

Introduction

Apropos the origin of the *beautiful* and the *ugly*. Humankind's oldest experience has proven that what *repels* us instinctually, i.e. aesthetically, is harmful, dangerous, and worthy of suspicion. The aesthetic instinct, suddenly become articulate (for instance, in revulsion), contains a *judgment*. The *beautiful* is thus grounded in the general category of the biological values of what is useful, beneficent, life-enhancing; but in such a way that an abundance of stimuli only remotely reminiscent of useful things and states gives us the feeling of the beautiful, i.e., of an increased feeling of power . . .

Thus the beautiful and the ugly are recognized as *dependent upon* our most basic *values of self-preservation*: it is meaningless to posit anything like beauty and ugliness apart from this. *The beautiful* exists as little as *the good, the true*.

XII, 554 / *The Will to Power*, 804

To say: The good and the beautiful are one, is a disgrace for a philosopher: If he adds: "the true as well," one ought to thrash him. The truth is ugly: *we have art* so we don't perish of the truth.

XIII, 500 / *The Will to Power*, 822

Apropos the genesis of art. The making perfect, seeing as perfect typical of the cerebral system overcharged with sexual energy . . . on the other hand, every *perfection* and *beauty* providing an unconscious reminder of that enamoured condition and of its manner of seeing – every perfection, all the *beauty* of things reawakens through contiguity [*durch contiguity*] the aphrodisiac bliss. *Physiologically*: the creative instinct of the artist and the spreading of semen through the blood . . . [*sic*] *The craving for art and beauty* is an indirect craving for the ecstasies of the sexual instinct, as it communicates itself to the cerebrum. *The world become perfect* through "love."

XII, 325–26 / *The Will to Power*, 805*

The following narrative explores a single Nietzschean theme that is best introduced in the philosopher's own words. It is about our traditionally "ascetic" misconception of beauty, which Nietzsche blamed on the "diabolization of Eros,"¹ sex, sensuality, sensuousness. That happened when

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Christianity “fed Eros poison,”² and earlier in Plato who, via a general transvaluation of values, reversed the pagan concept of reality.³

Nietzsche planned to trace this genealogy of ascetic beauty in greater detail at some point. Several times he speaks of a chapter on the hitherto unexplained physiology of aesthetics and/or art⁴ that was to form part of his major work, *The Will to Power*. Art which he hoped “to discuss more fully at another time,” he writes in *The Genealogy of Morals*, was “far more radically opposed to the ascetic ideal than . . . science.” Plato, “the greatest enemy of art Europe has thus far produced . . . felt this instinctively: . . . Plato vs. Homer: here we have the whole, authentic antagonism; on the one hand the deliberate transcendentalist and detractor of life, on the other, life’s involuntary panegyrist.”⁵

Nietzsche repeatedly returned to these plans. He draws up tables of content where the “Physiology of Art” appears, now under the subsection “The Criterion of Truth,”⁶ then under “The Battle Over Values.”⁷ He collects notes under titles like “Aesthetics,” *Aesthetica*,⁸ or, “The Counter-Movement: Art.”⁹ He attempts an eighteen-point summary towards the physiology of art,¹⁰ or gives a brief, preliminary account of how aesthetics is indissolubly tied to “biological presuppositions”: “there is an aesthetics of *decadence*, and there is a *classical* aesthetics – the ‘beautiful in itself’ is a figment of the imagination, like all idealism.”¹¹

Nietzsche even sketched some of the major stages of the genealogy of ascetic beauty from Plato through St. Paul, Augustine, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Kant to his own lifetime. Here Plato once again is the key figure, and in a triple sense. It is Plato who destroys paganism by transvaluating its values; it is Plato who thereby creates the moral ground on which Christianity alone could prevail;¹² and once more it is Plato who provides the “great intermediary bridge of corruption [*die große Zwischenbrücke der Verderbnis*]”¹³ leading from one to the other, somehow enabling even the erudite and well-to-do to embrace Christianity. “In the great fatality of Christianity, Plato provided that ambiguity and fascination called ‘the Ideal,’ which allowed the nobler natures of antiquity to misjudge themselves and step onto the *bridge* that lead to the ‘Cross.’”¹⁴

