

# Everyday Aesthetics and Philosophical Hermeneutics

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This article discusses Everyday Aesthetics seen from philosophical hermeneutics where aesthetics is understood as a form of knowledge. Two approaches are made, one concerning content, i.e. the knowledge made apparent to us in the aesthetic situation which is usually, but not exclusively, an exception to the everyday; another concerning the appearance of knowledge in form which, likewise, is also in danger of becoming isolated from the everyday. Everyday Aesthetics is reviewed through the same two approaches to understand how it differs from hermeneutics and where possible exchanges between them appear. | Keywords: *Form, Interpretation, Sensuous, Knowledge, Art*

## 1. Introduction

To discuss Everyday Aesthetics in relation to European traditions is an odd endeavour. Everyday Aesthetics is a discipline, Europe is a continent. Disciplines in philosophy may have geographic origins like the Vienna circle, but their practice is not related to geographic locations. Of course, some disciplines are more strongly positioned in some institutions and countries than in others. It makes a difference to the choice of topics and use of concepts if one's training is in German idealism or British empiricism, but today we find all philosophical disciplines practised everywhere. So does this endeavour make sense?

Everyday Aesthetics is written with capital letters in the call which indicates it is not merely an interest in the relation of aesthetics to the everyday but an established discipline with its own characteristics. Everyday Aesthetics comes from opposing the dominant focus on art in Anglo-American aesthetics (Saito, 2017, p. 1), which may explain why little interest is shown in other discourses sharing a wider focus on cultural phenomena seen for example in works by Herbert Marcuse (1969; 1972), Wolfgang Fritz Haug (1971/1986), Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991), and Jacques Rancière (2008). A question is, if the little interest is due to an unbridgeable difference, or if there is a potential for exchange.

I approach this question of Everyday Aesthetics and European traditions from philosophical hermeneutics to understand what they may have in common. First, I will present a hermeneutic understanding of aesthetics with an emphasis on knowledge and form. Secondly, I will look at Everyday Aesthetics through that lens to finally discuss if there are common interests and if they can enrich each other.

## 2. Aesthetics in a Hermeneutic View

Philosophical aesthetics is about reflecting on the knowledge implied in aesthetic analysis of artefacts. Such analysis is not philosophical but about characterising concrete artefacts. One can argue whether 'philosophical' is already implied in aesthetics and thus a superfluous addition, but often aesthetics is used for aesthetic theories that are not also philosophical. My perspective is philosophical, but for simplicity, I will proceed without adding it.

Everyday Aesthetics belongs to philosophical aesthetics though this is only occasionally emphasized (e.g. Brady, 2005, p. 179; Saito, 2007, p. 11; Mandoki, 2007, pp. 4 ff.; Leddy, 2012, p. 45). Nevertheless, I believe we can establish it to be the case.

My approach from philosophical hermeneutics is from the tradition of Hans-Georg Gadamer where interpretation is not limited to interpreting texts, artworks, and cultural phenomena; it is to interpret our existence. With this in mind, I will also stop adding 'philosophical' to hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics, Gadamer writes (1993, p. 3), is the art of understanding what is not immediately apparent in what the other says. Karlfried Gründer (1982, pp. 78 f.) emphasizes how interpreting implies a reflection on the difficulties of understanding – we do not interpret that which creates no difficulty. From this view, aesthetics is a matter of making an intellectual effort of understanding rather than, for example, a sensuous reaction to something. It is an intellectual effort that has a sensuous aspect.

I believe we have a key to what aesthetics is in the first lines of the conclusion to Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788/2015, p. 129 (A 288)) where he states that the starry heavens above and the moral law within filling his mind with admiration and awe. Between the heavens above and the moral law within, between cosmology and norms, we find the concrete individual filled with admiration and awe. We individuals must ask how cosmology and norms become concrete for us and relate to our lives. These forms of concretisation are sensuous and as such, they affect us.

An example illustrates the point. In Sophocles' *Antigone* we encounter something concrete, a story about people and events, with a general point about conflicting norms, including in conflict with divine law, i.e. cosmology, and false behaviour. The individual figure, king Creon, and his actions are concrete events. These lead to tragic events when one believes that the authority as ruler depends on giving indispensable commands instead of reflecting on the conflicting matters of the situation. We learn from the concrete narrative of a king's acts that power depends on good judgement and not merely on the authority to give commands.

