

# The Work of Art as a Plant

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*I obey something which sounds in me; constantly,  
but not consistently – sometimes it points, sometimes  
commands. When it points I argue, when it  
commands I submit... To hear correctly is my  
concern, I have no other.*

Marina Tsvetaeva, 'The Poet on the Critic'



## N

This text will propose a brief promenade around objects. We will try to look upon where their reality is situated, following the propositions of Graham Harman and Henri Bergson, discover that this space has the properties of a moving entity, and some tendency to hide itself from us. However, this journey will not become a quest, for as we will observe, this text cannot be the place for it. Rather, in the company of Harman and Bergson, we will wander around this space, articulate some hints about its location, and suggest some tools that could help us to fugitively slip into it. Then, with the assistance of Brian Massumi, we will discuss the role of art in this journey, and, eventually, question the consequences of the use of these tools and the potential location of objects in relation to a creation process.

## I

In his short essay ‘The Third Table’,<sup>1</sup> written in 2013 for Documenta 13, Graham Harman departs from Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington’s assertion<sup>2</sup> that every object is doubled: composed of two opposite realities. On the one hand the object of everyday life, the one that has effects on us, and on the other hand the object of physics, the one that we cannot see with our bare eyes, but which contains its constituent inner informations, such as atoms and particles. Thus he states the existence of two tables in one. Harman argues that neither of these is the real table, for we can neither reduce the table to its components nor to a series of effects on humans and other inanimate things. He states that both are ‘equally unreal’<sup>3</sup> and instead proposes the existence of a third table, hidden in the depths, which is the only real table.

Eddington's first table ruins tables by turning them into nothing but their everyday effects on us or on someone else. Eddington's second table ruins tables by disintegrating them into nothing but tiny electric charges or faint material flickerings. Yet the third table lies directly between these other two, neither of which is the real table. Our third table *emerges* as something distinct from its own components and also *withdraws* behind all its external effects. Our table is an intermediate being found neither in subatomic physics nor in human psychology, but in a permanent autonomous zone where objects are simply themselves.<sup>4</sup>

According to Harman, this third table is the only one that is genuinely substantial. He points out that in the Aristotelian tradition, the term 'substance' refers to the autonomous reality of individual things. Aristotle obviously does not reduce things to their tiny components, and furthermore states that knowledge refers to the universal, thus to the many (green, heavy, square, etc.), whereas things are always individual, their reality therefore lying outside the grasp of human knowledge. Being substantial, the

third table stands in a space that is inaccessible to both knowledge and perception (response to effects). Therefore this table cannot be verified. By excluding the first two tables as unreal, and proposing a third existing but unverifiable one, Harman is suggesting a specific relation to substantial reality. A few lines later, he reminds us that the term 'philosophia' does not mean 'wisdom' but 'love of wisdom', and therefore that 'the real is something that cannot be known, only loved'.<sup>5</sup> Love is wordless, but this does not mean that we must now stop our investigations. It only suggests that in the realm of knowledge our access to the real table can only be indirect. 'Obliqueness' is exactly what Harman is proposing as a method to access the third table.

We can only be *hunters of objects*, and must even be non-lethal hunters, since objects can never be caught. The world is filled primarily not with electrons or human praxis, but with ghostly objects withdrawing from all human and inhuman access, accessible only by allusion and seducing us by means of *allure*. Whatever we capture, whatever table we sit at or destroy, is not the real table.<sup>6</sup>



We now have a first zone on which to direct our gaze in the hope of finding the space where objects reside, mainly by stating where not to look, and have found two tools to help us. The first, in the realm of knowledge, is obliqueness, and the second, in a more absolute but wordless manner, is love. We will now look further at the zone and the first tool, and, eventually, come back to the latter.

## II

Henri Bergson, through various texts,<sup>7</sup> employs a similarly elusive method in an attempt to show us how to access a differently named space. It is the space of duration, and we will see that it may give us a more precise area in which to look for the reality of things.

No image will replace the intuition of duration, but many different images, taken from the ranks of very different things, might, working together in their movements, guide consciousness to the very place where a certain intuition is conceivable.<sup>8</sup>

As we see here and will see further on, Bergson, in order to talk about duration, and just as Harman is doing with his tables, is delimiting a space by affirming

what space it is not, pointing from outside where it might be, and, gently, guiding us toward it.

