The following document is brought to you by

ILLiad @
Oxford College Library
Emory University

If you have any questions or comments about this document, please call 770-784-8380 or send email to oxfill@libcat1.cc.emory.edu.

NOTICE: This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U. S. C.)

STATUS	TYPE	OCLC #	
Considering 20160427	Copy	30719791	166196769
SOURCE	**REQUEST DATE**	**NEED BEFORE**	
ILLiad	04/21/2016	05/21/2016	
BORROWER	**RECEIVE DATE**		**DUE DATE**
EMO			
LENDERS			
AUU, NQZ, *NEO, NKM			

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

LOCAL ID Paper
AUTHOR

TITLE Philosophy in the contemporary world : an international journal sponsored by the Society for
IMPRINT Morehead, Ky. : Society for Philosophy in the Contemporary World, c1994-
ISSN 1077-1999

ARTICLE AUTHOR ,

ARTICLE TITLE Apposite Bodies: Dancing with Danto

FORMAT Serial
EDITION
VOLUME 22
NUMBER 1
DATE 2015
PAGES 19-

INTERLIBRARY LOAN INFORMATION

ALERT

VERIFIED <TN:1153287><ODYSSEY:illiad.library.emory.
MAX COST OCLC IFM - 25.00 USD
LEND CHARGES
LEND RESTRICTIONS

BORROWER NOTES We are a reciprocal library.Please do not send MICROFORMS/MICROFICHE. (maxCost: $25)

AFFILIATION GOLD/SOLINE/RLG MEMBER/UNIV CENTER
COPYRIGHT US:CCG

SHIPPED DATE
FAX NUMBER (770) 784-8408
EMAIL christopher.bishop@emory.edu

ODYSSEY illiad.library.emory.edu/EMO
ARIEL FTP
ARIEL EMAIL

BILL TO
same

SHIPPING INFORMATION

SHIP VIA Library Mail
SHIP TO OXFORD COLLEGE LIBRARY
OXFORD COLLEGE OF EMORY UNIVERSITY
134 FEW CIRCLE
OXFORD, GA, US 30054

RETURN VIA
RETURN TO

Marx, Karl. 1993. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. New York: Penguin Classics, 488.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1967. *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann, Toronto: Random House.
Oakeshott, Michael J. 1939. *The Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Plato. 1961 "The Laws," Trans. A.E. Taylor, in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns.
Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1957. *Existentialism and Human Emotions*, trans. P. Mairet. New York: Philosophical Library.
Shakespeare, William. 1997. *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 7; *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act 5, Scene 5 from the First Folio 1623.
Weitz, Morris. 1956. "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol 15, No. 1, 27-35.

Apposite Bodies: Dancing with Danto

Joshua M. Hall

Emory University, Oxford College
j.maloy.hall@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Though Arthur Danto has long been engaged with issues of embodiment in art and beyond, neither he nor most of his interlocutors have devoted significant attention to the art form in which art and embodiment most vividly intersect, namely dance. This article, first, considers Danto's brief references to dance in his early magnum opus, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. Second, it tracks the changes in Danto's philosophy of art as evidenced in his later *After the End of Art* and *The Abuse of Beauty*. And finally, it utilizes Danto's most recent work on the philosophy of action to suggest a new Danto-inspired definition of art, namely "apposite bodies."

NEITHER DANTO NOR HIS PHILOSOPHICAL interlocutors have devoted sustained attention to dance.[1] Yet Danto recently suggested that three of his major books—1981's *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 1997's *After the End of Art*, and 2003's *The Abuse of Beauty*—"might be considered" as constituting a three-volume "contemporary philosophy of art" (14). The first and third of these books do contain discussions in which dance is critical in either undermining or confirming the definition of art Danto defends there. This will therefore be my focus, the conclusion of which is a strategic new definition of art for those committed to choosing one such definition. That is, following the interpretive principle of charity, I wish to grant as much as possible to Danto and his readers,

[1] For two early examples of Danto on embodiment, see Danto 1963 and 1969; for a recent and representative critique of Danto on action, see Sneddon 2001.

offering an internal critique that "meets halfway" those committed to defining art in Danto's considerable wake.

In my first section, I consider Danto's brief references to dance in *Transfiguration* alongside his symbolic definition of art there, and conclude that dance's exclusion from the book is connected to its capacity to undermine that symbolic definition—I(o) = W, read "the interpretation of an object is the artwork"—at its core. In my second section, I analyze Danto's modified version of this definition ("X is an artwork if it embodies a meaning") in *The Abuse of Beauty* (25), and I suggest that his conception of "the sublime" there resonates with at least certain forms of dance. And in my final section, I utilize Danto's most recent work on the philosophy of action (*The Body/Body Problem*) to suggest a strategic new definition of art (for those committed to one such definition or another) based on Danto's penultimate definition in *The Abuse of Beauty*. More specifically, I argue that artworks are better understood as bodies which have been spatiotemporally placed (by themselves or one or more other bodies) in such a way that said placement makes those bodies meaningful in a new way—to be explained as "apposite bodies."

The upshot of this essay is that although dance reveals a fatal flaw in Danto's definitions of art, it also suggests a way to modify those definitions into a strategic new one. And this new definition, by (a) bringing dance closer to the center of aesthetics, (b) can help swell the ranks of aesthetics with members of the disempowered communities associated in the West with dance, (c) thus facilitating the expansion of aesthetics beyond its current "ghettoization," and thereby (d) guiding philosophy off the back-roads of regressive irrelevance and onto the highway of progressive social justice.

1. Un-*Transfigured* Dance

Danto only mentions dance three times in *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*. First, in the "Preface" Danto (1997) claims that the problems that the book addresses vis-à-vis the visual arts can also "be made to arise transgenerically, in all the branches of art," including "dance" (viii). This broad application is so important to Danto, in fact, that he insists that should his analyses fail "to apply throughout the world of art," he will "consider that a refutation" (viii). Danto thus sees his hospitality to dance, one could say, as lying at the very heart of his philosophy of art.

The second time that dance appears in *Transfiguration*, it is as the following example of Danto's claim that the concept of imitation does not logically imply the existence of an original thing (of which the imitation is a copy):

> Consider an Indian shaman imitating the behavior of the Fire God. The shaman dances a flame dance, undulates his body, leaps like a flame, but he is not engaged in a charade in which he is simulating a fire; he is imitating the Fire God himself. And we know there is none. Perhaps one would want to say that though there is no original, the mime must believe there is an original, and this may be true for the Indian shaman (68).

