

From objects of Communication towards reasonableness of sensibility: aesthetic experience and epistemology of Communication

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Abstract

This text examines the ideas that provided a nucleus to an aesthetic discourse, in the context of Communication studies: departing from the implications between aesthetics and axiology of appreciation of Media culture products, theories of Communication identified the aesthetic core of such phenomena with their “artistry”. In view of an “aesthetic turn” in more recent theories of Communication, this article proposes to fix new milestones of the “aesthetic”, assimilating this concept to dimensions of sensory and affective in sociability, with the corollary of communicability of sensible experience, as formulated by Herman Parret and Jean-François Lyotard.

Keywords: Aesthetics. Communications. Sensibility.

Beyond the axiology of instrumentality in aesthetic approaches towards Communication

By correlating “aesthetic” and “Communication”, either in the pathways of theoretical and epistemological questions, or in practical contexts of teaching subjects in disciplines of the likes of “Communication Aesthetics”, “Aesthetics of Mass Culture” or “Communication and Aesthetic Experience” (all

present in the curriculum of most of undergraduate courses on Communications in Brazilian universities), one finds a repository of concepts (and a whole historicity of theoretical discourses) within which aesthetic theories, processes and phenomena of Communications are altogether packaged in the records of, in Habermasian terms, a “philosophical discourse of modernity”. It is however necessary to clarify a little more the tacitly shared understanding of the meaning of this very correlation between aesthetics and Communications from the perspective of epistemological constitution of our field of study.

It is already known that this ethos of an aesthetic discourse has marked the genesis of a kind of reflection on the empirical universe of Media Communication: there is here a certain conception of the historical and cultural modernity, particularly defined by the emergence of mass Communications as a central element of contemporary social experience, an aspect taken to be central to the discourse of social sciences from early years of the 20th Century. In such a context, the distinctiveness of the questions on Communications in contemporary thought could easily be characterized by the so-called “question concerning technology”, as an aspect of the massive presence of instrumental rationality that is pervasive within the cultural experience of our days.

Accordingly, to think of Communications in all universe of its devices, processes and products in contemporary societies would imply a recognition of the range of modalities of sensitivity gestated in ways proper to *technicality*: if such a question can take on such a central character for cultural evaluation of modern and post-modern times, it is because we aim at the joints of a whole new organizational model for exploitation of historical experience, including the presence of instrumentality as a guarantee by which modern Media could claim their fair place in the cultural universe of our times.

Being characteristic of a way of experiencing history that is marked by the abolition of distances and the extreme exercise of instrumental rationality, the world of reproductive technologies will emerge at the confluence of the discussions on

the ultimate character of modern cultural and social experiences. We recognize on the basis of the most recurring themes of this discourse the notion that Media constitute a factor of such an original order in its historical emergence that the discussion on various aspects of their cultural validity calls for the theories to develop a set of values framework of a new kind: in other words, the critical assessment of the relationship between modernity and the processes of social mediatization requires from social sciences a new set of values from which to exercise these critical considerations on the centrality of mass Media in the cultural fabric of contemporaneity.

In that context, we evaluate the privileged figure of cultural criticism of the Media: from one side, it is directed against the connections between art, technology, and instrumental rationality (especially the letter of the social philosophy of Frankfurt School, with Adorno, but also in certain texts of late stage of Heidegger's thought); on the other hand – which seems to be the opposite sign of this thesis – it comes with an adventitious announcement of the experiential modalities unveiled from a non-traumatic look at this same predominance of technical engineering in cultural production in late capitalism (the examples here come from Walter Benjamin's views on the most obvious signs of historical experiences of modernity). Notwithstanding the apparent distance between these positions, there is a survival in both of them of the implication of an aesthetic core within a certain status of “artistry” (or a “poetic principle”) that would lead the way to qualify the cultural experience as a whole. Therefore, it is about the axis offered by this artistically derivative character of aesthetic phenomena that we might examine how these positions differentiate themselves as regards to the massive presence of technical rationality in the field of cultural production.

