

On compositional spaces

Vers la perfection, vers l'imperfection

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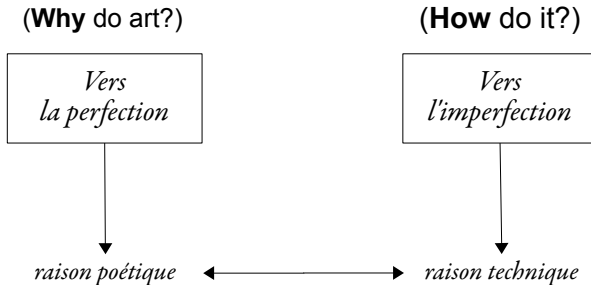


1 Dualities

2 Domination and belonging

3 Conclusions

A fundamental duality



Jean-Yves Girard, Cours de logique (2 tomes), Hermann éditeurs, 2007.

Vers la perfection...

Subject vs. object [1]

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- This separation is also at the origin of the fear/respect to *nature* (ob-jectum = something that is against to or in front of).
- *Humanization* and *deification* are two basic process that humans put in act to deal with this important dichotomy.

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- Subject is limited while object is infinite.
- Subject represents the *continuity of life* while object represents the *inevitability of death*.

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- The former celebrates life and is at the originy of comedy.
- The latter celebrates death and is at the originy of tragedy: through the *sacred* terror, the listener experiments an inner upset that produces a purification.

Comedy vs. tragedy

- I. Calvino says that, in the end, all stories are two sides of the same coin: either celebrates the continuity of life or the inevitability of death; in other words, each story is either a comedy or a tragedy.

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- In quantum mechanics, the Heisenberg uncertainty principle states a fundamental limit on the accuracy with which certain pairs of physical properties of a particle, such as position and momentum, can be simultaneously known.
- In other terms, the subject that is discovering an object is (at the same moment) altering it.

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- In modern art, this crisis produced important reactions.

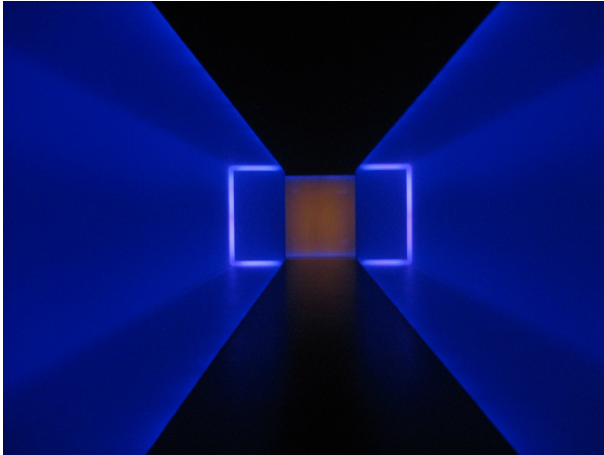
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- Some artists started shifting the attention from the perceived object to perception *itself*.
- In visual arts this has been really evident from the beginning (James Turrell, Robert Irwin) while in music this tendency appeared more slowly.

Turrell and Irwin [1]



J. Turrell, The light inside.

Turrell and Irwin [2]



R. Irwin, Who's Afraid of Red Yellow and Blue.

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- Artists are no more possessing the listeners but they integrate them into their work and experiencing art becomes an act of belonging.
- The *place* where art is performed becomes a structural part of the work itself producing a work that is totally contestualized into a specific *time* and *place*.

Integral listening

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- This proposes the definition of *integral listening*: a listening experience in which the place, the time and the circumstances are strictly connected to the listened object.
- Integral listening is the musical-acoustic counterpart of the art of belonging and is a sonic-space experience.

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- What's the place for electronic music?

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- Among the important concepts that he defined, there are:
 - schizophony and schizotopy;
 - the acoustic string;
 - the pollution of *continuous sounds* and of 50 Hz basal frequency.
- Other composers/researchers gave contributions to acoustic ecology, mainly in Vancouver at Simon Fraser university through the *World Soundscape project*. Among the others: Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp and Howard Broomfield.

Sound topology

- Sound has three main tipologies of spaces (*topoi*):
 - **inner space**: is defined from the relations between the partials and can be roughly regarded as *timbre*;
 - **external space**: is defined by the relations between different acoustical entities and can be roughly regarded *form*;
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- Each composer sets his/her own musical experience into this topology: there are composers that write *with* sounds, other writing *in* sound (Handel vs. Bach, Mozart vs. Beethoven, Boulez vs. Grisey, etc.)

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- In this regard, **music is a compositional space** that takes into account the whole topology of sound.
- This space has its limits in *silence* and *noise*, respectively explored (among the others) by Sciarrino and Lachenmann.

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- The only way to judge art is by evaluating the *deepness* of thoughts of its creator (example: Beethoven vs. Diabelli) not the technique involved.
- A translation of the greek word $\tau\epsilon\chi\nu\eta$ (tékne) is exactly art.

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- Art is a process towards the *sacre* as in sacrifice (example: Sciarrino's tables).

Any questions?

- C. E. Cella, **Towards a Symbolic Approach to Sound Analysis**, MCM 2009, Yale University - New Haven (CT), Springer.
- C. E. Cella, **Sound-types: a new framework for sound analysis and synthesis**, ICMC 2011, Huddersfield (UK).
- C. E. Cella, **On symbolic representations of music**, PhD dissertation, 2011, University of Bologna.
- See also **www.carminecella.com** and **www.soundtypes.com**