This is an intriguing and important passage for the present article, for several reasons. First, this example is drawn, in Danto's own terms, from outside the realm of art proper, because the kind of ritual it describes originated before Danto's historical beginning of art. Second, there is no clear evidence that any Native American religions include a separate deity devoted exclusively to fire, which means that the example is (at best) anthropologically suspect. And third, note that in the last sentence of the quote Danto effectively abandons the example entirely by ascribing a kind of epistemological inadequacy to the imaginary shaman. Although this might appear to be a cheap shot, at a mere throwaway comment by Danto, it is this very (and mutual) thrown away-ness of dance and a non-white racial group that is significant. To be precise, it foreshadows the advantage of my new strategic definition of art, namely by emphasizing—as apposite *bodies* versus object-*interpretations*—the concrete embodiment of those associated in the West with dance (including people of color).

Dance appears for the third and final time in *Transfiguration* in the context of Danto's definition of "exemplification," the gist of which is that the latter is a form of representation in which the "vehicle" and the content of the representation are identical; thus "a line represents and is a line; a color a color; a shape a shape; a sound a sound; and movement movement, as in a representational dance or in a motion picture" (190). Note that every item in this series except for "movement"—which is explicitly linked to dance—has some word between its original appearance and the repetition thereof. (Though one might object that this is merely a grammatical issue, namely that movement is a mass noun and the rest are count nouns, in the arena of dance, "movement" actually functions primarily as a count noun). Perhaps Danto is denying "movement" anything, as it were, between its selves (i.e., the first and second appearances of the word "movement"). And in that way, he could be understood as suggesting that movement, and thereby dance, are involved (to a greater degree than other arts) with immediacy, repetitiveness and even emptiness. In other words, whereas the lines, shapes and colors of the visual arts, along with the sounds of music, are distinct and solid enough to merit an article ("a"), the movements of dance blend haphazardly and meaninglessly together, in apparently pointless repetitions. I draw attention to this deceptively-significant stylistic moment, and draw out these three qualities in particular, because Danto implicitly links them to dance, early in his work, and then later links them explicitly to dance (to which I will return below).

Having thus considered Danto's explicit treatment of dance in *Transfiguration*, and before turning directly to his symbolic definition of art there, I will first consider three moments leading up to that definition which bear directly on dance. First, although Danto acknowledges that the "relationship between the work and its material substrate is as intricate as that between the mind and body" (104), he nevertheless insists on speaking "of the mere thing, various parts and properties of which will be parts and properties of the artworks... as the material counterpart of these" artworks (104). At face value, applying this approach to dance would seem to entail that the body of the dancer, as matter, would be the material counterpart of the work of art (that is, the dance being performed). But the performance that is the

dance artwork is not only materially constituted by the dancer's body; rather, the movements of that body also formally constitute the performance. Put differently, while the "mind" (idea) and "body" (material) of a visual artwork (such as Duchamp's *Fountain*) are discrete entities (thus supporting Danto's concept of the "mere thing"), the mind and body of the dancer are potentially (and often actually) identical; thus, whatever "thing" might be involved in a dance artwork, there is, as one says, "no 'mere' to it."

In the second of these three moments pertinent to dance, Danto defines "barbaric taste" as "the demand that the beauty of the work be identical with the beauty of the material counterpart" (106). Bracketing this problematic usage of "barbaric," it is far from obvious in the case of dance that equating the beauty of the dance with the beauty of the dancer is inappropriate in every case. For, as Valéry (1964) famously asked, "How can you tell the dancer from the dance?" (191). Granted, there is a crude way of making this identification, for example judging a ballet solo to be good because the soloist has a beautiful face. However, there are also potentially sophisticated ways of making the identification, for example judging the solo to be good in part because the soloist's body is beautiful (perhaps in terms of visible strength in the legs, or arms whose length accentuates the lines). In the latter example, what is involved is the correlation between bodily beauty (of a certain sort) and traditional ballet competence.[2]

And in the third of these dance-pertinent moments, Danto (1997) characterizes his new definition of art as a Copernican revolution, since, "each new interpretation constitutes a new work, even if the object interpreted remains, as the skies [between Ptolemy and Copernicus], invariant under transformation" (125). Of direct relevance to dance's relationship to this definition, however, the skies in question have not in fact remained invariant, at least not in every relevant sense. More specifically, although the stars and planets have obviously not relocated themselves due to astronomy, Copernicus' work has nevertheless created a new situation in which they were joined by many new "neighbors"—including satellites, space stations, and even several human beings. This development, in turn, has led to a new perception of the earth as a discrete object in the infinity of space, which has revolutionized the way we relate to both our planet and each other. To put the point more generally, interpreting something in a new way necessarily occurs in a particular historical context, and can lead to new contexts in which the interpreted object may be significantly changed.

In contemporary Latin dance, for example, the way one interprets the artful movements of one's partner is almost immediately taken up (both consciously and unconsciously) into one's own attempts at artful movement, which are then taken up by one's partner subsequent attempts, and so forth. In fact, dance in general, in fact, is so much an artwork of the body that any change (no matter how small) in its performance will necessarily change the body or bodies involved—even at the level of such phenomena as muscle tension and neurotransmitters. The point here, and in my previous two examples as well, is that the relationship between materiality and

[2] See, on this point, the foundational text on dance studies, Noverre 2004.

interpretation is much more intimate, mutually determinative, and even dialectical, than Danto's characterization seems to imply.

This intimate, mutual and dialectical fact is also evident, moreover, in the symbolic formula itself, I(o) = W (where I = "interpretation," o = "material counterpart," and W = "work of art") or "The interpretation of an object is an artwork." To begin at a basic level, this formula does not fit, on the face of it, quite a few examples of dance artworks. For example, if my girlfriend and I dance a particularly graceful waltz, but do so alone in my apartment, and neither of us "interprets" the dance, then does that mean that no artwork has taken place after all? The reader may have noticed that I pass in silence back and forth across the traditional distinction between dance as performance for an audience, and dance as mere activity. The reason is that this distinction tends to disappear on closer inspection, in part because of halfway examples, such as a cage-dancer at a nightclub, or a professional couple quasi-performing in a space spontaneously cleared amid a crowd of amateurs at a dance conference.