Firstly evoked from the finding of a predominance of mass Media standards of circulation of cultural goods nowadays, this biased analysis favours an aesthetic accent for theories of Communication that is defined by an evaluative discrimination of this state of affairs, most especially in the face of a need to set

for the universe of modern Media culture a place that does not mix this products with the most noble and elevated objects of artistic tradition, for example. In good measure, we could say that this *aesthetic accent* of approaches in theories of Communication comes certainly from a preference for the system of values that permeates the second argument, the one about a *positive axiology* for evaluating the products of Media culture: once faced with the free convenience within which Marshall McLuhan's writings will later weave the inevitable correlation between the entire realm of culture and the world of "technical extensions", it seems finally prefigured the scenario in which the aesthetic questions about Communication will install its own (and franker) theoretical platform.

Accordingly, the aesthetic bias that seemed to prevail in our field of study is often confused with certain considerations about the realm of technology and with the proper role it plays in the reconstruction of a whole cultural fabric, not only from the point of view of the "materialities of Communications", but also from the values implied by such predominance of the "technical extension" (especially in the ways by which they restructure the very meaning we attach to the cultural experience in a whole). If any lesson could be drawn from all this route (born from the Frankfurtian reservations and finally reaching a McLuhanian "gay prophetism") is that our culture is crossed by a predominance of technical instrumentality, not only associated to *ways of doing things*, but also and especially to those *regimes of being and appearing*.

However, this implicit *praise of the technique* can lead to a seizure of misconceptions as to the real place of genuinely aesthetic questions within this discursive complex of the theories of Communication: the fact that the cultural relevance of Media may be restored to a lineage of technologies and materialities does not mean that the aesthetic question should be necessarily retained at a mere contemplation of these relationships between the historical dimension of modernity and the constitution of the Media as privileged "mediation devices" of social experience in contemporary culture. In short, the statement made on technologically determined aspects of cultural experience are

not, by virtue of necessity, the minimum threshold of the aesthetic orientation that can foster the inspection on processes and phenomena of Communication.

In the background of these relationships between aesthetics and Communication, one must consider the need for a more longitudinal questioning about the origin and nature of the basic patterns of the sharing of meaningfulness of these products (either in semantic or aesthesiological terms), as well as on the role played by their respective horizons of expectations (which are also distributed in human communities): one might say that each of these aspects sets the discursive space that is proper to certain disciplines - such as the theories of meaning and interpretation, but also to certain aspects of contemporary philosophical reflection – all of which are necessarily preliminary (and even transcendent) to proper technical aspects of the constitution of mediated Communication. From the point of view of an aesthetic discourse on Communication theories, we must start from the recognition that the social fabric of contemporary culture consummated this constitutive aspect of technologies in our communal experience: but in the closure that aesthetic theories could offer for such a diagnosis (and for the sake of a question about the uniquely aesthetic basis of this order of things), we must promote a progressive silencing for this “questions of the technique” that runs pervasively within our scientific field.

What does afford aesthetic dimension to Communication phenomena?

There is a particular aspect of the focus on this technically determined dimension of Media phenomena that draws our attention in what respects the aesthetic approach of theories of Communication: it is the fact that the aesthetic character of the Communication processes is often confused with the “artistic” qualification thereof. Not incidentally, this symptom of theoretical discourses on Modernity reflects a misunderstanding of the very location of the aesthetic disciplines, with regards to the universe

of the arts: for this very reason, in the evaluation of the impact of arguments (as those of Benjamin on the fate of art in time of technical reproducibility), many might have there glimpsed a kind of safe-conduct for the admission of Media products along the lines of “works of art”; this aspect could not be further from Benjaminian ideas, and suffice it to examine this little passage in his famous essay on the crisis of the aura, to give account on what is at stake in this very discussion:

Within major historical periods, along with changes in the overall mode of being of the human collective, there are also changes in the manner of its sense perception. The manner in which sense perception is organized, the medium in which it occurs, is dictated not only naturally but also historically. The time of the migration of peoples, in which the late-Roman art industry and the Vienna Genesis came into being, had not only a different art from the Ancient World but also a different perception (BENJAMIN, 2008, p.8).