Our position between cosmology and norms requires a concretisation of those abstract ideals which make them meaningful to us. Aesthetics is about: (1) how this knowledge is provided through the concretisation, and (2) the form in which it is done. Aesthetics investigates the form and legitimacy of the process of making sense of something by sensorial means that affect us and enable us to understand what is otherwise inaccessible or at least difficult to comprehend.

Sophocles's *Antigone* exemplifies how cosmology and norms can be translated to concrete individuals allowing us to proceed from the concrete to the general, i.e. to understand norms from the concrete narrative.

The translation between concrete and general is one of the most difficult problems in philosophy. I call the object in front of me a tree but the word *tree* can be applied to innumerable many phenomena and does not exhaust the concrete tree I encounter. Nevertheless, I do understand the object in front of me when classifying it to be of a kind, as a tree, similar to other objects. We distinguish conceptual knowledge from a painting or poetic expression about the tree. The former aims at unambiguously translating a multiplicity of perspectives on a phenomenon present into what is considered to be essential for us to know; the latter goes the opposite direction to make the tree present to us in its phenomenal richness through a concrete representation. The former is as a matter of knowledge eliminating the need for interpretation – to say this is a tree is immediately understood in any normal context; the latter is an aesthetic form inviting us to an interpretation that does not come to a final conclusion.

The painter's tree is concrete, yet it invites me to see something more. This is why we enjoy looking at pictures, writes Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448 b15 ff.). We come to understand something, otherwise we only take pleasure in the colours. Richard Hamann (1919, p. 21) writes likewise in his *Ästhetik* that our interest in aesthetics is not in how one experiences (*erlebt*) an image, which is a matter of psychology; aesthetics is about the relation to spiritual sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) – in what the perception of the image means and the conditions for it being meaningful.

The painter's tree appears in an intuition (*Anschauung*) where something is made present to us without being conceptually determined – to say the painting is of a tree does not exhaust it as painting. Joachim Ritter calls it a double movement when the object of the intuition, like the house of God, is more than we intuit and also something in itself, an artwork (Ritter, 2010, p. 78; cf. Bubner, 1989, pp. 62 ff.).

We must here abandon discussions whether intuition is defined as non-conceptual (Kant) or we should acknowledge also an immediate understanding in form of an intellectual intuition (Fichte). They are, however important to German Idealism and consequently to the traditions formed by its heritage such as hermeneutics (Bubner, 1989, pp. 56 ff.). However, we should pay attention to what Gadamer (1993, pp. 191 f.) says, that Kant's division between sensuous intuition and concepts is a problematic abstraction. Kant himself

is aware of how the division serves its purpose for achieving knowledge of phenomena in nature where concepts provide us with rules for determining what is given in our intuitions; however, this is something different from asking about nature itself. Nature is not given in any intuition as it forms the limit to our intuitions and experiences he writes in *Critique of pure Reason* (1781/1787/1998, B 753). Nature is an interpretation and requires a reflection, the central topic of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790/1799/2000). Kant points at a problem central to aesthetics, namely the meeting point between senses and spirit (*Geist*) where the intuition is no mere intuition but an invitation for a reflection in which we search for a determination which proves to be indeterminate because it is inconclusive. The tree we determine because we have a concept is different from the poet's tree that is given in an intuition as something more than an intuition, hence, it is indeterminate.

Cosmology and norms can be translated to concrete individuals and be given in intuitions like Sophocles' *Antigone* or the painter's tree but they also invite us to search for a meaning-giving frame for our interpretations. The painter's tree represents a tree as well as an invitation to reflect on what nature is and our human relation to nature, and Sophocles's *Antigone* makes us reflect on norms and laws in the world we live in.