In fact, an important characteristic of dance is that it is a kind of border-dweller, moving on both sides of boundaries both external and internal to art. External examples include the boundaries between art and other arenas, such as art/religion and art/sports (given that dance functions as a vital aspect of most world religions, and there are Olympic sports that are also dances, such as water ballet and ice dancing). And perhaps the most important internal example is the boundary posited between spectator and aesthetic object. To frame the latter as a question, does one ballet dancer have the capacity to experience other ballet dancers in a performance as aesthetic objects, or is s/he too close and/or actively engaged? Though a sufficient treatment of these boundary issues is beyond the scope of my current investigation, I have investigated them in detail elsewhere.[3]

To return to Danto, and in fairness to him, more informal/less performance-focused dances do fare somewhat better in his later modification of *Transfiguration*'s symbolic definition, from 1986's *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*. More specifically, Danto clarifies the relationship between interpretation and work by comparing the interpretation to "a lever with which the object is lifted out of the real world, where it becomes vested in often unexpected raiment" (23, 39). This modified version is more adequate to dance for at least three reasons. First, Danto's metaphor emphasizes materiality (through the image of the lever) and embodiment (through the image of raiment), insofar as dance is intimately connected to both. Second, rather than being "transfigured," complete with that word's religious overtones, the body in this new formulation is, instead, merely clothed and lifted. And third, given Danto's characterization of interpretations as "functions which impose artworks onto material objects," which "arise together in aesthetic consciousness" (with said objects), this new formulation could also be rendered into a symbolical formula more congenial to dance.

More specifically, I would suggest the following: W_{io} (where i = "interpretation," W = "imposes artwork status," and o = "material object"), read as "Interpretation bears the relation of imposing artwork status to the material object."

[3] See Joshua M. Hall forthcoming (Aurelius), forthcoming (Goodman), 2014a, 2014 b, 2014c, 2013a, 2013b, 2012a, and 2012b.

The benefit for dance in this symbolic formulation lays in the fact that interpretation and objects are both subscripts, thus elevating the object to the same level of syntactic importance as the interpretation (because, again, the object-as-body is so much more important to dance artworks than other genres of art such as painting). Nevertheless, interpretation still retains, at the semantic level, the advantage of occupying the position of activity vis-à-vis a passive object.

In addition to the dance-relevance of this reformulation for Danto's definition of art, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* also contains his famous "End of Art," which itself contains several interesting references to dance. First, Danto notes that dance (and music and poetry) have "yielded exemplars which could not have been perceived as art had anything like them appeared in early times, as in sets of," in the case of dance, "movements" (82). Moreover, dance (along with poetry, performance, and music) exemplifies for him how "the boundaries between painting and the other arts…have become radically unstable" (85). Perhaps this is the real reason that Danto begins, in the year after *Transfiguration*'s publication to attend to dance, because other arts were beginning to encroach on the (for him) paradigmatic visual arts. In support of this suggestion is Danto's discussion, later in this essay, of actual moving figures in sculpture, examples of which include the dancer-like mythical "moving dolls" crafted by Daedalus, and the "evil" or "uncanny" "idea" of "the dancing doll in *Coppélia*," a nineteenth century comic ballet based on the macabre fiction of E. T. A. Hoffman (also the creator of the story behind that most-performed ballet, The Nutcracker) (94). This last reference is significant, additionally, in that it is the first reference in Danto's entire corpus to an actual dance artwork.

By contrast with "The End of Art," however, and as I mentioned in the beginning of my essay, *After the End of Art* contains almost no references to (a) particular dances, (b) dance in general, or even (c) anything in which dance is implicated. The two exceptions to this, however, are suggestive. First, Danto refers to the distinction "between dance and movement" as an achievement parallel to Warhol's in the visual arts (35). Second, dance is also Danto's first example of both (a) that which will probably survive the end of even formal artworks, in that "It is quite possible that human beings will always express joy or loss through dance and song," and also (b) that which preceded the first historical artworks, in that "the early division of labor which enable gifted individuals to take on the aesthetics responsibilities of society," for example, "to dance at marriages" (47). It seems significant here, not only that dance (with pride of place) bookends the history of art for Danto, but also that the above two passages end with rather condescending references to "rituals that verge on art" and "the spaces in which the members of the tribe commune with spirits," respectively (47, 48). This latter move, taking place in the second volume of Danto's philosophy of art, also recalls the aforementioned reference, from the first volume of that philosophy, of the Fire God, and foreshadows the barely less pejorative dance content in his third and final volume, to which I now turn.

2. The Continuing *Abuse* of Dance

In the "Preface" to *The Abuse of Beauty*, Danto makes a distinction between an artwork's "semantic" properties and its "pragmatic" (or later "inflectional") properties, the former belonging for him to the concept of art proper, and the latter constituting the locus of aesthetic properties, foremost among them being beauty. "Pragmatic properties," Danto explains, "are intended to dispose an audience to have feelings of one sort or another toward what the artwork represents" (xv). Beauty, for example, may have the pragmatic task "to inspire love toward what an artwork shows" (xv). These pragmatic properties also "correspond," Danto adds, "to what Frege speaks of as 'color'—*Farbung*—in his theory of meaning" (xv). For Frege, of course, this involves the personal, idiosyncratic, poetic, expressive dimension of language, a dimension entirely absent from meaning and reference.

Danto admits that he was initially tempted to affirm pragmatic properties as an additional necessary condition of an artwork (along with its "embodying a meaning"). His first reaction to this temptation, though, was negative, given that he was "not sure this would be true" of art in a necessary and sufficient way (xix). Danto's second reaction, moreover, is a more extreme move in this negative direction, applauding the avant-garde's disavowal of aesthetics in art as "a healthy move" (xix). His final move, however, is to swing in the opposite direction (albeit with the same medicinal rhetoric), suggesting that we "have now built up sufficient immunities that we can again consider what after all makes art so meaningful in human life" (xix). As Danto elaborates, and with an even more intense shot of medicinal rhetoric, "Protected by what I have learned, I can begin once again to pick up, with the long forceps of analytical philosophy, such toxic properties as beauty, sublimity, and the like" (xix). Thus, Danto presents beauty (and aesthetics in general) not as something that is merely out of place in art, but as a toxic, poisonous, dangerous phenomenon that threatens the health of art itself.

