something truly philosophical, or if it has anything to do with philosophy at all, then, at least for Wittgenstein, aesthetics is something deeply connected to a sort of *work on oneself.* At another passage of *Culture and Value*, Wittgenstein remarks that "Working in philosophy... is really more a working on oneself. On one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things" (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 16e), suggesting precisely that idea. We can interpret this as a kind of Wittgensteinian glossing about the theme of philosophy as an activity of resolving pseudo problems by realizing the inner workings of language as he expounded in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Similarly, we can interpret it as a glossing about the theme of philosophy as a therapeutic instrument which enables us to *brings words back to their home* (Heimat), saving them from going *idle* and saving us from the temptations of metaphysics – ideas that Wittgenstein expounded in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In the context of the property of the philosophical investigations.

Nevertheless, we can also interpret it as Cavell (1976) suggests, i.e., as admitting that philosophy (together with aesthetics) is an activity one must endure on his own as a work on oneself: a special kind of "self-scrutiny" (Cavell, 1976, p. 71). The point of self-scrutiny appears in the Cavellian interpretation while he is discussing the dimensions of Wittgenstein's choice of Augustine's Confessions as opening for Philosophical Investigations. Apart from the religious hues that might color our conception of a 'confession', Cavell (1976) also suggests that a confession is something that involves admittance of certain 'temptations' and a 'willingness to correct' them; but there are no explanations in confessions, only descriptions. Importantly, 'temptation' not only implies this 'willingness to correct' mentioned by Cavell but also an inevitable and uncontrollable tendency to error, or sin, again and again. The paths that leads from 'sin' to 'redemption' are everything but linear; showing their loops and circles in an unending cycle. Nothing really prevents us from sinning once again after confession. So, this metaphor of the sinner taken from Augustine's Confessions might just be the perfect analogy to Wittgenstein's own ideas in Philosophical Investigations, because the book can be read as an unending procedure of attending one by one those philosophical temptations that keep on surfacing the text. These ideas brings us back to the consideration of a descriptive aesthetics, something that is made by talking about art and by comparing artworks, which is very alike to art criticism.

Consider now the following concrete example. It is an art installation by the Brazilian artist Bruno Novaes called *The teacher shall be the last to leave, even in rainy days*, at Paço das Artes (São Paulo, Brazil) in 2019. In the room, thousands of used school chalks were deposited in the back of the room. In front of them, a little student desk from the beginning of the century displays an open calligraphy notebook and a pen. Entering the room, Novae's invitation can be read on the wall: *Write down your own confessions, related or not to your school memories*. The book itself is somewhat of a collective artwork and it's called *Confes-*

sional Teaching (2017). It started in 2017 and registers personal confessions of several people that dared to contribute to Novae's calligraphy books. At the time of 2019's installation at Paço das Artes (SP), there are already fifty-one calligraphy books from other installations. But here, at *The teacher shall be the last to leave, even in rainy days*, participants are invited to write down their confessions in front of those mountains of white chalk encased into a room very similar to the ones in schools (at least in Brazil).

Apart from the peculiarities of contemporary art – its presentation as installation and not as a picture or a sculpture, i.e. unlimited to spatial and temporal limitations, its usage of everyday objects in the tradition of the Duchampian ready-mades or *objets trouvés* and its solicitation to be experienced not just by means of visual engagement – Novae's installation was intended as an invitation for participants to muse on their own experiences and recollections about life as students, in the same way Cavell is interpreting Wittgenstein's idea of "work on oneself": self-scrutiny, reflecting about one's own education, cultural inheritance, inner-change, etc. Novae's invites us to write down several times and with effort *our own confessions*.

Figure 1 – Bruno Novaes, The teacher shall be the last to leave, even in rainy days, 2019



Figure 2 – Bruno Novaes, The teacher shall be the last to leave, even in rainy days, 2019



Source: Novaes (2020).

Figure 3 – Bruno Novaes, The teacher shall be the last to leave, even in rainy days, 2019



Source: Novaes (2020).

Figure 4 – Bruno Novaes, The teacher shall be the last to leave, even in rainy days, 2019



Source: Novaes (2020).