Bergson makes a distinction between two ways of knowing something: analysis and intuition. The first implies that we turn around the thing, the second that we enter it. The first depends on our viewpoint and on the symbols we use to express ourselves, while the second assumes no fixed point of view and makes use of no symbols. The first stops at the relative, while the second (where it can exist) reaches the absolute.<sup>9</sup> An absolute is a thing in itself, whereas a relative is a thing when we try to express it, necessarily positioning ourselves in relation to it. Though in itself the absolute is something simple, it is often identified with the infinite, for when we try to express it, which means accessing it from the outside, relatively, we find that every image and analogy fails and that we would need to multiply our images to infinity in order to coincide with it. Therefore an absolute is something that becomes complex, or infinite, when approached relatively.

By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an [metaphysical] object

in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, to elements common both to it and other objects. To analyze, therefore, is to express a thing as a function of something other than itself. [...] But intuition, if intuition is possible, is a simple act.<sup>10</sup>

Following Bergson further, we learn that there is one thing that we can certainly access from within: 'our self which endures'.<sup>11</sup> If we look to ourselves, we find that we are permanently changing. But we also see that we pass from one psychological state to another, the former of which is automatically stored in our memory, and therefore augments the present, newly generated, state. But we see as well that we cannot find a precise limit between these two states. This limit is a concept that we force upon it. The change from one state to another is in fact a fluid transition, which denies the possibility of two distinct states. But still, we can recognize some evolution, since memory is constantly created, updating the state to itself, and differentiating it from the previous one. In addition to this, we see

that we can actually distinguish one of these states from another by creating *a* memory, constructing some limits within our memory, even though memory in itself seems more of a single block, or permanent flow.

Bergson is using different metaphors to explain this movement, such as a myriad-tinted spectrum, or a gradually stretched elastic.<sup>12</sup> But he has to note that none of these metaphors can restore the two aspects of this movement without sacrificing the other.

If I use the comparison of the spectrum with its thousand shades, I have before me a thing already made, whilst duration is continually in the making. If I think of an elastic which is being stretched, or of a spring which is extended or relaxed, I forget the richness of color, characteristic of duration that is lived, to see only the simple movement by which consciousness passes from one shade to another. The inner life is all this at once: variety of qualities, continuity of progress, and unity of direction. It cannot be represented by images.<sup>13</sup>

We notice the poorness of images to describe the complex simplicity of inner life. Or, put otherwise, the simplicity of the

inner life becomes complex when represented in images. But we must notice that it will be even more difficult to render it by the use of concepts. Intuition alone can give us a perfect impression of this movement. Images, as stated earlier, can however contribute, thanks to their concreteness, on restoring it. But one image will never suffice. A plurality of images could, because of the effort it asks on our minds to find the in-between which is none of them, force us to toggle into intuition. This tension leading to effort and possibly to intuition is however impossible using concepts. Concepts, which are real symbols, tend to substitute themselves for the actual thing; by their simplicity, they tend to give the mind a place of rest, where the thing in its plurality seems clarified, resumed to them. They thus cancel the necessary effort. In addition to this, they possess another danger: they are able to symbolise a specific property only by making it common to an infinity of things. They thus always deform it by the extension they gave to it. Transformed into a concept, the property will enlarge itself indefinitely and exceed the given metaphysical object, since the property must now contain it as well as plenty of others.

We now find ourselves transported back to our first chapter: to Aristotle and the impossibility for the human mind to grasp reality in its substantiality, because of the tendency of the mind to put properties in the realm of the universal (i.e., to represent them as concepts), while things themselves are always individual. Bergson, however, is proposing, as we saw, a different entrance to things, one that bypasses concepts to enter the particular: intuition. He puts it clearly: 'If a man is incapable of getting for himself the intuition of the constitutive duration of his own being, nothing will ever give it to him, concepts no more than images. Here the single aim of the philosopher should be to promote a certain effort, which in most men is usually fettered by habits of mind more useful to life.'<sup>14</sup> However, together with Bergson we must see as well that metaphysics is to some degree bound to the use of concepts, since part of its reality is to look at things relatively.