In light of the moral stigma not infrequently attached to issues of health and toxicity, it is not surprising that Danto initially "felt somewhat sheepish about writing on beauty" (14). His justification, however, is that the "spontaneous appearance of those moving improvised shrines everywhere in New York after the terrorist attack," suggests that "the need for beauty in the extreme moments of life is deeply ingrained in the human framework" (14). Consequently, although Danto admits that beauty is "but one of an immense range of aesthetic qualities," he nevertheless insists that it is "the only one of the aesthetic qualities that is also a value, like truth and goodness" (15). In other words, Danto overcomes his personal trepidation or insecurity through an appeal to, not only communal tragedy, but also biological essentialism, and even the Platonic triad of "values."

Perhaps to immunize his philosophical project against this potentially deleterious mixture, Danto then offers a "condensed" version of his first definition of art. (Keep in mind that the first formulation, from Transfiguration, was I(o) = W, or "An interpretation of an object is an artwork," and the second formulation, from *After the End of Art*, was that an artwork must be about something and embody its meaning). "X is an artwork if it embodies a meaning" (25). On the one hand, there is an absence here that Danto is quick to acknowledge, namely its lack of any

reference to aesthetics. On the other hand, there is another absence that he fails to mention, namely its lack of any reference to interpretation, and (along with interpretation) both the art critic and the art world.

Danto's own critics, however, do not fail to note this second absence. Noël Carroll (1997) for example, describes what is missing as "an atmosphere of art theory," and suggests that Danto's motive here is to make his new definition less exclusionary of specific artworks. More specifically, and importantly for the present essay, one of his examples of these excluded artworks is the genre of "tap dancing."(386) That Carroll's example is appropriate, moreover, is evidenced by a comparison of the role of dance in volumes one and three of Danto's philosophy of art. More specifically, *Transfiguration*, working with Danto's first formulation of his definition, includes not a single reference to a specific dance artwork (among around one hundred references to other artworks), whereas here in *The Abuse of Beauty* one finds three separate references to one particular dance company, and two references to the same dance!

In the first of these three references, from the preface, the Judson Dance Group is Danto's first example of an avant-garde organization ready "to consider everything as art," as "it was possible for a dance to consist in someone sitting in chair" (xvii). Thus, just like dance's only mention in *After the End of Art*, dance again holds pride of place here at the intersection of minimalism (of material, with only a dancer and a chair) and inclusiveness (of form, with even sitting in place as art). This lack of content in the chair dance, incidentally, is what I was referring to near the beginning of the article when I observed that Danto links to dance to emptiness. A few pages later, Danto returns to this same dance as, again, his first example of a completely counter-intuitive artwork. Danto (2003) remains "amazed" to this day, he confesses, "that a dance can consist in nothing more remarkable than sitting still" (21). His reaction, incidentally, thus seems not that different from the reaction of the "institutions of high culture," which (as Danto describes) concluded, "it was unreasonable to pay admission to watch a woman not move" (21). Finally, just a few pages later than that, Danto quotes from the Judson Group's famous agenda, written by its director, Yvonne Rainer: "NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image" (24-25). Thus, as the reader has observed, dance has come, in Danto's work, from being virtually invisible (in *Transfiguration*), to serving as a marker of imaginary primitive societies (in *After the End of Art*), to taking center stage as the genre-home of the paradigmatically counter-intuitive artwork, sitting (here in *The Abuse of Beauty*).

Returning to Carroll (1997), however, the problem with Danto's new definition's inclusiveness is that it becomes, in fact, infinitely inclusive, in that "anything can be art *at any* time," including Carroll's examples of a "real sword" and "sports cars" (389, 387). Insofar as this critique by Carroll is valid, in other words, dance again threatens to undermine Danto's entire philosophy of art—since the modification that Danto made to his definition, which allowed dance's (belated) inclusion in the world of art, also allows the inclusion of the rest of the world, even the kitchen sink. But whereas this new definition may indeed be over-inclusive,

Danto's subsequent discussions of beauty certainly are anything but, and in fact seem to seek out new ways to exclude it.

The first such arena from which Danto (2003) explicitly excludes beauty is the famous elaborate tattoos of the South Sea Islanders (which so fascinated Kant). The second is "the brass neck coils affected by the Paduang women of Burma" (43). Both, Danto asserts, and without argument, evidence, or even indigenous testimony, "have nothing to do with beautification" (43). As usual when a philosopher goes so far out on a limb, there is something valuable at the end; in this case the prize is that, if his claim is correct, "a universal beauty may be entirely consistent with cultural differences, our mistake consisting in regarding certain things as aesthetic when they have some quite different and more cognitive function" (43). In other words, if these tattoos and neck rings, which to most Westerners seem ugly or repulsive, are also ultimately repulsive for the islanders and Paduang people themselves, then that is further evidence that all humans share the same, natural, ideals of beauty.

Having thus purged beauty from both concept of art and (at least certain forms of) body art, Danto (2003) then, in effect, quarantines it in what he calls "the Third Realm," a "a more or less vast and largely unmapped territory, sharing boundaries with natural beauty on the one side and artistic beauty on the other" (61). Danto's first example of this third realm is "the beauty of a garden," and he claims that it has three important characteristics. First, it plays "a far greater role in human conduct and attitude than either" natural or artistic beauty"; second, it is "greatly connected with human life and happiness"; and third, it is even "coextensive with most forms of human life" (61, 63). In a word, the Third Realm's domain is "beautification" (68).

As beautification, the Third Realm is "intended to produce a certain effect," making it for Danto (2003) "really akin to rhetoric, the skills of which are bent on making the case look worse or better than it is" (69). As a consequence, he claims, "the very existence of a third aesthetic realm is internally related to moral considerations in a way in which art in its 'highest vocation' is not, nor nature in its aspect as beautiful" (70). And here, at the quarantined site, dance appears, as one of Danto's first examples of beautification's immorality, specifically "a ball" characterized as "the scene of flirtation or seduction" (71). More importantly, this dance reference also signals a swing in the direction of affirming beauty for Danto, or, more precisely, three separate dance-related swings that collectively illustrate, yet again, dance's power to disrupt Danto's thought.

In the first swing, taste in this Third Realm "is associated with how people believe they ought to live," and "belongs to ritual," and ritual is something that is both necessary for society and intimately connected to dance throughout history (72). Secondly, Danto (2003) asserts that "the absence or presence of ornament always transcends questions of aesthetics alone," as evidenced, for example, in the ornamental aspects of dance costuming, and beautification "may accordingly also carry symbolic weight, which can be perverted if something is used for looks alone" (73). And finally, Danto goes so far as to suggest the possibility that "nothing cosmetic is without symbolic meaning," which claim seems particularly true of dance (74). Altogether then, and escorted by dance, beautification has thus moved

from a den of iniquity to universally significant beautification, thus threatening to escape its quarantine among "pragmatic properties" and run free into the embodied meaning of the work.