Hence, the aesthetic artefacts, whether a painting, a play or other forms, invite us to reflect on what makes sense for our everyday existence. The occasion for this reflection is when we step out of the everyday. Such occasions are when we participate in festivals representing a divine order giving a religious explanation to our existence, or when we participate in a profane and humanistic celebration such as a nation's liberation, independence, and constitution giving meaning to the secular order we live in (Bubner, 1989, pp. 144 ff.). In our modern world such events have often lost their significance and do not define our world-interpretation in the same way as before. Festivals do not offer an authoritative world-interpretation or give consolation for suffering like before. Instead, suffering has become a practical problem to solve rather than to explain. Bubner writes that we expect to find consolation in having time off for festivals that become parties and leisure time and not a moment of meaning. The props of the festival then become themselves the focus of attention instead of the interpretation they previously offered – they become aesthetic objects (Marquard, 1989, p. 13; cf. Gadamer, 1993, p. 110). However, such a focus-change on the festival does not discredit the model of interpretation of our existence embedded in it; it is merely the content, meaning and significance that change.

The dissolution of universal frames of interpretation allows aesthetic artefacts in the form of artistic experiments to step out of our everyday lives and offer us alternative interpretations of our world. In the context of the religious cult, the ceremonial props would invite us into the community celebrated. With the dissolution of this frame the artists' task changes. To follow Gadamer (1993, p. 98), the artist now creates a community. While the religious festival intended a universal community, and some artistic ambitions of the avant-garde did likewise for a political community, this is also a characteristic we can

apply in moderate forms, such as the props of a music festival and a sub-cultural community. Aesthetics is not about the content of the interpretation, but about the means of it.

Hence, the exception to the everyday does not rule out aesthetic dimensions of ordinary artefacts and situations. However, the interest in the exceptional is emphasized when a visit to the art museum can be said to change our views (Gadamer, 1993, p. 117) and when the exceptional artefact is one we keep coming back to because we never finish with it (Bubner, 1989, p. 60). The hermeneutic perspective does not exclude more trivial examples of the everyday, it just takes more interest in the significant moments.

Sophocles's *Antigone* tells us something through affecting us. Following Aristotle, we learn how king Creon too late comes to recognise, *anagnorisis*, the fatal error of his behaviour at which point a reversal, *peripeteia*, happens, tragically too late. Anyone could give us the same information, but we understand differently through the play.

How it works, and how well it works, are matters of aesthetic analysis, i.e. analysis of the different components in the composition – like the execution of *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*, along with elements of style, figures etc., and of receptions. If the aesthetic experience offers a moment off from the everyday it could be considered a moment of aesthetic pleasure. Nevertheless, aesthetic pleasure, appreciation and similar characteristics so common in Everyday Aesthetics are rare in hermeneutics. Hans Robert Jauß (1982/1997, p. 71) even writes that whoever has the courage to say they enjoy or appreciate art will expose themselves to the accusation of satisfying themselves with mere kitsch or mere consumption – which in fact is not different from Aristotle's point above about only taking pleasure in the colours of an image. There is an important difference between what we feel and what the significance of what we feel is.

The tragedy makes me feel something which is conveyed and emphasized by its structure. We should keep in mind that aesthetics has its origin in rhetoric that is not merely about persuading someone to think something specific but to make them *want* to think it when we follow Quintilian in *The Orator's Education* (1921, pp. 417 ff. (VI, 2)). As human beings we sense, feel and react emotionally along with what we think, and different structural elements can correspond with and enhance our feelings. Hence, the trembling and terror I may feel at the tragedy are feelings I share with others in the audience, and I can embark on a learning process in which I come to sense and feel in ways similar to others. We express this in judgements of taste. They are not merely about evaluating aesthetic qualities of something but about demonstrating social affiliation and cohesion through the evaluation.

The analysis of how narratives, images, and artefacts work, of how we feel about them, points towards knowledge as we do not stay at the mere image or narrative. What is given in an intuition is no mere representation, in that case, the painter's tree is just identified as a representation of an object. An image is something we *read*, and it involves our imagination and thinking which is set

at work by the form (Gadamer, 1993, pp. 193 f.). Sophocles's *Antigone* may teach us something about rulers and conflicting norms by means of sensorial effects that integrate into our world-interpretation far better than when explained in a sleepy lecture. The aesthetic situation, object, play etc. provide no immediate pleasure, but an affective situation that requires an effort of us to make sense of (Gadamer, 1993, pp. 199 f.). The pleasure of such an interpreting effort, Odo Marquard (1982, p. 31) says, is that we do not stay the same but learn – it is the pleasure of saving us the effort of remaining ignorant.