Here, we prefer to address the traditional relations between “aesthetic” and “artistry”, by means of a foundation of artistic phenomena that might be designate as of their “sources”: according to certain traditions of reflection on the aesthetic basis of works of art, it is not their *reality* that matters (either that of *material manifestation* of arts to the senses, or the one through which one restores its origin, as of a “productive” or “artistic” character); instead, such a determined feature of artworks must be brought by a certain genealogy of its *modalities of appearing*. Our question is directed to the structure in which the works are always presented as “prefigured” for the horizons of reception and sensitivity: it is in a *plastically binding* order of the artwork that one might find what is the core of a specifically aesthetic question.

Let us treat each of those issues, departing from an immanent examination of the universes of Media Communications: for instance, the photojournalistic iconography of events throws us frequently within a sense of playful dimension of the visual witnessing that is recorded within each of their images; this is particularly noticeable in the ways through which images always imply the beholder’s glance scouring the event in its various

dimensions – the verge of a dramatic split in action and conflict pictures; the natural and architectural ruins retrospect events and disasters, giving them an air of sublimity; the suffering that is a part of the meaningful faces that stare at us, charging the reception with an emotional dimension of sympathy. Beneath all canons of a photojournalistic visual discourse, one identifies the survival of a constitutive relationship of these images with the affective and sensory collection of receptivity, which drives all the time relations that these images propose with the pretensions of photojournalism for mediating “actuality”, “historicity” and “direct witnessing”.

As regards the *primacy of experience* in relation to the artistic objects, the lesson brought by thinkers such as John Dewey and Luigi Pareyson is that the “artistry” of artworks corresponds to “formative” criteria not originated in the activity of its creation, but in a particular relationship with the philosophical idea of “experience”: in the case of Pareyson, this is the status issue given to the interpretation of artworks, conceived of as processes of “formativeness” – i.e., the fact that the evaluation of works, far from being mere resumption of a program in its “poetic” origin, is truly its own “execution”, something ordering from the beholder his frequent repositioning of the artwork against the dynamic horizon of his experiential perspective.

That is not to believe that the execution is a fact with regard to specific art forms, more than to others. Even if it is better focus willingly to cases such as of music and theatre, it is worth remembering the case of poetry, which can be performed by reciter or speaker. One should also not think that if in this respect there is no difference between the arts which are assigned to a conventional writing and those in which the work is fully present in its physical signs, such as if the first case required execution, whereas the others only asked for the vision (PAREYSON, 1960, p.189).

In Dewey’s case, it is the “quality” of experience that evokes its necessarily aesthetic dimension, as a fundamental trait of the very definition of experience: it is the sense of “unity” of eventfulness that gives the experience its most special core, being its quality of the order of a “feeling” or a “sensation”, for it

is a receptive sensitivity than is required in the apprehension of such unity; either when we conclude an argument (operating the symbols and signs of its achievement), or when we appreciate a work of art (covering the materials that it is made of), it is this receptiveness that effectuates the sense of unity by which we realize or think about such things.

A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution; a game is played through; a situation, whether that of eating a meal, playing a game of chess, carrying on a conversation, writing a book, or taking part in a political campaign, is so rounded out that its close is a consummation and not a cessation. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience (DEWEY, 1934, p.35).