In fact, Danto (2003) seems to acknowledge this burgeoning significance of beauty himself, as suggested by his subsequent analyses of allegedly universal standards of beauty, and the aesthetic oppression of people of color and women (76-78). Danto's response to this expansion, however, is to try to divert the pathogenic significance of beauty away from art and in the direction of life in general, thus counter-intuitively (given Danto's career) elevating an aspect of aesthetics into a realm even higher than art. Or, more accurately, "submerging an aspect of aesthetics into a realm even deeper," in light of Danto's affirmation of the following quote from Freud: that beauty is derived "from the realms of sexual sensation is all that seems certain; the love of beauty is a perfect example of a feeling with an inhibited aim" (82).

Danto's (2003) enforcing of this quarantine relies on his distinction between "internal" and "external" beauty, of which only the former for him is appropriate in art. Danto's first two examples of this "internal beauty" in art (because he also finds it in nature) are Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans' Memorial* and Robert Motherwell's series of paintings entitled *Elegies for the Spanish Republic*. What makes the beauty of the Vietnam memorial and of the paintings "internal" for Danto is that the beauty is, in both cases, "part of the experience of the art" (97). This "felt beauty," he asserts "is part of the meaning of the work" and "internal to the work" (101).

The point here seems to be that, whereas external beauty consists of a (merely) beautiful object or thing, internal beauty consists of something along the lines of a beautiful meaning achieved through a beautiful object. Put differently, both of these examples are about the tragic loss of life in warfare, and the beautiful appearance of the examples themselves is supposed to help transform communities' overwhelming grief into manageable sadness by uniting them around public objects—objects which both focus the community members' psychological energy on the warfare (by representing those wars) and also channel that energy in a different and more beneficial direction (by the objects being beautiful).

Note that the response of both the memorial and the paintings to warfare is elegiac, just like the impromptu 9/11 memorials that constituted Danto's (2003) initial justification for this exploration of beauty. Elegies, Danto explains, "are part music and part poetry, whose language and cadence are constrained by the subject of death and loss and which express grief, whether the artist shares it or not" (110). Suggesting again the aforementioned issue of biological essentialism, Danto also claims that the elegy "fits one of the great human moods; it is a way of responding artistically to what cannot be endured or what can only be endured" (110).

The details of this elegiac process, according to Danto (2003), are as follows: "beauty works as a catalyst, transforming raw grief into tranquil sadness, helping the tears to flow and, at the same time, one might say, putting the loss into a certain philosophical perspective" (111). Importantly, then, the elegiac experience in Danto's view is not that of an isolated individual; on the contrary, "since the occasion of elegy is public, the sorrow is shared. It is no longer one's own. We are

taken up into a community of mourners" (111). It is exactly in this facilitating of shared sorrow, for Danto, that the beauty of the elegy's form is located.

Motherwell's paintings, for example, "are not to be admired because they are beautiful," Danto (2003) argues, "but because their being so is internally connected with their reference and their mood" (112). These last two words, interestingly, recall the two-part definition of the artwork that Danto almost affirmed in the preface to *The Abuse of Beauty*, according to which something is an artwork if it embodies a meaning and (as he puts it later) "is inflected to cause an attitude to its content" (121). According to this definition, the Vietnam memorial, for example, is an artwork because it embodies a meaning such as "It is beautiful to remember our veterans' sacrifice," and inflects that meaning by shaping the stone of the memorial into an angle vaguely resembling the protective wings of an angel. This "inflection" is so important for Danto, in fact, that it "helps explain why we have art in the first place," namely "because, as human beings, we are driven by our feelings" (122).

Danto's (2003) own life has, in his own words, "been transformed by reading Proust or Henry James," notably two of the most beautiful writers in their respective languages (132). (Such transformation is also true, incidentally, at another level, in that Proust's novel "teems with characters who see their lives in terms of paintings, stories, melodies, bits of architecture, gardens, essays") (132). Apropos of these transformations, and reminiscent of his previous analyses of the elegy as beautiful consolation, Danto suggests that beauty perhaps also "confers meaning on life in much the same way, as though its existence validates life" (137). Since Danto also wrote a book on Nietzsche, it seems likely that Danto is thinking here of Nietzsche's famous quote about art as "the complement and consummation of existence, seducing one into a continuation of life."(43).

On the one hand, Nietzsche's privileged art form makes no further appearances after the middle of The Abuse of Beauty; on the other, however, dance can be understood as figuring prominently, albeit indirectly, in Danto's (2003) final chapter's discussion of the sublime. The relationship of sublimity to beauty, according to Danto, is that none of the other aesthetic, pragmatic, or inflectional properties "poses quite the challenge to beauty that sublimity does" (143-144). Danto's privileged source for both the theory and practice of the sublime is the abstract expressionist artist Barnett Newman. Building on the latter's conceptions of beauty as the search for perfect form, and of the sublime as the "desire to destroy form," and thus beauty, Danto argues that beauty is centrally concerned with taste, while sublimity's focus is instead "ecstasy or *enthusiasmos*" (145, 147). Such enthusiasm, Danto suggests, is suggested in everyday conversation when "we speak of ourselves as 'blown away' or as 'knocked out' or 'bowled over' or 'shattered' by an artwork," and enthusiasm's etymology, of course, means, "to have a god within" (147).

Appropriately, then, Danto (2003) writes that those who were first exposed to sublime visual art in the West (specifically that of the Abstract Expressionists) wondered why its historical predecessor, namely beautiful art (such as that of the Impressionists), never "lifted them out of themselves" (147). In other words, these viewers too wanted to be overcome, as Danto's puts it, "much in the way the god Dionysus invaded Thebes in Euripedes' unsettling play, *The Bacchae*" (147). I

would suggest, however, that the viewers' appetite for ecstasy and enthusiasm may have already been whetted (and, in fact, satisfied) before this, just not by visual art. Perhaps, instead, they were intrigued by the prospect of a visual art that could move them as they (or at least some of them) were already being moved—by other art forms, and perhaps especially dance. After all, Danto's reference here to Dionysius, the Greek god of dance, suggests at least a possible connection to dance, a possibility supported by three moments in Danto's subsequent analyses.