Either metaphysics is only this play of ideas, or else, if it is a serious occupation of the mind, if it is a science and not simply an exercise, it must transcend concepts in order to reach intuition. Certainly, concepts are necessary to it,

for all the other sciences work as a rule with concepts, and metaphysics cannot dispense with the other sciences. But it is only truly itself when it goes beyond the concept, or at least when it frees itself from rigid and ready-made concepts in order to create a kind very different from those which we habitually use; I mean supple, mobile, and almost fluid representations, always ready to mould themselves on the fleeting forms of intuition.<sup>15</sup>

We now have the fundamentals of the game, and are hopefully starting to understand why we turn around the space where objects lie. We are ourselves bound to a space from which we see things relatively. However, we must try to combine and to refine our perceptions in order to escape an overly reductive (universalizing) conceptual directness, and to find instead a fluid (adaptive) method that would eventually generate some effort, some contraction, which might propel us from where we stand to a space where intuition could arise. We have seen how ‘This means that analysis operates always on the immobile, whilst intuition places itself in mobility, or, what comes to the same thing, in duration.’<sup>16</sup> We must now also see some similarity, despite the



use of different words, between the use of images and fluid concepts to reach intuition, opening the space of duration, and the use of obliqueness in a textual realm to reach the fugitive third table. But let us be concerned with the possibility of transcending an apparent similitude of method, to see how the actual spaces (duration and the third table) could connect. For this, we will attempt to look a bit closer at duration.

First, we see that we exist in time. Time, as we witness, is incessantly flowing ‘further’. If we examine ourselves for a bit (we have seen that it is the one entity that we can access from within with certainty), we see that we pass from one state to another.

I am warm or cold, I am merry or sad,  
I work or I do nothing, I look at what is  
around me or I think of something else.  
Feelings, sensations, volitions, ideas —  
such are the changes into which my ex-  
istence is divided and which color it  
in turns. I change, then, without ceas-  
ing. But this is not saying enough.  
Change is far more radical than we are  
at first inclined to suppose.<sup>17</sup>

We have the tendency to see our states as defined blocks, separated from each other. But a simple effort of attention will make us notice that if a block could be fixed as such, its duration would erase itself. We would as well be confronted with the problem of defining a precise limit between these two blocks, which would reveal itself soon enough to be rather arbitrary. We have to admit that our states are far closer to constituting a general state together, and, respectively, that each state contains far more changes within itself. The transition is continuous. But since we are unable to keep track of these tiny changes, we are forced, when the differences have become too considerable to escape our attention, to note the presence of a new state. 'The apparent discontinuity of the psychological life is then due to our attention being fixed on it by a series of separate acts: actually there is only a gentle slope; but in following the broken line of our attention, we think we perceive separate steps.'<sup>18</sup>

The very fact of being conscious implies to be aware of the past: having memory. A consciousness which would forget itself continuously, being forced to be reborn constantly, would rather be synonymous of unconsciousness. And what is memory

bringing other than anticipation? Since it is aware of having existed, our mind is constantly busy with the upcoming. “The future is there; it calls up, or rather, it draws us to it; its uninterrupted traction makes us advance along the route of time and requires us also to be continually acting. All action is an encroachment on the future. To retain what no longer is, to anticipate what as yet is not – these are the primary functions of consciousness.”<sup>19</sup> The present stands in between, but, to be precise, it does not truly exist as such; it has to remain a conceptual, mathematical point. It can only be conceived, never perceived. The present is the constant bridge between the two preceding, abstract concepts, past and future. “We lean on the past, we bend on the future: leaning and bending forward is the characteristic attitude of a conscious being. Consciousness is then, as it were, the hyphen which joins what has been to what will be, the bridge which spans the past and the future.”<sup>20</sup> To summarize, there are three permanent constituent movements: memory, anticipation, and consciousness – their meeting point. This threefold synthesis is the basic principle of existence, as submitted to time. The intuitive feeling for it is called duration.

Reality is constantly, flowingly, renewing itself to us. Every instant, which, as we saw, cannot be reduced to even the tiniest mathematical point, our present is updated by new memory, instantly shaping a future, as potentiality, anticipation. Let us take an example. We observe an inanimate object. Even though we are extremely careful to maintain the same viewpoint and to make sure that the light does not differ, our perception of this object is nevertheless being constantly transformed, permanently updated by the just-created memory of our vision of the object, an instant before; bringing about an as much renewed potentiality. We could even add that now that we are specifically aware of this fact, we, by consequence, create a new layer of memory that, by itself, transforms the object again. 'My mental state, as it advances on the road of time, is continually swelling with the duration it accumulates: it goes on increasingly, rolling up around itself, as a snowball on the snow.'<sup>21</sup> This brings us to a rather astonishing observation: the object we are looking at is, continuously, imposing as much transformation on us as we are imposing on it. Observing the object is transforming us as well as *our perception* of the object. In addition to this, we are forced

to admit a second, no less impressive fact: duration is our commonness with the object. We cannot access the object in itself, but we can intuitively recognize the movement it is taken by through time and witness the very same movement happening in ourselves. We cannot however note it, since the present is always running away from us, but only witness it by intuition. Duration is our meeting point with the object as much as what makes it run away from us, subtly depending on whether we perceive through analysis or intuition.