In such a context, it is remarkable how this conceptual turn made upon the inclusion of works by the experience bias implies a relationship between this new meaning of the very concept of “aesthetic”, with the new understandings attributed to authors and philosophical traditions of the past. Accordingly, one of the axis running through the research involved here comprises a kind of *critical genealogy* of the traditional concepts of aesthetic theories: very specially, it implies the ways in which the issue of Communication is thus manifested as supposedly inherent in the several orders of effectiveness one could claim to artworks. We would like to specify a little more this series of problems, departing from the correlation between the *sensitive dimension* of the experience of Communication and its implication for the idea of a necessary *evaluative sharing* of the experience of the objects of our field.

However, from the standpoint of traditional aesthetic categories, one of these questions is of course the status of “taste”, far beyond its purely axiological dimension of its expression and public argumentation. Let us consider whatever might have led Umberto Eco to develop this theme of the positivity of “bad taste”, defined as a criterion of the experience of certain products of Media culture (ECO, 1962): the bias we favour here is one that identifies the potentially communicative character of sensibility as

the foundation under which one might sustain the effectiveness of categories such as those of the “Kitsch” and “Midcult”, defined as central to the assessment and socially justified judgment of Media culture. Accordingly, what must be considered in the light of an aesthetic approach to this cultural universe is not so much the conceptually predetermined value of critical judgments that can be attributed to them, but precisely the *sensory* and *affective* regimes (and their collective and virtually communicable basis) that come into play, as constitutive of symbolic efficacy of these very products.

Instead of an *axiology*, hereby assumed as an aesthetic departing point, it is the case for us to return to the connection between the *semiotic structure* of these products (not just their “program of effectiveness”, but also their “systems of meaningfulness”) and also their aspect of perceptive link of their expressive manifestation. It is therefore necessary to remove from a possible “aesthetics of Communications” the historical implications that our field of research had constructed with a purely judgmental character of the analysis and critique of contemporary cultural universe: instead, one must introduce in such a context the emotional and sensorial foundations upon which the shared sense of taste judgments about these events is erected.

As for the “standards of mediatization” characterizing the ways under which Communication weaves the contemporary regimes of sociability, the examination of some aesthetic dimension of such phenomena requires some distancing with respect to the sign in which the relationship between Communication and sociability was usually built: in these terms, although considering the ways in which the sensitive appearance of sociability is trafficked by the logic of technical and Media devices, the place of an aesthetic approach towards Communication is not fully assimilated to this purely exceptional recording of merely “sensible strategies” (MUNIZ SODRÉ, 2006).

In the process of mediatization described by [Muniz] Sodré, there is no place for aesthetic experience, since it is lowered to the condition of widespread aesthesis or exacerbated sensuousness. Such characterization

strongly echoes the thesis of Debord: the misleading character of sensible appearances, the annulment of the subject (in which the more one includes for contemplation, the less is being), separated from truth, dislodged the world the spectacle that is everywhere (LEAL; MENDONÇA; GUIMARÃES 2010, p.13).

Assuming that Media processes carry with them an even firmer dimension to the aesthetic approaches of analysis, we cannot be restricted to the notion that the mediatization is in itself a phenomenon of a poetic origin: this means that its own foundation is not identified with the orders of productive strategies characterizing their actual genesis, but in the *relational character* that is constitutive of any conceivable acts of *poiesis*. If the aesthetic dimension of Media is not derived from their productive order, once recognized as a dominant pattern of contemporary sociability, therefore this dimension should be examined in its necessarily *interactional* character, one in which the skills and the competences and capacities of beholders are played from the start in the very center of this process.

Affects, esthesiology and the shared character of sensibility

From now on, we are not worried with a recap of the most distant conceptual sources of aesthetic theories discursivity, at least in that aspect of a mainly philosophical topic. At the moment, what concerns us is the return of more specific matrices in which this particular theoretical brand cut out the core of the phenomena in Communication studies: that is where the relevance in which issues of “Communication” and “aesthetic experience” manifests itself in a possible dimension of an epistemological criticism of our field of research. To vindicate the aesthetic dimension of processes and phenomena in Communications, we aim not at some dignifying quality of the problems in our field of studies, as if one could recognize in then the extension of nobler accents of these quarrels, but claiming from this very aesthetic dimensions of Communications a factor that might help us to conceive of our objects under a new kind of heuristics.