In the first of these moments, Danto (2003) describes the "mark of being in the presence of the sublimity" as "the swoon," and swooning (both literally and figuratively) remains a not-uncommon experience (whether from exhaustion or desire) in various kinds of dance (152). In the second moment, in regard to dance (as with Newman's paintings) one must "be in front of and in fact rather close to them, in order to experience" sublimity (155). And in the third, also as with Newman's painting, dance too aspires to "wonder and awe at ourselves as here" (158). Indeed, few experiences in general, let along experiences with art in particular, are as conducive as dance to such an intense appreciation/satisfaction of the lived, embodied present.

Although there are two likely objections that might be raised regarding my linkage of dance to the sublime, both, with Danto's (2003) help, can be addressed in a satisfying way. First, although the historical association of the sublime with fear would seem to distance it from dance, Danto emphasizes that the more important of these historical references concern, instead, "such feelings as wonderment and awe," and one often experiences wonder when caught up in an overwhelming experience of dance (148). Along similar lines, Danto also rejects "terror" as the central category of the sublime in favor of the confrontation with our "limitations if we have artistic ambitions," and one almost always feels this humbling sense of limitation whenever one is dancing among more skillful dancers (154).

A second objection might be that dance, unlike the sublime, tends to be beautiful; Danto (2003), however, suggests in three different places that these two properties are not mutually exclusive. He evokes, first, the beautiful and sublime works of the Hudson River School and the vault of the Sistine Chapel, and second, "the beauty of Helen of Troy" (155, 160). The third place, however, is by far the most significant for my purposes. Here, in the conclusion of his final chapter, and thereby also the book, Danto asserts that "the beautiful is the sublime 'amid the night of non-being'" (155, 160). The quote-within-a-quote here invokes Nabokov's following description (which, incidentally, Danto describes as itself sublime) of the experience of simply existing: "The marvel of consciousness—that sudden window swinging open on a sunlit landscape amid the night of non-being" (160, 159). Dance, I would suggest, could easily be described as similarly marvelous, through its own sublime swing into the beauty of the day.

3. Apposite Bodies Dancing

In this final section I explore how Danto's philosophy of art would need to be revised in order to be adequate to dance. But first, given the centrality of embodiment for dance, and the centrality of action for Danto's conception of

embodiment, I will briefly consider Danto's philosophy of action as introduced in *An Analytical Philosophy of Action* and repackaged in his more recent *The Body/Body Problem* (1999). The core of the former book is Danto's failed attempt to define successfully the concept of "basic action," understood as an action that is done immediately, "not through any distinct thing that we do" (28). For reasons of space, rather than trace this effort in detail, I will instead turn to Danto's take on it in *The Body/Body Problem*.

Danto's (1999) original title for *The Body/Body Problem* was *Analytical Philosophy of Philosophy*, which was to be a study of representation that culminated in a new definition of human beings as "*res representans*." Despite the fact that Danto's four other "*Analytical Philosophy of X*" books were successfully completed and published, he remarks that, in regards to this last one, he "could not make it come to life" (17). In other words, and with significant implications for dance, Danto encountered resistance—from nothing other than bodies themselves—in his attempt to reduce human bodies to a mere aspect of human beings defined as "things that represent."

Perhaps, in fact, it was to honor this bodily resistance that Danto (1999) ultimately chose the actual title, in which the word "body" appears, not once, but twice. And this is not the only way that such bodily resistance makes itself felt in the book. Although for the most part Danto elaborates here another version of his characteristically minimal philosophical anthropology, there is one interesting exception, and it takes place in a passage that contains the book's one and only reference to dance. I will consider this passage in detail below, where the reader will observe how, yet again, dance threatens (by Danto's own litmus test from *Transfiguration*) to undermine his entire philosophical project. But first, it will be helpful to summarize the basic concepts of Danto's philosophy of action (with the reader invited to imaginatively substitute dance for Danto's own examples of his concept of action in what follows).

In looking back on his early work on action, and with admirable candor, Danto (1999) acknowledges that it "yields no intelligence regarding what makes a basic action an *action*" (46). He even goes so far as to attribute his early text "a certain physiological recklessness," conceding that even its paradigm example of a basic action, (namely, "raising one's arm") might not count, on its terms, as such a basic action (51). (Trying to imagine an example of a basic action in dance, I imagine, would be even more difficult). Later, Danto puts the point even more starkly, writing that the "collapse" of his "counter-Cartesian" materialist program also "entails the demolition of basic actions, at least insofar as its hopeful philosophical significance is concerned" (63).

One might conclude from the word "demolition" here that Danto (1999) was done with basic actions for good, but (just as the reader has observed in regard to his definition of art) his strategy is instead one of continuing modifications. In the case of these so-called basic actions, Danto's new contention is that actions "acquire their status as [basic] in being parts of non-basic actions, outside of which those basic actions would be but merely bodily movements" (53). Put simply, there are for Danto at this point no longer any such things as basic actions in isolation. Danto then supplements his new conception of basic actions with a new understanding of

an action in general, according to which "a bodily movement is an action when caused by a representation" (60). The reason for his introduction of representation here, Danto explains, is to capture "the form of the *imaginings*, which seem to spring from a sort of philosophical unconscious that knows no principle of contradiction, and that reads hopes forth as realities" (60, 59). That is, actions for Danto are irreducibly linked to representation/imagination. Given the centrality of imagination to art, incidentally, Danto seems to be moving here in the direction of a concept of action more hospitable to the art of dance.

The central insight from this insistence on the imaginative dimension, according to Danto (1999), is that materialism can no longer be understood as the overcoming of dualism per se. Rather, by "closing the gap between our mind and our bodies," materialism simultaneously, opens "a gap between our bodies, on the one side, and *mere* bodies, on the other—" (64). This, in turn, sets up the thesis of Danto's essay, namely that the concept of representation is necessary, at the very least, to explain "errors in the theory of our knowledge of objects and misperformances in the theory of action" (69). Without "representation," Danto elaborates, there is no intention with which to compare a performance, such that one can judge the performance successful or unsuccessful. In other words, for Danto abandoning representation in action leaves us with a world in which there can be no such thing as errors, mistakes, missteps, etc.—because everything just happens.

Danto's (1999) first step in defending this thesis, which includes a specific invocation of dance for theoretical purposes, is to reject G. E. M. Anscombe's concept of "practical knowledge," specifically because Anscombe characterizes it as "*knowledge without observation*" (in a Wittgenstein-like attempt to exorcise the metaphysical ghost of representation) (71). But then Danto almost stops himself from rejecting "practical knowledge" in favor of merely suggesting a radical reduction of scope. And it is here, finally, that one finds the book's one reference to dance, as that which, singlehandedly, justifies Danto's going ahead with this rejection, and thereby to his own new conception—making this dancing moment a critical one in the argument, the essay, and the book.