If we return to Kant's starry heavens and moral law, we may easily wander off into cosmology and norms – into scientific knowledge and ethical conflicts. Yet, we also wish to come back and ask what they mean for our concrete lives. Aesthetics is about taking us, as concrete individuals, seriously by making the abstract and universal concrete. This is why it becomes important that the analysis of aesthetic elements does not become isolated from the world the aesthetic artefact belongs to. Such an isolation creates what Gadamer (1993, pp. 9 ff.) calls an aesthetic consciousness. He is critical about this as the isolation turns the aesthetic relation into a mere appreciation of artworks that lose significance for our experiences and knowledge. Art is supposed to offer perspectives to our everyday existence; an aesthetic consciousness only demonstrates one's skills as an art lover where one takes pleasure in oneself as an art critique.

### 3. Everyday Aesthetics Approached From Hermeneutics

I will now pursue the two questions from hermeneutics about knowledge and form in the dominant view on Everyday Aesthetics.

Kant's starry heavens and moral law translated into our concrete existence in a narrative like Sophocles's *Antigone* exemplifies what Everyday Aesthetics finds as a narrow view of aesthetics. Instead of viewing something for the sake of our everyday life, we should take an interest in the everyday as it is. Yuriko Saito (2017, p. 56) writes that we should care about “the familiar experienced as familiar.”

To say what everyday signifies causes difficulties for Everyday Aesthetics (Naukkarinen, 2013). It is paradoxically how we experience the everyday without negating its everydayness – without taking it out of the ordinary to be foregrounded and defamiliarized in order to make something invisible visible (Saito, 2017, pp. 20 ff.; cf. 2007, pp. 50 f.; Leddy, 2012, p. 77). Or it is difficult to say what is aesthetic about our experience if objects remain in their ordinariness and resist being taken out of it, and our aesthetic experience of them is in their familiarity as unnoticed (Haapala, 2005, pp. 50 ff.). These positions and their respective difficulties are summarized by Jane Forsey (2013). Despite the variations, I think there will be agreement that hermeneutics burdens the everyday with too many expectations of meaning and with too much exception from it. If aesthetics relates to making us aware and understanding our lives, the approach, according to Everyday Aesthetic, should not be through exceptions but through an increased awareness of what happens in our lives.

What is then, the interpretation of our everyday lives that aesthetics should turn its attention to instead of occupying itself with exceptions; and how does it affect us in forms worthy of aesthetic appreciation?

The festival is what Everyday Aesthetics seems to say holds no particular privilege in giving significance to the everyday. It is not that the celebrations are insignificant, but they do not make sense of the everyday in any emphatic sense; we can only say it makes sense to have celebrations. Perhaps they deserve attention for how we dress up and hold the celebration, but not for sense-making. This is in contrast to the hermeneutic view in which the wedding is a celebration of a ceremony with a significant meaning for the celebrated couple and their relatives. The enjoyment of the dress, food, music and other aesthetic features of the celebration is secondary to what it signifies. To make them objects of aesthetic pleasure is a mistake of perspective, like if one of the guests is inappropriately dressed and comes to steal the attention from the couple.

In a culture that is aestheticized, i.e. where everything is subject to an aesthetic treatment and consideration, the difference between party and everyday is erased. Everyone can now celebrate oneself. The wedding becomes the excuse for having a celebration instead of the celebration being of the wedding, i.e. of the significance of the ceremony. In a hermeneutic perspective, this is a loss of significance because the exception stops being an exception. Where the everyday becomes a permanent festival the aesthetic turns into the anaesthetic – it loses the explanatory potential for the everyday and becomes insignificant (Bubner, 1989, pp. 152 f.; Marquard, 1989, pp. 11 ff.). For Everyday Aesthetics, on the contrary, it is the opposite. Now the everyday can step out of the shadow of special events and become more significant. However, we should be careful as significance may be considered in two different ways by the two approaches.