In this case, what is required from this altogether other way of apprehending the aesthetic core of Communication is, first of all, a question about what might confer an “aesthetic dimension” to whatever kind of subject (not only the Communication): in order to think about aesthetics as a part of the most particular, constitutive functions of works of art, aesthetic theories must value in the proper measure the question of artistic effectiveness in the ways in which art is designed to produce certain kinds of effects; that question is important to the extent in which the very existence of the artworks is committed to a virtualization of its very appreciation. This commitment between *artistry* and sensory *effectiveness* will mark one of the dimensions of the very origin of the work of art, precisely the one that features the imposing particular strength of their sensory qualities to the experience that they will foster as an object of appreciation.

Once we broaden these clauses of an aesthetic question made towards the theoretical study of Communications, there is something we can grasp about what does it mean to conceive of these processes and phenomena most typical to our field of study: from such a characterization of the aesthetic dimensions of Media products (and from the cues to how they might be assessed in the senses), we can finally re-examine some of the epistemological assumptions of theories of Communication. As regards the relations between the aesthetic theories and the philosophy of art, this characterization of a “sensory appeal” that constitutes artworks connects us to a very important aspect of what we might call an original experience of their “communicability”: if we consider that this experience calls for the special relationship that artworks arouse in our sensory systems and bodily pre-reflexive dispositions, we might say that this sensitivity that organizes our relation with the world – identified by Merleau-Ponty, with the Husserlian topic of a “*logos* of the aesthetic world” (MERLEAU-PONTY, 1960) – is not absolutely restricted to private subjects, but is precisely something of the order of an *intersubjective sharing*.

On the other hand, early on the beginning of his dense and critical essay on the objectual criteria for ontological questions

about the nature of artworks, philosopher Richard Wollheim warns us against the false generality of the object upon which aesthetic ponders, i.e. that of the “artwork”. If we follow this reasoning thoroughly, we shall see that there is a profound difference between considering the common points between the various descriptions of expressive genres (such as “painting”, “literature”, “theatre”, “music”) and the assumption of a theoretical power under which these various classes of events could be grouped altogether in a perspective that might preserve the aesthetic dimension of such a generality.

Those who are ready to concede that some kinds of work of art are not physical objects will yet insist that others are. *Ulysses* and *Der Rosenkavaler* may not be physical objects, but *Donna Velata* and Donatello's *Saint George* most certainly are [...] It will be clear that I am now about to embark in the [...] challenge [...] that allows that there are (some) physical objects that could conceivably be identified as works of art, but insists that it would be quite erroneous to make the identification (WOLLHEIM, 1980, p.10,11).

In Wollheim's argumentation, it is evident that the aesthetic problems have historically been built over the idea that the original activity that gives the ultimate sense underneath which one identifies the artworks with their specific qualities is that one which gives rise to the “object” in its sense of “perfection” or “closure”: in this way of thinking the defining core of the artworks, there is a double implication between the *aesthetic nature* of the work and its sense of *artistry*, so to speak. Wollheim strives to dismantle this sort of ontology of art, as being an effect of assimilating the definition of the problem of the “sensible qualities” of the artwork to the fact that it is, physically speaking, *performed with Art*.

Therefore, a first important aspect of an “aesthetics of Communications” will result from the *deflation* we might provide on the very *phylogenesis of the aesthetic object*: it is not the *artistic origin* of the works that will instantiate the sensible qualities by which we identify them as aesthetically charged events. In this case, we must delimit the range under which an aesthetic theory can be assumed with regards to strictly artistic determinations of

the artwork for the beholder's experience: to the extent that the sensible qualities of an object are not originated in his particular way of becoming, the case of artworks is not solely determined by the intentional states of the artist producing it; we recognize that this is a statement a little too strong, but its value here is of a heuristic nature, serving us not to confuse what we identify as the "aesthetic" core of the works (which is of an order of *sensibility*) with its dimension of "artistry" (evoking the practical conditionings and ontological implications of a poetic *way of making*).