More specifically, although Danto (1999) concedes that Anscombe's concept of practical knowledge "works best for mere bodily movements," he then adds the following qualification:

> To be sure, we may have something left [after removing the concept of representation] we can call practical knowledge, as a sort of knowing-how which has application to our bodies, though I suppose we would want to distinguish the knowledge of how to move our bodies gracefully, like dancers do, from mere bodily behavior (72).

In other words, dance intervenes at the exact moment in Danto's (1999) text and thought where he was about to grant a complete reduction to "mere bodies." Dance, one might say, reminds Danto here that there are wondrous things that bodies can do, and that one therefore needs to make some important distinctions—at the level of bodies—that have nothing to do with representation. That is, the adverb "gracefully" indicates a style of movement that does not represent anything in the world, nor interpret the world; instead, "graceful" is more like a pure inflection or nuance.

Human beings, Danto (1999) summarizes in the conclusion, as "agents and knowers are within the world under the concept of causation, and external to it under the concept of truth. Within and without the world at once: that is the philosophical structure of man."[4] But what, then, one might wonder, is a dancer? An agent (because a cause of motion), or a knower (because a knower of truth)? If the latter, how could the dancer have access to the truth of a dance, given that dance clearly takes place in the form of the actions of bodies? After all, as indicated by his aforementioned three references to the Judson Dance Group, there must be some kind of truth for Danto in dance. One can fairly infer, then, that there must be some other part of Danto's thinking that is setting up a roadblock to such dancing truth.

In conclusion, therefore, I offer a first attempt at getting around such a roadblock, along with the other (similar) roadblocks that I have noted throughout this essay. My strategy is to suggest a new, strategic definition of art (since some will inevitably affirm one such definition or another), a dialectical inversion of Danto's own most recent definition. The question that inspired this definition is the following: in place of "embodied meanings"—since for dance at least (and perhaps for other arts as well) bodies seem more important than meanings[5]—why not, instead, "apposite bodies"? I chose the fairly uncommon word "apposite" (whose meanings include "appropriate" and "suitable") because of English's poverty in regard to one-word synonyms for the phrase "to make meaningful." And I understand "meaningful"—as Danto himself understands it in *The Abuse of Beauty* (following the later Wittgenstein's understanding)—as "use." If being meaningful, that is, consists of being put to a particular use in space and time—and since apposite means "appropriate because of being placed in a certain way"—then to be apposite just is to be meaningful. In other words, I am offering, instead of "embodied meanings," "meaning-ed bodies," merely switching the concepts' (substantive and modifier) conjugations.

A dance as artwork, on this view, consists of one or more bodies made meaningful in some distinct way by being taken up into the spatiotemporal matrix of a dance. I add "in some distinct way" to draw attention to the fact that bodies are

---

[4] As this passage suggests, Danto's relationship to feminism is problematic, and complicated in light of, on the one hand, claims, rhetoric and imagery such as this, and on the other hand, repeated, explicit calls for social justice for women. This issue is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of my essay, but deserves further attention.

[5] That is, dance thus far cannot exist without an animal body, but there are dances in which there is no motion whatsoever (such as the Judson chair dance), and in every dance bodies move in meaningless ways (such as the processes of digestion, or invisible nervous tics that no one notices). Granted, such movement could potentially be meaningful in a given context, as in a dance in which the dancer's character is understood by the audience to have just overeaten spicy food, which implies s/he is dancing through the digestive difficulties created thereby. However, not all invisible movements can be made legible in this way simultaneously. In the spicy food dance, for example, the regulation of the dancer's blood sugar levels by her/his pancreas would not be meaningful, but would still be bodily necessary. In other words, though (a) there are always bodies in a dance, (b) meaningful movements are an optional subset of the total embodiment present in a dance work. This is not to say, however, that meaning is dependent upon the audience's attentiveness, but rather that meaning requires legibility/visibility, whether for the dancer, the choreographer, audience member, etc. And legibility/visibility requires a material/bodily support, a background to foreground the meanings.

always-already meaningful in a variety of ways (and in a variety of contexts) before engaging, or being engaged, in dance. To take one particular dancer's example, part of the meaning of me (as my body) is that I am (among other things) the child of my parents and the uncle of my niece; therefore, when I begin dancing on a specific occasion, I (as my body) become additionally meaningful on that occasion as a dancer.

To explore the adequacy of this definition for non-dance artworks, it might be helpful to return to Danto's longtime favorite example of an artwork, Warhol's appropriation of James Harvey's Brillo Box. For my definition, the boxes here constitute the (figurative) bodies which Warhol has made meaningful, by placing them spatiotemporally in a certain geographical and historical context in which they have acquired new meanings—chief among these for Danto being the status of art. Something is an artwork by my definition, that is, if it is a body placed in both space and time in such a way that this placement endows that body with new meaning. I will now consider two likely objections to this new definition.

First, one might object that my definition ultimately reduces to George Dickie's institutional theory of art. The reason why this is not the case derives from differences in emphasis and content between our two definitions. Regarding emphasis, my definition makes reference to bodies which are spatiotemporally placed in new contexts, and which therefore depend upon the existence and cooperation of other (usually human) bodies for said placement, whereas Dickie refers to "artifacts" having new statuses "conferred" by persons who belong to the specific institutions he calls "artworlds." Since my definition deals in "bodies" spatiotemporally "placed" by "bodies," my definition is more materialist and pro-embodiment in tone than Dickie's theory (which instead deals in "artifacts" "conferred" by "persons"). That is, my definition takes the subjects and objects of art to be bodies, whereas Dickie takes the subjects to be persons and the objects to be artifacts. It is important to note, however, that by "materialist" I refer, not to mainstream modern scientific materialism, but rather to the materialist tradition of Aristotelian interpretation in Judeo-Arabic medieval philosophy, which views matter as a dynamism that "yearns for form." Regarding content, "the art world" can easily be incorporated into my definition in the form of but one of a variety of communities within which a body can become an artwork through differential placement; other such communities include churches, neighborhoods, bedrooms, and tree-houses.