And it is as if we were students all over again, trying to excel ourselves in class and trying to improve and refine our own calligraphy, our own language. As if we were being invited to take part in the world through language and self-discovery. In Novae's invitation there's something that summons us to realize precisely how, by writing, we can come to terms with the fact the we were already written down by language and by culture. As if Novae's is saying: "Go on... Dare to write yourself down, embrace your self-scrutiny through language. Discover your own letter." To face this kind of self-scrutiny through your own words can be something really daring specially because it can put us right in front of that infuriated alphabet that sparks in all of us the instance of letter and language itself. This sort of chaotic confrontation is also remarked by Wittgenstein as something peculiar of philosophy: "When you are philosophizing you have to descend into primeval chaos and feel at home there" (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 65e), as if getting used to the idleness of words taken apart from their homes, or countersenses originated from trying to speak that of *what cannot be spoken* about, is something we have to get used to in philosophizing.

But what Novae's is trying to teach us? What is this artwork about? It is all about *the invitation*. About our own capacities as human beings to work on ourselves through self-scrutiny with effort, discipline and time. But it is also something that only happens in contact with this instance of *otherness* represented by other people, language, culture, education and art. It all starts, so to speak, with the invitation itself. Which we have to gladly accept, even if it results in chaos. If we accept it, we will not only face the opportunity to recognize how we are formed by language and culture - those things that stand as a radical otherness but also to recognize the limits of what can be articulated into words. As I write down my own ideas about Novae's installation and my own musings about the role of language in Wittgenstein's philosophy, I recollect of Truffaut's 1970s movie L'enfant Sauvage and its fictionalization of Victor, the boy from Aveyron discovered by Jean Itard; a boy that grew apart from language and culture, away from our form of life. Although Victor's history and Itard's methods and reflections about the process of 'teaching' Victor have their own particular interests for Education and Philosophy of Education, we can regard Truffaut's movie through a Wittgensteinian perspective. The themes of ostensive teaching, following rules, language as a human form of life, all are there. But as well as this idea of the infuriated alphabet that lays in our primitive first encounters with language and how it changes us.



Figure 5 – François Truffaut, L'enfant Sauvage, 1970

Source: Página mk2 films (2020). Available at: https://mk2films.com/en/film/lenfant-sauvage/>.

Figure 6 - François Truffaut, L'enfant Sauvage, 1970



Source: Página mk2 films (2020). Available at: https://mk2films.com/en/film/lenfant-sauvage/>.

Figure 7 – François Truffaut, L'enfant Sauvage, 1970



Source: Página mk2 films (2020). Available at: https://mk2films.com/en/film/lenfant-sauvage/>.

Figure 8 – François Truffaut, L'enfant Sauvage, 1970



Source: Página mk2 films (2020). Available at: https://mk2films.com/en/film/lenfant-sauvage/>.

I believe those aspects are somewhat essential for something to be considered a Wittgensteinian aesthetics. In the first place, *it is something that art evokes* and not the other way around. It has *something to do with the self-scrutiny* about our own engagements with artworks and about the recognition that *beyond the realm of descriptions, lays the ineffable*. It is *something mostly focused on art criticism* as a form of drawing someone's attention to art objects and comparing them with other objects. And it is not an overly theoretical enterprise, something that preconizes first and foremost theories about art or about taste and aesthetic judgement, but *something deeply interested in the ways we look at things* and how we accomplish such things in the concreteness of our experiences.

As I gaze upon Novae's installation and contemplate my own musings about Wittgenstein's ideas of philosophy and aesthetics (at least as I tried to suggest here) as practices of working on ourselves, I remember the final passages of Cavell's Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy (1967):Between control by the living and control by the dead is nothing to choose. Because the breaking of such control is a constant purpose of the later Wittgenstein, his writing is deeply practical and negative, the way Freud's is. And like Freud's therapy, it wishes to prevent understanding which is unaccompanied by inner change. Both of them are intent upon unmasking the defeat of our real need in the face of self-impositions which we have not assessed (§108), or fantasies ("pictures") which we cannot escape (§115). In both, such a misfortune is betrayed in the incongruence between what is said and what is meant or expressed; for both, the self is concealed in assertion and action and revealed in temptation and wish. ... the ignorance of oneself is a refusal to know (Cavell, 1967, p. 72)

Apart from some negativity intrinsic to Wittgenstein later works, it seems to me that what is non-negotiable in Wittgenstein philosophy is that understanding comes with self-scrutiny and inner change and that those things, which are intrinsic to the philosophical enterprise, are always accompanied by the classic, Delphic maxim of "know thyself"; or its modern take in enlightenment with Kant's *sapere aude*.²⁰

Art education

But a question that is not yet clear is the relation of art education with this *work on oneself*. Although a possible is only suggested in the text, it is also important to address it explicitly. Art education is an education about art and its history? Is an education through art? Or, yet, an education to produce works of art? An what it has to do with school (if indeed it has)? Or art education is concerned with education in the sense of *Bildung*, a formation of the person, a personal and intellectual development?