The communicability of aesthetic experience and the 'return to Kant'

There is a curious fact following from these provisions of another discourse on aesthetic theories in contemporary society: the expressive signs of the passionate and sensory basis of taste (that of a communicational conception of aesthetic phenomena), once historically identified with the trademark of a certain postmodern thought, was due as well to a resumption of consecrated ideas of modern philosophy, of the late 18th century; it is therefore in the Kantian register of a theoretical resumption of the "judgments of taste" (those involving the primacy of a necessary character of the "feeling of pleasure and displeasure") that contemporary philosophy reinvents itself, through the themes of a theory of sensitivity, as gestated in a given sense of an intersubjective sharing of the senses.

It is in such precise context that the problem of judgments of taste is born to an aesthetic theory, in the necessary confluence with the notion of "common sense". It's the same beat of a return to the deepest elements of Kantian critical philosophy that French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard reflects (by way of the subject of the very sense of beauty and sublime) on the importance and the necessity of the notion of *sharing*, building his aesthetic theory upon which, as a theory of sensitivity and mandatory communicability of affections. This idea of a sharing between subjects is constitutive of the very structure of thinking,

established as an internal requirement for the sense of taste, in the very acts of thought: unlike most frequent interpretations of Kant's, the "common sense" is not due to sociological or anthropological variables of determination, but from the proper logic structure of thought (in such terms Lyotard correlates pleasure and subjectivity, on the frameworks of a "tautegory" of sensations).

The interpretation to be given to this common sense has provoked much debate. I will attempt to show how its *ratio essendi* consists not in the assent that empirical individuals give one another in regard to the beauty of an object but – insofar as it makes the *a priori* feeling of aesthetic pleasure possible – in the unison in which the two 'voices' of the faculties are to be found: the 'proportionate accord' [...], 'accord' [...], 'proportion' [...], in which their 'ratio' [...] is 'best adapted' [...]. This text in particular, in which the problem of the universality of taste is posed, should be enough to discourage all sociologizing and anthropologizing readings of aesthetic common sense, although other passages of the third *Critique* seem to lend themselves to it (LYOTARD, 1994, p.18).

In Communication studies, this variety of aesthetic reflection never assumes the controversial value with which one could confront the *technophile* legacy of aesthetic theories in our field of study: well, it is precisely this connotation of the aesthetic turn that interests us in our enjoyment of such a "zurück zu Kant", which is especially manifested in the areas which take an aesthetic discourse, now as any antinomy that founds the relationship between the non-cognitive foundation of sensibility and the necessary communicability of the aesthetic taste. The most striking character of an aesthetic experience is one in which these apparent contradictions of aesthetic judgment (not endorsed by concepts, but still playing with the possible universality of its contents) resolve themselves within the issue of a *Communicational sharing*: in the bodywork of Kantian aesthetics this order of problems evokes the place of feelings and affections in the wider economy of understanding and thought; therefore, there is no possible knowledge in the refusal of a reference to the very thought, expressed in pure forms of aesthetic feelings of pleasure and displeasure.

Let us return to ‘communicability’. This demand is much more than a remarkable aspect of taste. It serves as the basis for its universal validity. The hypothesis of an aesthetic sense, common to all thought, the *sensus communis* [...] will be formed on the basis of this demand. With this demand and through the hypothesis of a *sensus communis*, the critique will discover the principle of a supersensible substrate that finalizes all thought [...]. This demand is what will permit the antinomy of the critique of taste to be debated: the antinomy states that there can be no ‘dispute’ and ‘decision’ [...] about taste, but that there can be always ‘contention’ [...] about it [...]; this, of course, has to do with the status of its universality and necessity [...]. This paradoxical coexistence is precisely what is marked analytically by the double immediacy mentioned earlier: as singular, thought is immediately affected by pleasure on the occasion of a given form; as universal, it immediately calls for the communication of its affection (LYOTARD, 1994, p.197,198).