These latter observations lead us to understand how duration might have some very close resemblances with an 'autonomous zone where objects are simply themselves'. A permanent, constantly moving space, intuitively (obliquely) recognizable but running away from us every instant, hiding itself in the depths whenever we attempt to grasp it.

We are now hopefully able to distinguish a certain commonness between the space of the third table and the one of duration. Before moving on, we must still clarify a couple of aspects. We must note that, since from the beginning we have been employ-

ing the analogy of a space (where objects might truly stand), this actual space might not exist. There is no such thing as a space where objects are truly standing, all together, sending us some sort of images that we would receive from one moment to the next. Objects (animate or inanimate) can only be particular, not only conceptually particular, but constantly particular, that is: durationally particular. The closest analogy might be the one of a movement, giving a slightly other sense to their capacity of self-hiddenness from us. Once again, we cannot grasp them, since grasping is fixing, even for the shortest moment, and both the objects and ourselves will have moved during this moment, under the influence of each other. Every time we are getting close we witness a renewed repulsion. Therefore duration is not specifically the *space* where objects hide themselves from us, but the means that objects employ, the movement they are taken by, in order to do so. It is the constant event that pushes them away. The tendency to instant attraction and repulsion seems to be a dominant quality of our relation to objects.

### III

There is a point that we neglected on the way. Clarifying it now will allow us to introduce the next chapter. We saw that, through duration, the very fact of our perception transforms both ourselves and our perception of the object. We need to be very clear on the fact that solely our perception is transformed, as a consequence of our own transformation. The object itself, devoid of consciousness, has not been transformed, *in itself*. Consequently, the transformation imposed on us, as a consequence of our memory, remains an *effect*, deep to say the least, that the object has on us. It thus reveals itself as being of the domain of the first table. Our gaze, therefore, does not transform the object, still standing out there, next to the third table. Which gives the object an impressive

advantage over us: it has the permanent capacity to transform us, while it remains totally insensitive to this transformation, keeping merely moving around as we do.

As Harman states at the end of his text, art might be the field that is the most occupied with obliqueness. We could, at present, extend this idea, saying that it might as well be the field that tends to lead to intuition.

For on the hand art does not function by dissolving white whales, mansions, rafts, apples, guitars and windmills into their subatomic underpinnings. Quite obviously, artists do not provide a theory of physical reality, and Eddington's second table is the last one they seek. But on the other hand they also do not seek the first table, as if the arts merely replicated the objects of everyday life or sought to create effects on us. Instead there is the attempt to establish objects deeper than the features through which they are announced, or allude to objects that cannot quite be made present.<sup>22</sup>

Brian Massumi, in 'The Thinking-Feeling of What Happens',<sup>23</sup> analyses the mechanics of our relation to objects specifically



in the realm of art. In order to do so, he first goes back to the perception of objects in everyday life. Let us examine how this connects with our investigation.

The idea that there is such a thing as fixed form is actually as much an assumption about perception as it is an assumption about art. It assumes that vision is not dynamic – that it is a passive, transparent registering of something that is just there, simply and inertly. If vision is stable, then to make art dynamic you have to add movement. But if vision is already dynamic, the question changes. It's not an issue of movement or no movement. The movement is always there in any case.<sup>24</sup>

By movement, he means a certain 'double-ness' in our perception of the object. He, later on, takes the example of the 'voluminousness' and 'weightiness' of the object. He explains how, in the very act of seeing, we perceive both the 'image' we actually see (what is in front of us), as well as what we deduce of the object, referring to our experience of objects in general; such as its potential volume and weight.