Carroll's account of the *identifying narratives* directs us towards the idea of artwork identification as a necessarily practical, concrete and language-oriented procedure. But is also suggests that our competence in seeing something as art is determined by our knowledge of the history of art and its practices. And when we fail to do so, we rely on the knowledge of others (artists, critics, teachers, etc.). That means that Carroll is advancing an account about art identification that also relies on the idea that we modify our perspectives, ways of seeing the world and beliefs through the narratives and discussions that others around you produce. This is, or at least it seems, that Carroll is addressing the theme of transformation of perspectives and world views as something that involves (i) language, (ii) other people, (iii) metacognition.

The idea that education is something deeply connected to this change of perspective (i.e. the ways how learners construe and reformulate the meaning of their own experiences) because it evokes language-oriented procedures and the level of *metacognition* is an idea already rooted in Philosophy of Education, especially in the works of Phillipe Perrenoud (2000, p. 14-17) and Jack Mezirow (1991/2001). In this sense, its legitimate to consider Carroll's ideas concerning the production of narratives that can help others to *see something as...* as means of transforming one's perspectives about the world and about one's own place in it. Moreover, the idea we advanced in this text that Wittgesntein's aesthetics can be considered as an eminently descriptive enterprise – *drawing someone's attention to something* or by *putting things side by side* – also seems to involve Mezirow's consideration of metacognition.

We tried to accentuate the language-oriented character of these enterprises (aesthetics, art criticism, formulation of narratives) suggesting that they are somewhat related to Wittgenstein's idea of *work on oneself*. But we are also aware that this particular direction seems to elude or ignore a possibility that our interactions with artworks might also not be entirely linguistic. Our mentions of Noë's enactivist account (and his consideration that our engagement with art might also be related to sensory-motor machinations and an education not involved with meta-cognition) tried to suggest the possible limitations of our own perspective²¹.

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Notes

- 1 I'm aware of Cavell's attempt to interpret Wittgenstein as a philosopher of culture in *This New Yet Unapproachable America* (1989) from the idea that language modifies human existence. However, the relations between 'art' and 'culture' are apart from clear or obvious; and demand developments that would require something far more detailed than this text proposes to do.
- 2 Distinctions are to be made between 'philosophy of art' and 'aesthetics' if we wish to consider the idea that art can be understood without any reference to aesthetics as something relevant. To my knowledge, Noël Carroll's work *Beyond Aesthetics* (2001) is one of the first works on contemporary philosophy to demonstrate the importance of separating these two fields. Following his own thoughts on the matter, I will try to abstain myself from a unifying treatment of aesthetics and philosophy of art in this text whenever possible.
- 3 In art, 'art support' refers to the medium implied by a specific artwork, i.e., the material peculiarities of different art mediums. Lucy Lippard's *Six Years: The dematerialization of art object* (1997) develops the idea that from the 1950's forward, at least in visual arts, artists started engaging themselves with the task of dissolving the material boundaries that traditionally limited the artistic production. A similar idea is developed by Leo Steinberg's *Reflections on The State of Criticism*, 1939 (In Branden Joseph, *Robert Rauschenberg*, 2002).
- 4 The idea that the image is a compelling entity for human beings and that it has a complex ontological status is developed by Ernst Gombrich in his famous Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, 1960. Gombrich himself stands in the lineage of important thinkers of image, image making and pictorial representation from the Vienna School of Art History, such as Franz Wickhoff, Alois Riegl, Julius von Schlosser and Hans Sedlmayr.
- 5 Wittgenstein, 2009, §\$67-84, pp. 39e-44e
- 6 A similar idea can be traced back to Hölderlin's musings on *poetic logic*. Hölderlin elaborates his conception of poetic language as poetical logic in his commentaries on the translations of *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*; cf. Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, vol. 2, pp. 849-857 e pp. 913-921. Kathrin Rosenfield's detailed essay on Hölderlin's conception on poetical logic and specific way of (non conceptual) thinking is also a relevant reference. Cf. Kathrin Holzermayr Rosenfield, *Antigone: Sophocles' Art, Hölderlin's Insight*, 2010, chap. 7, pp. 171-191.
- 7 It is interesting to note that long before Wittgenstein, certain rare philosopher/artists mused about this problem as well. The understanding that certain things require *Anschauug* (intuition or contemplation) rather than rational, conceptual reflection. Cf. Robert Musil, *Literary Chronicles*, 1914.