The nature and the artworks raise this reflexive locus of our origin, this place that is not lost within the limits of a pure subjectivity, inaccessible to any Communication – precisely because it is originally “reflective”, opposite to the “determinant” character of logical judgements. There would be no exaggeration in saying that if Kantian issues seem to us so quite remote, it is otherwise clear that *Communication sharing* of affections and sensations themselves is something that characterizes the *Communicational turn* of aesthetic issues, bringing us back to these same themes as an irrefutable source for an aesthetics of Communication.

For it is precisely in such a spirit of dialogue with traditions of modern philosophy that the questions brought by Belgian philosopher Herman Parret – on the proper foundations of cooperation in the language practices – will find a specific aesthetic sediment of communicability: although his own argumentative route does not imply an exegesis of aesthetic themes in the philosophical architecture of Kant, yet this theoretical movement is born out of a rejection of sociological paradigms of communicability – especially the idea that the sense of shared sensitivity should constitute a kind of naturalization of the ontology of social life, as idealized in normative standards, as illustrated by the case of discursive ethics of Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas.

In contrast to prevailing conceptions of the foundation of social norms in human sciences – and the place exercised by linguistic Communication in this context – Parret presents us with the “small ontologies” of the “free and infinite game”, the “affective fusion”, and the “communitarian temporality”: in these terms, the social experience that consolidated itself in a historical manner hides from us, at the same time, its most important foundations, precisely those under which the passionate dimension of our bond with partners are exhibited, precisely those that expounds the lower threshold of an aesthetic dimension of social experience. In this context, he offers us the example of how Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* announced the issue of the “sense of unity” of the thought, before you even think this synthetic function as the effect of a purely intellectual determining of concepts of the understanding.

To illustrate what the mode and style of the quest for foundations involves, one can cite the paragraph 49 of the *Critique of Judgment*, will be omnipresent in this book: ‘Whenever we convey our thoughts, there are two ways (*modi*) of arranging them, and one of these is called *manner* (*modus aestheticus*), the other *method* (*modus logicus*); the difference between these two is that the first has no standard other than the *feeling* that there is a unit in the exhibition (of the thoughts), whereas the second follows in (all of) this indeterminate *principles*’. Following Kant, one can therefore reflect upon the *political* foundations of pragmatics, according to the *modus aestheticus*, as aesthete, not with method but with *manner*, as mannerist, with the good taste and tact of the aesthete (PARRET, 1997, p.24).

In conclusion, we can say: this aesthetic conception of Communication does not necessarily emerge from a definition of the either *poetic* or *artistic* foundations of the Communication subjects, for it actually implies a whole other different conception of Communication as a process or phenomenon: it is structured in a kind of *fusional game*, of a particular temporality in the virtual *infinity* of own social experience, that should however be aperted from the features that this game assumes, within a strictly instrumental rationality or finality; it contributes to the foundations of the very structure of our knowledge but should not be confused with the deterministic result of a causal or scientific rationality.

Interestingly enough, these questions about the aesthetic dimension of Communication processes emerge not only in the debates of contemporary branches of the philosophical pragmatics of discourse, but rather by a resumption of Kant's third *Critique* (as well as in Peirce's talking about abductive rationality in science); it is Kant that has relocated the problems of his most extensive philosophical architecture (his project of a critical philosophy of all possible knowledge) and that will dwell on the judgments about artistic and natural beauty and organic feeling, to find a kind of aesthetic resumption of the thought about itself, about the feeling of pleasure and displeasure that is prior to all legislation and determination by the neat categories of knowledge.

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