In a hermeneutical understanding, the exception is a significant event because it gives meaning to our everyday life. In Everyday Aesthetics, we give meaning to something and grant it significance. From this view, hermeneutics will be seen as falsely believing that a prosaic everyday must be rescued to make it reveal its hidden poetry (Saito, 2017, p. 12), and also for neglecting experiences of what is pretty, shiny, glittering, and cute because they will be considered incapable of generating profound and meaningful experience that has significance (Saito, 2017, pp. 39 f.). The problem for Everyday Aesthetics is not that art generates significant aesthetic moments; the problem is that an art-oriented approach ignores aesthetic moments in the everyday. The experiences of the everyday are far more important for guiding us in our daily life than the exceptional experiences; whoever neglects them demonstrates inattentiveness and mindlessness (Saito, 2017, p. 25) as well as apathy (Mandoki, 2007, p. 93). To become aware of everyday moments and cultivate an aesthetic appreciation of them is to develop “a mindful way of living” and, furthermore, to “restore our mode of being-in-the-world” (Saito, 2017, p. 59). In this context, Sherri Irvin (2008, p. 27) discusses whether scratching an itch can be considered an aesthetic

experience, i.e. an experience in which we are able to discriminate qualities and meaningful features we can be attentive to for their own sake. If that suffices as qualifying, the argument is, scratching an itch can be included into aesthetics. It enables one to become more sensuously aware in trivial situations like when attending a meeting; one can acquire an “ability to transform such moments into occasions for aesthetic satisfaction” (Irvin, 2008, p. 32).

Of course, a question is what is considered qualities and meaningful features. I think this question finds different answers in *Everyday Aesthetics*. Emily Brady represents what may be considered one extreme here. In her discussion of Kant as representative of a classical tradition, she opposes what she sees as a traditional rejection of smells and tastes from aesthetics due to their lack of complexity and, consequently, their lack of an intellectual effort of making distinctions. However, I think her example of comparing tastes of ice cream by memorizing and imagining tastes to determine whether I like a taste or not (Brady, 2005, p. 183) confuses an ordinary sense perception in which something is identified as something with an aesthetic. Her appeal to cognitive values in smells and tastes valued through appreciation does not do the job. It is not a matter of aesthetics if I am served a dish of seafood in which I, in its complexity, detect that something is wrong and ask to have it replaced; I simply do not want to have a bad stomach.

If an imperative of *Everyday Aesthetics* is to be attentive about our sensorial relations because aesthetics is about sensory perception and sensibility (Saito, 2017, p. 1) – a theory of sensibility as it is called by Arnold Berleant (2010, p. 155), we should also acknowledge that not any sensorial perception is aesthetic. Brady points at how the values of smelling socks or the pine trees in the forest are socially or culturally differentiated. Nevertheless, she does not pursue questions of the relation between sense and an informed reaction to the sensed (Brady, 2005, p. 180). Berleant (2010, pp. 27 ff. and pp. 51 ff.) is explicit about how training is essential for sense perception, and that we must understand such training to be culturally filtered and inherently cultural. Epistemology and aesthetics here overlap regarding perception because our relation to the world is an active, sensuous engagement (Mandoki, 2007, pp. 67 ff.). What matters then, is the interpretation (Mandoki, 2007, p. 9) through which aesthetics is what highlights appreciative effects of perception (Mandoki, 2007, p. 47). The cultural filtering and training form our perception of and emotional relation to our cultural environment.

It is far from easy to understand the exact uses of perception and experience in *Everyday Aesthetics*, but according to Berleant (2010, p. 29) an aesthetic experience is both sensory and an experience of meaning, and consequently, it relates an aesthetic evaluation to social, political, and environmental values (Saito, 2017, p. 98). In the aesthetic experience, our relation to the world differs from ordinary experiences that are about understanding what something is, which is an act that separates us from the concrete and present thing. In the aesthetic experience we have an opportunity to engage differently with it.

While this seems to be a meeting point with hermeneutics, I think it is also a point where the traditions part. A hermeneutic interest is to understand better what this meaning in the aesthetic experience is, i.e. the form it has and the knowledge it provides us with, which is an occasion for challenging our ordinary understandings and making way for different perspectives on it. Everyday Aesthetics is about improving our sensorial awareness and becoming more attentive to what there is in our everyday life to enrich it. We should work on improving and changing what we otherwise find will impoverish and harm the quality of life and environment (Saito, 2017, p. 216). Not to make use of the potential of aesthetics here is a missed opportunity (Saito, 2017, p. 198).