The pathway from Plato to Christianity leads through figures like St. Paul, with his unconscious Platonism,¹⁵ and, above all, through Augustine, with his explicit, yet “vulgarized Platonism . . . dressed up for slave types.”¹⁶ It was due to men like these, then, that Greek and Roman antiquity, before succumbing to foreign invaders, was corrupted, demoralized, and brought down from the inside. Not struck down, “but debased and destroyed by cunning, secretive, invisible, bloodless vampires! Not defeated, – only sucked dry! . . . [*sic*] Hidden vindictiveness, petty

envy become *master* . . . To realize, to *smell*, what unsavoury fellows had therewith come out on top, one only has to read any of the Christian agitators, for instance, St. Augustine.¹⁷

As we know, Nietzsche neither completed *The Will to Power*, nor ever wrote the physiology of art or aesthetics that was to form part of it, and his scattered notes regarding a post-Platonic genealogy of aesthetics remain even sketchier than the above. In his view, Platonism, via Augustine, lead in a straight line to the Middle Ages and beyond. Its “contempt for the body, for beauty, etc. . . is a prelude to the Middle Ages.”¹⁸ Following these comes a brief reemergence of the pagan ideal in the Renaissance, as, for instance, in Montaigne and his “best reader”¹⁹ Shakespeare, who adopted the French philosopher’s nonconformism²⁰ and explored the Christian diabolization of Eros in his sonnets.²¹ But due to Luther and the Reformation it all came to nothing. “The Renaissance – an episode without sense, a great *in vain!*”²² The Enlightenment’s thrust toward a reversal of the originary Platonic–Christian transvaluation of values suffered a similar fate at the hands of Kant and his followers – Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, even Schopenhauer – all secularized latter-day ascetic priests in disguise, all semiconscious counterfeiters (“*unbewußte Falschmünzer*”), “all mere veil-makers [*Schleiermacher*]”²³ like the theologian of that name.

Most of Nietzsche’s diatribes here focus on the author of the *Critique of Judgment*, and particularly on his doctrine of disinterested pleasure. At the same time, Kant serves Nietzsche as a touchstone for developing his own physiological aesthetics: Kant, the philosopher crippled by and idolizing his abstruse jargon;²⁴ Kant, who, via his “dangerous old, conceptual confabulations”²⁵ and his “back door philosophy”²⁶ sent everyone after him crawling along “the secret path [back] to the old ideal [*Schleichweg zum alten Ideal*]”;²⁷ Kant who, “as it turned out,” was a “deceitful Christian in the end.”²⁸

Kant’s aesthetics of “disinterested contemplation,”²⁹ to Nietzsche, is an absurdity ultimately rooted in Plato’s puritanical condemnation of art. At best, Nietzsche might grant that the beautiful, if considered historically, is an expression of what is worthy of veneration, of what is apparent in the most revered persons of a given time.³⁰ Otherwise, it strikes him as self-evident that “an interest connects [us] with the beautiful which pleases [us],” even though this may not always be immediately apparent. “The expression of happiness, perfection, quiet, even the silence of the work of art, its willing submission to our judgment – it all talks to our instincts [*Trieben*].”³¹ No wonder Nietzsche found that, since Kant, “all talk about art, beauty, understanding, wisdom [has been] made a mess of [*vermanscht*] and besmudged [*beschmutzt*] by the notion ‘without interest.’”³²

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Paradoxically, an extreme case of such confused aesthetic thinking in the wake of Kant, to Nietzsche, is the *l'art pour l'art* doctrine. For did not its adherents try to banish the kind of moralizing that caused Plato to corrupt philosophy and to condemn art? Even so, *l'art pour l'art* continues, and in a way reinforces, the post-Platonic denaturalization of aesthetics and art. Ultimately, it was analogous to the doctrine of morality for the sake of morality, an important step in that transvaluation of pagan values evident, as we shall see, in Plato's redefinition of *sophrosyne* or self-control as *sophrosyne* for its own sake.³³ Art for the sake of art, like its trinitarian analogues, to him, is merely one of "three forms of the *evil eye* for the real," which by detaching an ideal from it, pushes down, impoverishes and bad-mouths the real.³⁴ In other words, there is no real art "without 'affect,' without 'purpose,' without extra-aesthetic needs . . . 'To mirror,' 'to imitate': alright, but how? all art praises, glorifies, extrapolates, transfigures – it strengthens certain valuations."³⁵

In sum, Nietzsche, to speak with Montaigne, tried to "naturalize art" where others "artificially nature";³⁶ or, as he put it himself, attempted to rescue aesthetics from its post-Platonic denaturalization (*Entnatürlichung*)³⁷ by renaturalizing (*vernaturlichen*) it.³⁸ Was he successful? Understandably Nietzsche occasionally wondered so himself. Considering the triumphant revival of the ascetic ideal in the wake of Kant,³⁹ his answers were predominantly pessimistic. Even more discouraging to him was the popularity of Richard Wagner, most sublime advocate in later times of a new kind of "counterfeit transcendence" flattering "everything Christian, every religious expression of decadence."⁴⁰