Basically, it's full of potential. When we see an object's shape we are not seeing around to the other side, but what we are seeing, in a real way, is our *capacity* to see the other side. We're seeing, in the form of the object, the *potential* our body holds to walk around, take another look, extend a hand and touch. The form of the object is the way a whole set of active, embodied, potentials appear in present experience: how vision can relay into kinesthesia or the sense of movement, and how kinesthesia can relay into touch. The potential we see in the object is a way our body has of being able to *relate* to the part of the world it happens to find itself in at this particular life's moment.<sup>25</sup>

This doubleness is easily relatable to Bergson's basic notion of duration. The potential Massumi is discussing presents interesting similarities with the one Bergson is proposing, when introducing anticipation as the embodiment of future in our present. This potential is created by our experience, just as Massumi explains. Anticipation comes to existence by the very fact of memory, as we saw. Massumi's doubleness exactly takes place in duration. It is the permanent update and synthesis of our

memory which is creating this 'doubleness'. The 'movement' suggested previously is the movement of duration, in other words.

Massumi is then presenting the specificities that art brings about, through this movement. For this matter, he is borrowing a term coined by Suzanne Langer in her theories of the perceptual movement of art:<sup>26</sup> semblance. A semblance is created when the body is charged from the potential generated by memory through perception, and that this potential remains unfulfilled, unverified. Basically when the potential does not transform itself into action, but remains potential, suspending experience into duration.

A semblance takes the abstraction inherent to object perception and carries it to a higher power. It does this by suspending the potentials presented. Suspending the potentials makes them all the more *apparent*, by holding them to visual form. The relays to touch and kinesthesia will not take place. These potentials can *only* appear, and only visually. The event that is the full-spectrum perception is and will remain virtual. A life dynamic is presented, but virtually, as pure visual appearance.<sup>27</sup>

Semblances are the transformation of perception specifically created by art. Carrying perception to a higher power, it creates a direct self-referentiality in perception. It intuitively makes us aware of duration; embody its mechanisms, in a frontal, non-analytical level.

This produces another level of vitality affect. It feels different to see a semblance. Even in something so banal as a decorative motif, there is the slightly uncanny sense of feeling sight see the invisible. The action of vision, the kind of event it is, the virtual dimension it always has, is highlighted. It's a kind of perception of the event of perception *in* the perception. We experience a vitality affect of vision itself. This is like the doubleness of perception I was talking about becoming aware of itself. A direct and immediate self-referentiality of perception. I don't mean self-reflexivity, which would be thinking *about* a perception, as from a distance or as mediated by language. This is a thinking of perception in perception, in the immediacy of its occurrence, as it is felt — a *thinking-feeling*, in visual form.<sup>28</sup>

The peculiarity of art is not to create semblances. Semblances occur in everyday perception as well. But they are simply backgrounded, dissimulated by the curse of actions. What art does is to bring them to the fore. In everyday life, we orient perceptions toward the instrumental aspect of the actions and reactions that they afford. We basically fulfil the potential by giving it practical answers. Duration is constitutive of our existence, but we have the tendency to push it to the background. Art gives us the intuitive possibility to relate to objects substantially through duration.

Art and everyday perception are in continuity with one another. But in everyday experience the emphasis is different. It is all a question of emphasis, an economy of foregrounding and backgrounding of dimensions of experience that always occur together and absolutely need each other. Art foregrounds the dynamic, ongoingly relational pole. Everyday experience foregrounds the object-oriented, action-reaction, instrumental pole.<sup>29</sup>

We could be tempted to relate semblances to the category of effects that objects have

on us, thus to the space of the first table. But rather, it is the specific movement that art is generating. It seems to be exactly what Harman is introducing at the end of his text. It is the effect that art has, making us relate to the third table. The awareness (the instantaneous, not conceptual awareness) of the 'doubleness' of perception is the intuitive slipping into duration. And this is what art does.

We are, obviously, now discussing the effects of art when seen, implicitly referring to ourselves as viewers of a 'finished art product'. How do such statements relate to the process of art making? Let us begin this consideration by proposing a simple statement. What makes art different from everyday life is the precise fact that it is art. Seen as such it imposes the necessary conditions to its experience. Therefore an artistic process is not excluding itself from art, simply because the art object, along its creation, is already seen as such by its maker. Consequently, the art maker remains his/her first viewer. In other words, semblances are genuinely active already in the relation of the maker to the art object. The maker relates to the in-process art object through art dynamics. One obvious-

ly takes physical actions over the object, but every now and then, if not constantly, one is looking at it in terms of art. (To be precise, let us clarify that by 'art' we consider the genuine dynamics of art, which are present in any kind of art, independently of the acceptance or rejection by the maker of a specific, societal, art system.) The artist is interacting with an object whose potentiality is foregrounded. One falls and returns from intuition constantly, experiencing duration, getting uncanny glimpses of the third table.