- 8 It is interesting to consider the discussion made by Gregory Nagy about the Sanskrit root *muo, that renders this tilting of the visual, physiological, aspect of seeing into another kind of vision: a vision that contemplates the larger context, the numberless relations of the single object with ever expanding 'worlds' (micro and macrocosm): *muo has a cluster meaning, i.e. "keep one's eyes shut" and "see differently" and applies to different forms of knowledge which escape the philosophical definitions (mystical vision, music, and all the Muses' faculties). Cf. Gregory Nagy's, *Pindar's Homer. The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past, 1990, pp. 31-68. Kathrin Rosenfield's mentioned insights into the specific "other" way of thinking through artistic images, gestures or metaphors are based both on Hölderlin's *poetical logic* and on Gregory Nagy's essay.
- 9 My Master's thesis was entirely dedicated to Carroll's philosophical project and it tries to expound the twofold invective of Carroll in *Beyond Aesthetics* (2001). First, Carroll disenfranchises 'aesthetics' as a field able to respond with legitimacy the question about art through an essential definition of art in terms of aesthetic experience or it's ontological counterpart (the form, significant form). Secondly, Carroll's account for *art narrativism*, called method of identifying (or historical) narratives. Thus, Carroll's enterprise has a *pars destruens* and a *pars construens*. See Guilherme Mautone, *Aesthetic Disenfranchisement and narrative habilitation: the construction of a new model for philosophy of art in Noël Carroll [Descredenciamento estético e habilitação narrativa: a construção de um novo modelo para a filosofia da arte em Nöel Carroll], 2016. In: http://hdl. handle.net/10183/134323*
- 10 The concept of artworld was first introduced by Arthur Danto in 1964 with the objective of conceding the status of artwork to objects that were visually i.e., phenomenically indistinguishable from common objects, as Andy Warhol's *Brillo Pad Soap Boxes*. What, then, determines an object as an artwork is its presence inside a context of production and reception that is oriented by artistic practices and conventions, a world of art. Maybe, and that is currently only a supposition, this historicizing approach leaves aside the Kantian view of the aesthetics experience as an *a priori*. Another supposition is that there might be a Kantian overtone in Wittgenstein's idea of the *mystical* concerning aesthetics, as well as their shared conviction that the aesthetical and the ethical might be closely connected.
- 11 The first occurrence of the notion of *form of life* in the *Philosophical Investigations* comes together with the analogy/image of the old city that Wittgenstein introduced in order to respond to the objection or the questioning of whether language is complete or incomplete; that, by its turn, is a sort of an *echo* of the discussion about completeness of the system of language in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Interestingly enough, there might be an intimate relation between the employment of the notion of *form of life* in the *Investigations* and Wittgenstein's passage on the *Tractatus* about the limits of our own language as limits of our world. Cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 2004, 5.6.
- 12 Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 3.1, 2004.
- 13 Ibidem, 2.18 and 2.2
- 14 Ibidem, 1 and 1.11
- 15 *Ibidem*, 6.522
- 16 Wittgenstein's 4.0311 aphorism also expounds the same notion, admitting that a name stands for a particular thing as another name stands for another

particular thing. See Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 2004, 4.0311, p. 26.

17 Ibidem, 6.421 and 5.631-2

18 Ibidem, 6.52-6.522

19 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 2009, §116, p. 53e.

- 20 Cf. Kant, *Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?*, 1784. I'm taking these notions that are so deeply thematized in the history of philosophy from the perspective of their proposal, in the sense that I also question myself about the larger context in what they appear and have meaning, not in their technical stance. Seems to me that Wittgenstein is making a sort of attempt to articulate these things self-knowledge, self-scrutiny by expounding the theme of philosophy and art appreciation on *Culture and Value* (1980). And maybe he is, in fact, seeking for the meaning of this "know thyself" apart from a philosophy erudition, in its practical stance.
- 21 An enactivist account of education is suggested in Mog Stapleton, *Enacting Education*, 2020. In Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 2020. In: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-020-09672-4

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