Wagner, along with others like Augustine and Kant before him, is one of the figures in whom the turn toward the ascetic ideal unfolded within a lifetime. Mindful of how Nietzsche had celebrated the composer's seemingly Dionysian art in *The Birth of Tragedy*, he recalls how enthusiastically the young Wagner had walked in the footsteps of the Feuerbach advocating a return to a "healthy sensuality." "Did he eventually *relearn* his lesson about that? [*darüber umgelernt*] . . . Did the hatred of life become master in him?" Nietzsche's answer is an empathic yes. "For *Parsifal* is a work of malice, of vindictiveness, of a secret brewing of poison against the essentials of life . . . Richard Wagner, seemingly the most victorious one, but in truth a desperate decadent gone rotten, suddenly, helpless and shattered, broke down before the Christian cross."⁴¹

Since it involved the greatest disillusionment in Nietzsche's life, the case of Wagner more than all else sharpened his sense of the formidable powers of the ascetic ideal, especially in its secular disguises – "all the idealistic deceitfulness [*Lügnerei*] and weakening of conscience"⁴² – as it defeats the most courageous. For all that, his response to Wagner's music

was strictly physiological. It would not let him breathe easily, as he put it; it caused his foot to get angry and revolt against it: his foot that was in need of rhythm, dance, marching. “Or my stomach, my heart, my blood flow? Don’t they all protest as well?”⁴³ What, in short, was aesthetics other than “applied physiology”?⁴⁴

True art, unlike Wagner’s, then, is the “great stimulus of and toward life.”⁴⁵ As such, it is our quintessential “metaphysical activity,” the “proper task of life.”⁴⁶ All art impacts “the muscles and senses . . . it talks . . . to the delicate excitability of the body.”⁴⁷ The beautiful inflames our “feeling of sensual delight [*Lustgefühl*].”⁴⁸ Art, above all, appeals to our “animal vigour.” On the one hand, it constitutes “an excess and overflowing of blossoming corporality into the world of images and desires,” on the other, it provides a “stimulation of the animal function through images and desires of intensified life.”⁴⁹ What he needed personally, wrote Nietzsche, was the kind of music to deify “the animal life” in him, “to make it triumph, to make [him] want to dance.”⁵⁰ Art generally had to appeal to the sensual instincts,⁵¹ including the urge to eat, even one’s penchant towards frenzy [*Rausch*] and cruelty. Rather than a zombie-like state of disinterested contemplation, the “*aesthetic disposition*” is a “a blend of . . . very delicate shades of animal delights [*Wohlgefühlen*] and appetencies [*Begierden*].”⁵²

This is not to say that our experience of the beautiful remains limited to such animalistic impulses. Viewed from an either phylo- or ontogenetic perspective, “the most habitual beauty affirmations,” after a while, “*mutually stimulate and incite each other*. Once the aesthetic drive [*Trieb*] is at work, a host of other perfections, originating from elsewhere, crystallize around the ‘particular instance of beauty.’” However, what Plato radicalized into an antisensualist idealization of beauty should be seen as only a partial spiritualization grounded in physiological necessities, “in such a way that an abundance of stimuli only remotely reminiscent of useful things and states gives us the feeling of the beautiful, i.e., of an increase of the feeling of power.” In sum, our aesthetic sense is “grounded in the general category of the biological values of what is useful, beneficent, life-enhancing.”⁵³

Nietzsche repeatedly traces our culturally refined sense of beauty to more primordial responses which we continue to share with primitive forms of life, just as, in line with present-day evolutionary epistemology, he traces human cognition to an originary “‘positing as equal,’ or, earlier still, a ‘making equal’” analogous to the “‘incorporation of appropriated materials into the amoeba.’”⁵⁴ The sense of the beautiful, especially as formed in contrast to the ugly, revolting, or disgusting, goes back to a similarly instinct-driven, and eventually innate or rather inherited (*angebort*)⁵⁵

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creatureliness, that originally has nothing to do with anything specifically human, let alone rational. Like the contrast between “good and evil,” that between “beautiful and ugly” thus “reveal[s] certain conditions of existence and enhancement, not only of man but of any kind of firm and enduring complex which separates itself from its adversary.”⁵⁶ Here the sense of the repugnant, derived from what may, for instance, have proven to be nutritiously noxious or poisonous, probably was the evolutionarily more originary, more sharply contoured, because stronger sense, just as pain is potentially stronger than pleasure.