As we saw, the object itself possesses an inherent power of transformation on us, induced by an unshared consciousness. This fact applied to art practice shows us that, while the artist is working on transforming physically the art object, the latter is working on transforming the artist. The temporality of this exchange is peculiar: the transformations implied by duration are constant; fulfilling every instant between two consecutive, physical actions of the maker. In addition to that, these transformations remain somehow tacit, hidden behind the flow of events. The power of transformation of the object over the artist is consequently of greater importance than the power left to the artist. Which

leads us to the following fact: the object, by means of shaping the artist, is shaping itself. The maker remains the executant.

It is important to understand this fact in a greater way than the classical, practical statement that many discourses on art making tend to suggest, saying that in order to work the artist must test in physical ways the work in order to understand it, because one cannot represent it fully in the mind. The reality is exactly that the object is taking far more decisions than the artist, because, once again, the object is transforming the artist constantly, while remaining itself substantially unchanged. Art is the field where we can get a sense of the third table, since it is the realm of potentialities – semblances – making us aware of duration. Entering into contact with the object, we are transformed. We must, therefore, forget any idea of agency. We are not taking actions, but solely, blindly, executing what the object orders.



## IV

Objects stand, substantially, in a zone that we cannot access by analytical knowledge. We can get a sense of this fact, and, fugitively, where and what objects are, through intuition. Duration is the movement which makes them hide from us, and it is as well, inversely, the one that can give us, through intuition, a succinct access to them. Objects possess a power of transformation on us, which we do not have over them. Art is a space that enhances, brings to the fore, these processes. It is the one space offering the more transparency, directness to objects' reality. As a consequence, by contrasting with our everyday relation to objects, it is the space that triggers a certain mystical feeling ('uncanniness') towards objects. This feeling comes from the fact that, experiencing them through duration, we perceive their myste-

rious aspect: permanently transforming us, revealing themselves for the shortest instant, and, as soon as we try to understand or own this experience, instantly repulsing us and moving away, escaping from us.

Art-making is giving its full power to objects. They are taking decisions, by transforming us, suggesting ways. We execute these orders, without noticing, with no choice left to us. No agency is left. No power of action, only the possibility for us to listen. We became servants, gardeners.

This is perhaps where love comes in. Love is the acceptance of this fact, and the simple possibility of devotion. It is a state from which we can listen, overcome our will to grasp, to understand, to possess. 'The real cannot be known, only loved.'<sup>30</sup>

## EPILOGUE

As we advanced on the road of our investigation, we found ourselves more and more powerless. As we restrained ourselves from fixed knowledge, in quest of a – yet utopical, still conceptual – fluid contact, we discovered ourselves blind, floating. We prick our eyes and try to walk on moldy, unstable ground, in the dark. It is however a soft, warm darkness, since we must feel slightly relieved already. We have abandoned the useless, cumbersome instruments with which we built our habitual relation to objects. But we cannot yet find any other in the haze. Luckily, we will discover a powerful one, rooted in ourselves from long before the start of this journey.

Nature warns us by a clear sign that our destination is attained. That sign is joy. I mean joy, not pleasure. Pleasure is

only a contrivance devised by nature to obtain for the creature the preservation of its life, it does not indicate the direction in which life is thrusting. But joy always announces that life has succeeded, gained ground, conquered. All great joy has a triumphant note. Now, if we take this indication into account and follow this new line of facts, we find that wherever there is joy, there is creation; the richer the creation, the deeper the joy.<sup>31</sup>

Love accepts the changing forms of reality, *while* it is changing. It is directness to life, its embrace, and the obliqueness to analysis. Love is the intuitive movement of opening oneself. It is the possibility itself, the act of generating the contact. This contact is the only movement fluid enough to follow the movement of the real. Love is the surrender to life happening. In that sense it is constant creation. The creation of the world by the world, of its witnesses by permanent, renewed contact. The constant, durational transformation of humans by things. And joy is its direct expression, our main tool to verify its happening. Art is a place to exercise one's relation to reality. To press consciousness on this relation.

A creative relation to objects might be playful, as a child's gaze: joyfully discovering the world again. And again.



*And I must,  
if the moments of duration are to spring from me  
and give my stiff face a form  
and insert a heart into my empty breast,  
practise, year in and year out,  
unconditionally,  
my love.*

Peter Handke, *To Duration*

## NOTES

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- 28 *ibid.*, p. 6.
- 29 *ibid.*, p. 7.
- 30 see note 5.
- 31 *Mind-Energy*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

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