Saito's (2017, pp. 95 f.) examples of improvements are e.g. in disputes over wind farms that are found aesthetically unacceptable to imagining what could be even worse or to accept a situation that is impossible to change like conditions in the Gaza strip where "everyday aesthetic experience can help its residents retain a sense of humanity, dignity, and resilience" (Saito, 2017, p. 19). The conservative hermeneutic philosopher Odo Marquard sounds almost radical in comparison. He explains that experience (*Erfahrung*) is when our expectations are met with a veto from reality (Marquard, 1982, p. 23). In our contemporary culture, he writes, we lack experiences because of its accelerating processes of changes. Due to our limited capacity for changes, we cannot adjust to them all. Instead, we choose, on the personal scale, to stick to routines and habits, and in the societal scale to prognosis and statistics enabling planning of actions. In a world of accelerating changes, we insist on our expectations and ignore the veto that could give us experiences – like when our plans lose touch with reality. Everyday Aesthetics would ask us to pay more attention to our reality, to be more sensitive. Marquard, on the contrary, suggests that instead of seeking consolation with an increasingly changing world we may find experiences that can make us see our world in ways that give a veto to our expectations which are increasingly out of touch with reality. It is those kinds of experiences that are called aesthetic. Hence, it does not help to find the aesthetic in the everyday if we live in a world where the everyday can only be saved through the aesthetic (Marquard, 1982, p. 30).

We have a century of artistic experiments intended to make us discover perspectives on the world we live in. It is possible these experiments have been in vain because of the creation of what Mandoki (2007, p. 24) calls an aesthetic attitude, an attitude of the snob. The opposition of Everyday Aesthetics to an aesthetic attitude found in institutionalized art is shared by hermeneutics. Gianni Vattimo (1997, pp. 58 ff.) gives an illustrative example. We find visitors in the Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza church in Rome. One is religious who is present to pray, the other a tourist. The latter has an aesthetic experience of a kind similar to a visit to a museum, an experience different from experiencing a room that translates the space for prayers into a concrete, sensuous form. If the aesthetic experience becomes self-sufficient, i.e. about the aesthetic form itself and not what it gives form to, we encounter what Gadamer (1960/1990, pp. 87 ff.) considers as the dubiousness of the concept of aesthetic cultivation (*Bildung*). Now, the form becomes our object of interest and we care for the techniques

used to produce the appearance and how the outcome, the artwork, is. We analyse and communicate to like minded, now called aestheticians, in aesthetic judgements. What Gadamer finds dubious is when this approach to the aesthetic object serves to differentiate and distinguish it from non-aesthetic objects. It becomes a separation where the aesthetic object loses its place in the world (Gadamer, 1960/1990, pp. 90 ff.).

Everyday Aesthetics, I believe, places itself in difficulties here. It shares Gadamer's critique of losing the focus on our lives to excel in institutionalized discourses on art. However, it does not liberate itself from them. We live, Saito tells us, an aesthetic life and have aesthetic experiences where aesthetic includes "any reactions we form towards the sensuous and/or design qualities of any object, phenomenon or activity" (Saito, 2007, p. 9; cf. Leddy, 2012, pp. 259 f.). This use of aesthetic is all-inclusive. It seems to exclude investigating what an aesthetic life is and aesthetic experiences are, out of a fear that qualifications could exclude anything. The inclusiveness is seen as a liberation of aesthetics from narrow discourses by moving beyond canonical aesthetic terms such as beautiful, elegant, graceful, and ugly – Thomas Leddy (2012, pp. 64 ff.) suggests including neat and messy even though later in the book he moderates their significance and admits they are not "to be called aesthetic qualities in the fullest sense of the term" (Leddy, 2012, p. 236).