Nietzsche suggests that much in his note “Apropos the origin of the *beautiful* and *ugly*,” arguing that man’s “oldest experience has proven that what *repels* us instinctually, [i.e.] aesthetically, is harmful, dangerous, and worthy of suspicion.” Similarly, our feeling for the beautiful originally functions within “the general category of the biological values of what is . . . life-enhancing.”⁵⁷ Even at the most culturally refined and hence *learned*, “the beautiful and the ugly are recognized as *dependent upon* our most fundamental *values of self-preservation*.”⁵⁸ What is more, they are, for the greater part, biologically innate. Neither authority nor instruction will teach children that a certain melody is beautiful. Contrary to Locke and Kant, such valuations, to Nietzsche, were innate in the sense of being biologically or, as we would now say, genetically inherited. At the same time, he by no means failed to acknowledge the educational or learning processes that might help trigger certain, as the now fashionable term goes, “hardwired” affects. Thus our genetically endowed “affect-programs”⁵⁹ can unfold more easily when the persons who love and care for children, are in tune with their charges’ naturally endowed propensities.⁶⁰

A cautionary remark is called for at this point. Though Nietzschean in orientation, this study is intended neither as a novel summary of the philosopher’s aesthetics,⁶¹ nor as a reconstruction of what he may have thought about, say, Plato’s or Kant’s aesthetics in detail. Given the scarcity of such comments, most of which have been referred to already, an endeavor of the kind would be presumptuous and ill-conceived. What is more, several of the authors, with their either ascetic or alternatively anti-ascetic, even proto-Nietzschean agendas dealt with below, were barely discussed by Nietzsche in an aesthetic context (e.g., Augustine, Erigena, Boethius, Aquinas, Hegel versus Aretino, Montaigne, Hobbes, Mandeville) or, for whatever reasons, not mentioned by him at all (e.g., Ficino, Shaftesbury versus Aretino, Burke, Erasmus Darwin, Marx–Engels).

Nor does this study make an attempt to define matters such as art versus nature and beauty *vis-à-vis* sublimity, or to streamline the theorizing of

others according to traditional categories like the mimetic, the expressive, the formal, or the “naturalistic.”⁶² To have done so simply would have duplicated arguments already made elsewhere, that is, been tantamount to demonstrating that even, say, expressive and naturalistic aestheticians either explicitly embrace, tacitly endorse, or leave uncriticized the various ascetic and neo-ascetic agendas under attack here. Thus Coleridgean expressive theorizing, for example, goes back to an aesthetician who insisted on the unbridgeable “chasm” separating our aesthetic senses of sight and hearing from the nonaesthetic or “lower” ones of “feeling, smell, and taste.”⁶³ Similarly, a naturalistic aesthetics *à la* Zola, in making art subservient to scientific truth, remains caught in a new variant of the ascetic ideal which Nietzsche, for one, attacked both in general⁶⁴ and in the novelist himself.⁶⁵ Zola’s 1880 manifesto *The Experimental Novel* certainly bears out Nietzsche’s verdict. Here Zola describes the “experimental novelist” as one “who points out in man and in society the mechanism of the phenomena over which science is mistress”; or he defines “the experimental method in letters, as in the sciences” as “the way to explain the natural phenomena, both individual and social, of which metaphysics, until now, has given only irrational and supernatural explanations.”⁶⁶ Is not this belief in science precisely what Nietzsche, in spite of Zola’s protests to the contrary, describes as an essentially metaphysical faith? “Even we students of today, who are atheists and anti-metaphysicians,” as he puts it, “light our torches at the flame of a millennial faith: the Christian faith, which was also the faith of Plato, that God is truth, and truth divine.”⁶⁷

Nietzsche’s words incidentally serve as a warning against slotting his physiology of aesthetics in with a simple-minded naturalism, as well as against associating him, or worse, holding him responsible for, the strongly antiscientific bias of twentieth-century continental philosophy to this day. Such sentiments became fashionable ever since first Husserl and then Heidegger proposed to “bracket” the physical and/or scientific picture of the world as obstacles toward their, as they thought, more appropriate understanding of reality in terms of either Husserl’s neotranscendentalist phenomenology or Heidegger’s unprecedented megatranscendentalism.⁶⁸ Nietzsche himself was neither inclined toward such “bracketing” nor opposed to science as such. For it is one thing to take certain scientists or artists to task for their semireligious idolatry of a nonexistent absolute, scientific truth, which Nietzsche did; but it is quite another to impute such simple-mindedness to scientists and science at large, which he did not; and it is yet another thing, even more alien to Nietzsche, to scream scientism or reduction whenever science-inspired philosophical hypotheses threaten one’s Christian or transcendentalist beliefs, a marked habit with Heidegger, Derrida, and their followers.