Second, even (or perhaps especially) if persuaded by my response to this first objection, one might nevertheless conclude that my definition—perhaps as a result of sidestepping Dickie like Danto—is as vulnerable as Danto's to Carroll's aforementioned critique of over-inclusiveness. On the contrary, the difference between Danto's most recent definition and mine, is that Danto abstracts away from all explicit reference to any persons or communities who would, in his parlance, "endow a body with meaning," whereas my reference to spatiotemporal "placement" implies some (literal or figurative) body doing the placing, which in turn implies a context of a historical community in which the artwork comes to be.

For an example of this difference between Danto's definition and mine, any hammer that is hanging from a nail on a wall could be an artwork on Danto's terms; on mine, however, the hammer would have to have been placed there by another body at a particular moment in order to give it a new meaning. Thus, my definition (unlike Danto's) can distinguish a hammer that fell (perhaps off of a shelf) onto a nail accidentally (and without anyone noticing) from a hammer as a bit of intentional interior decorating. For another example of this difference, any bit of text from anywhere appearing anywhere, even if the result of an accidental (and forgotten) cut-and-paste from a website to an email, could be an artwork on Danto's terms. But on mine, that bit of text would have to have been placed in the email intentionally and at a particular time (as is the case when someone uses a quote from a friend's blog as an email "signature"). My definition, therefore, unlike Danto's, can distinguish between indifferent occurrences and artful citations.

Ultimately, however, and in conclusion, I am less interested in proffering a timeless new definition of art in general (or dance in particular), and more interested in pointing out that a serious consideration of dance in Danto's philosophy can produce, among other benefits, such a definition, more conducive to flourishing than Danto's own. More importantly, and finally, I want to emphasize that addressing the relative absence of dance in Danto's philosophy holds out new hopes for aesthetics, and for philosophy as a whole. To wit, by modifying Danto's definition to be more welcoming to dance, aesthetics becomes more welcoming to those associated in the West with dance (including women, people of color, and queer folks), enlarging aesthetics beyond its current "ghettoization" borders, thus facilitating philosophy's transformation into a more progressive and socially just discipline for the twenty-first century.

Works Cited

Carroll, Noel. 1997. "Danto's New Definition of Art and the Problem of Art Theories." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 37.4: 386-392.

Danto, Arthur. 1963. "What We Can Do." *Journal of Philosophy* 60.15: 435-445

Danto, Arthur. 1969. "Complex Events." *International Phenomenological Society* 30.1: 66-77.

Danto, Arthur. 1997. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge: Harvard, 198.

Danto, Arthur. 1998. *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Danto, Arthur. 1999. *The Body/Body Problem: Selected Essays*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Danto, Arthur. 2003. *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*. The Paul Carus Lectures Series 21. New York: Open Court.

Danto, Arthur. 2014. *What Art Is*. New Haven: Yale.

Dickie, George. 1997. *Art Circle: A Theory of Art*. Chicago: Chicago Spectrum.

Hall, Joshua M. Forthcoming. "Alfarabi's Imaginative Critique: Overflowing Materialism in *Virtuous Community*." *South African Journal of Philosophy*

Hall, Joshua M. Forthcoming. "A Divinely-Tolerant Political Ethics: Dancing with Aurelius." *Epoché: A Journal of the History of Philosophy*.

Hall, Joshua M. Forthcoming. "Meta-Notational Self-Exemplification: Dancing with Goodman." *Evental Aesthetics* 4.1.
Hall, Joshua M. 2014a. "Self-Mimetic Curved Silvering: Dancing with Irigaray." *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 22.1: 76-101.
Hall, Joshua M. 2014b. "Reattaching Shadows: Dancing with Schopenhauer." *PhaenEx: Journal of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture* 9.1. Web.
Hall, Joshua M. 2013a. "Syncopated Communities: Dancing with Ellison," *Southern Literary Journal* 45.2: 57-71.
Hall, Joshua M. 2013b. "Core Aspects of Dance: Condillac and Mead on 'Gesture'," *Dance Chronicle* 36.3: 352-371.
Hall, Joshua M. 2013c. "Poetic Intuition: Spinoza and Gerard Manley Hopkins." *Philosophy Today* 57.4: 401-407.
Hall, Joshua M. 2012a. "Choreographing the Borderline: Dancing with Kristeva." *Philosophy Today* 56.1: 49-58.
Hall, Joshua M. 2012b. "Revalorized Black Embodiment: Dancing with Fanon." *Journal of Black Studies* 43.3: 274-288.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1967. *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*. Tr. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage.
Noverre, Jean-Georges. 2004. *Letters on Dancing and Ballet.* Hampshire: Dance.
Sharp, Hasana. 2011. *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization.* Chicago: University of Chicago.
Sneddon, Andrew. 2001. "Does Philosophy of Action Rest on a Mistake," *Metaphilosophy* 32(5): 502-522.
Valéry, Paul. 1964. "Dance on the Soul." *Selected Writings of Paul Valery.* New York: New Directions, 184-198.
Dobbs-Weinstein, Idit. 2004. "On the Natural Dwelling of the Intellect." *The Bloomsburg Companion to Aristotle*. Ed. Claudia Baracchi. New York: Bloomsbury. 297-310.

Danto's Error: Sustaining Art's Narrative with the Primacy of the Aesthetic

Gregory L. Burgin

Arizona State University
gregory.burgin@asu.edu

ABSTRACT: According to Arthur C. Danto, without the progressive development of a dominant style the historical narrative structure of art in the West can no longer be sustained. It is thus the case in the contemporary world that art while liberated, has found its end in the arrival of a myriad of art-making styles where none is above the other. It is the aim of the present paper to suggest that the historical narrative structure of art cannot end in the way that Danto asserted. Instead, by examining the issue through the application of the aesthetic conceptions of Benedetto Croce and R.G. Collingwood it can be shown that Danto is committing a philosophical error by abstraction. It is then the focus of this paper to resolve the error and to provide a descriptive account of art's liberated state in the world today by making the argument for the primacy of the aesthetic

PROVIDING AN ACCOUNT OF ART'S CURRENT liberated state does not signal the end of the historical narrative structure of art as Arthur C. Danto asserted. What is embodied by Danto's assertion about Western art is a kind of philosophical abstraction that leads to error. It is not inaccurate to view the narrative of art as having changed, but to suggest that it has come to an end altogether is in error. The present paper hopes to demonstrate how art's liberation influenced Danto's view of the historical narrative structure of art. By examining Danto's position, it can then be seen how he commits himself to the philosophical error that results in a narrow