My difficulty here concerns what it is we come to understand better in light of these categories. Contrasting them to how Sianne Ngai (2010) suggests zany, interesting, and cute as categories with a critical potential for analyzing art, cultural artefacts and formations, political and economical forms in late capitalism, I fail to see what we learn from Leddy's categories, developed further by Saito (2007, pp. 152 ff.), and how they provide anything else than an adjustment of the dubious aesthetic differentiation. I can now be engaged in discussing a neat room as the occasion for experiencing "a certain pleasure in apprehending that neatness" (Leddy, 2012, p. 229), which, we are told in the preceding page, is no mere personal preference but an expectation of others seeing the same. This appears to be a mere substitution of one aesthetic characterization with another, but we do not overcome the logic of aesthetic differentiation because we expand the characteristic to also include neat, ordered, right, clean and similar terms. Saito finds that we currently lack a discourse for analyzing, educating and improving our relation to everyday artefacts and activities (Saito, 2017, p. 201) – we lack it to the point of asking for a "new aesthetic vocabulary" (Saito, 2017, p. 208) and I wonder what is then wrong with Ngai's suggestion.

If the aesthetic form should not merely repeat institutionalized discourses expressed in judgements of taste, we should give attention to how something is interpreted and become apparent to us in a sensuous form that affects us. The form should make the interpretation appear as one we not only understand but also feel we understand and feel to be part of our world. It is, parallel to Quintilian, to not only make us think but to make us want to think something. This is why it is important to recognize the "cultural and cognitive filters" that qualify an aesthetic experience (Berleant, 2010, p. 61). Saito (2017,

p. 54) demonstrates this well in examples such as reactions to a practice like hanging laundry where she has adopted ideals that make her hang it in ways that appear “as inoffensive, orderly, and organized as possible” i.e. “informed by spectator-like aesthetic judgments.” However, it is difficult to see how a new vocabulary instead of the existing one helps here. She asks for it in relation to being able to re-evaluate some aesthetic values such as to be able to appreciate a wildflower garden which one could suspect in fact just reveals her reflection on her own values – on many occasions she express a discomfort with what looks messy and unkempt (e.g. Saito, 2001, p. 93; cf. 2017, p. 125). But a new vocabulary does not question the aesthetic differentiation revealed to be present in the many examples in *Everyday Aesthetics*; at its best, it only changes some of the rules of play.

It should be clear how important it is to reflect on what the forming of our sensorial awareness is, on what is called perceptual commons by Berleant (2010, p. 209). Cultural norms appear in a sensorial practice and make us relate to it and appropriate it. Does it then help to expand categories of aesthetic appreciation from the art-related to the everyday? Are inattentiveness and apathy that *Everyday Aesthetic* wants to battle met by new terms and vocabularies that enable different experiences to be felt as significant? Or is it rather about understanding better the significance of our senses in our relation to and interpretation of the environment? Is it about understanding how this is also a central philosophical problem about the relation between sense and interpretation? These seem to be questions marking differences between *Everyday Aesthetics* and hermeneutics.

#### 4. Concluding Discussion

Albert Camus notes in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942/1979, p. 95) that if a writer like Dostoevsky dwells at a question such as whether existence is either a lie or eternal only to ask this question, he would be a philosopher. But because he demonstrates the consequences of such a question for a human existence he is a poet. He makes it concrete for us. It is the task of aesthetics to understand what this concretization in the sensorial form of literature is. This concretization is not limited to art, but art has taken a prominent position here because it often makes space for moments of reflection.

It does not require a Dostoevsky to become aware of our sensuous and perceptual reactions and relations. It is a matter of awareness. Hermeneutics and *Everyday Aesthetics* will agree to that, and to opposing ideas of aesthetics limited to the institutionalized situation. The differences between them appear when it comes to expectations of aesthetics being about an interpretative translation of general views into concrete and sensuous appearances, and about the form of these appearances that through affecting us make the meaning appear. Such an emphasis on aesthetics as a matter of knowledge is not expressed in *Everyday Aesthetics* despite interest shown in the cultural content of perceptions and appreciation.

I have suggested that a point of departure between the traditions is the differences in what a significant aesthetic experience is – whether it is

an experience that gives meaning to something or one that plays an important role in one's life. This is well illustrated by Leddy's misreading of Heidegger's *Die Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* (1950/1980) when he suggests that Heidegger's point about a Van Gogh painting of a peasant woman's shoes is that "great art enhances and intensifies our experience of the everyday" and brings us to "experience the everyday with wonder" (Leddy, 2012, p. 110). But Heidegger is not interested in a significant experience of something in our everyday life. The painting appears in relation to asking what a thing is, and here the painting, as painting, reveals something about our understanding of things – different from our understanding of a thing represented in the painting. The point is not what it makes us see, like the peasant woman's life; it is that it makes us see, i.e. something is made apparent to us through art. The origin of the work of art is not where or what art originates from, but how something originates from art. Leddy's misreading confuses the act of seeing with what we see. It is no shortcoming of Heidegger that he does not reflect on how the peasant woman can also set aside the demands of the everyday and enjoy the familiar scene as Arto Haapala (2005, p. 51) suggests. Heidegger's concern is not for immersing oneself in contemplating one's surroundings or finding a moment of wonder – if anything of such reflection is made it will show the fundamental difference between the peasant woman seeing her harsh conditions of living while we experience our privilege of taking a pause to enjoy the nature as landscape.

To discuss Heidegger's analysis would take us beyond the scope here, but one point should be emphasized to pin the difference between Everyday Aesthetics and hermeneutics. Recognizing the everyday in aesthetic and philosophical contexts should not obscure that we must ask what the everyday is rather than what we encounter in it, the latter is in far better hands in empirical disciplines than in philosophy. We do not see the everyday in the everyday; we interpret it to be our everyday. It is not what can be significant for me, and for the peasant woman, the spectator of Saito's laundry, or the Palestinian in a newly bombed Gaza, we should take an interest in; it is the frame of interpretation granting it the significance we find or ascribe to it.

To focus on what appears in the everyday, to include it into existing categories of aesthetics, and perhaps to learn from sensuous practices in other cultures to make us become more attentive, is to practice the aesthetic differentiation Gadamer finds dubious. The integration of everyday experiences into an aesthetic discourse is no reflection on our existence but a refinement of an instrumental use of aesthetic views and notions. It only concerns what exists for us. Haapala's (2005, p. 51) critique is false when he finds that the avant-garde art's endeavours of bringing art into the everyday have failed because they only manage to estrange the everyday and reinforce the institutional aesthetic discourse that neglects the everyday. It is true if one neglects the artistic intentions and reproduces the dubious aesthetic discourse of differentiation, but why reproduce that pattern when the exact motivation of Everyday Aesthetics is to oppose it, at least according to Saito (2017, p. 1)? For a philosophical aesthetics the question must be about the frame of interpretation we encounter, its origin, implications and legitimacy.

Saito and Berleant both emphasize how the interest in Everyday Aesthetics is not merely for having a larger field of phenomena that can be aesthetically appreciated and thus enrich our aesthetic enquiry; it also has “the potential for improving the quality of life and the world” (Saito, 2007, p. 52) and for revealing the morally negative (Berleant, 2010, p. 167). Granted their point that some institutionalized forms of aesthetics seems to take more interest in performing a role as art critic and aesthetician – we know this figure from Kant (1790/1799/2000, § 33) as the virtuoso of taste – a question is if the aesthetic dimension in the everyday can deliver the expected improvements.

I think we should see this in relation to what the expectations are. If they are modest there can be an improvement through acceptance when we learn “to find positive values in things we normally dislike or detest” (Saito, 2007, p. 132). The same holds for strategies of communication when the issue can be protests against wildflower gardens. Here, aesthetic standards and values are created and changed through affective means. They are responsible for forming sensuous reactions and cultural filters that become perceptual commons. The sensuous forms may form challenges, like Haapala says about avant-garde art, and of course, they can become estranged from our everyday life. However, this can also be an opportunity to make an effort of interpretation, like José Ortega y Gasset so well investigates in his essay *The dehumanization of art* (1925/1968) written in light of complaints of the new art forms of his age. Gadamer asks the same in relation to modern mass and popular culture that perhaps, due to a generation gap, are incomprehensible for him. He must acknowledge them to be used in rational ways by a generation having an understanding that differs from his; for him to understand them will imply an effort of interpretation (Gadamer, 1993, p. 141).

If aesthetics, as I have suggested, is about expectations of an interpretative translation making general views to appear in concrete and sensuous appearances where the form of these appearances convey the meaning by affecting us, Everyday Aesthetics may provide hermeneutics with more attention to and insights in some of these phenomena. In return, it may benefit from an understanding coming from hermeneutics of aesthetics as providing knowledge to answer questions that seem to lurk just beneath the intentions of Everyday Aesthetics.

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