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Another caveat, as what not to look for in the following chapters, is called for at this point. What is attempted in them, and especially in those on Plato, Augustine, Ficino, Shaftesbury, Kant, Marx–Engels, Heidegger, and Derrida, is a radically antitraditional or at least innovative rereading of these authors’ aesthetics in the context of their philosophies as a whole. Polemical as it is and tries to be, my argument, so as not to risk being dismissed as dogmatic out of hand, has had to be articulated in the respective authors’ own terminologies, ways of reasoning, and general systems. Hence, the detailed and sometimes nit-picking analyses (as of Heidegger’s and/or Derrida’s readings of Nietzsche and Plato or of Lyotard’s misappropriation of Kant), and the length of the book as it stands.

To engage in dialogues with academic aestheticians would only have further increased that bulk, while adding little to what is articulated in my discussions of the major authors I deal with. Now as much as since the early eighteenth century, when aesthetics emerged as a new cultural industry, there are several such eminent theorists, some of whom I have benefited from even where it is not so acknowledged in the notes.⁶⁹ Rather than to A. C. Danto,⁷⁰ J. Margolis,⁷¹ M. Mothersill,⁷² R. Scruton,⁷³ and F. N. Sibley⁷⁴ with their largely neoconservative agendas, let us briefly turn to three more controversial theorists, E. H. J. Gombrich, N. Goodman, and G. Dickie as our examples.

Among these, Gombrich and Goodman share a strongly intellectual sense of both artistic creativity and aesthetic appreciation. Gombrich, prompted by Popper’s theory of science as a deductive process of conjecture and falsification,⁷⁵ argues that art functions via similar stages of “schema and correction.”⁷⁶ Thus both artistic creation and the appreciation of art essentially encode and/or decode symbols.⁷⁷ Similarly, aesthetic vision, both creatively and receptively, to Nelson Goodman is a cognizing “interpretation” of reality. Art does not mirror an object, but provides a “version or construal of the object”⁷⁸ by encoding it within a structure of symbolic denotations with semantic and syntactic properties.

To argue that such an understanding of art and aesthetics remains caught in a one-sided intellectualization of both is not to minimize the complexity of either Gombrich’s or Goodman’s insights, to which I can hardly do justice here. However, what this bias fails to address, let alone to do justice to, is what in Nietzsche’s and this author’s view constitutes the emotional, instinctual, or genetically innate predispositions around which such more ethereal aspects of the aesthetic sense tend to accrue. Taking issue with Gombrich’s and especially Goodman’s aesthetic theorizing, Diana Raffman points to the new body of data provided by cognitive science. Thus, some of our core aesthetic responses, for instance, to

“the shapes, colours, pitches, and timbers of objects” may be “informationally encapsulated,” that is “largely impermeable to the influence of cognitive systems like belief, memory, and decision making.”⁷⁹ Moreover, our listening to or viewing of art works is neurobiologically compartmentalized. Thus it has been shown how different perspectives in the seeing, understanding, and appreciating (or evaluating) of, for instance, a painting or kinetic sculpture are domain specifically empowered by clearly circumscribed brain modules so that lesions to, say, V4 (which codes for color) and/or V5 (which codes for motion) impair or extinguish the aesthetic appreciation of color and/or motion, while leaving all other aesthetic propensities intact. Neurobiologically, as Semir Zeki puts it, “there is not one visual aesthetic sense but many, each one tied to the activity of a functionally specialized processing system” in the visual brain.⁸⁰ This “modularity of visual aesthetics” becomes even more compartmentalized *vis-à-vis* portrait painting, whose full appreciation depends on at least two further, separately functioning brain features, one responsible for recognizing familiar faces or faces as such, the other for perceiving the expression on a face.⁸¹

Traditional aestheticians’ lack of concern for such nonrational propensities, curiously enough, may have resulted in an overintellectualization of art itself. The obvious failure of Schoenberg’s twelve-tone music to secure large audiences is a possible case in point here. According to experimental studies of the existence of a genetically endowed universal grammar of music, this failure may have to do with the fact that such music violates our “instinctually,” that is, innately programmed aesthetic inclinations⁸² – which does not mean that twelve-tone music is bad, let alone uninteresting music: given our progressive overintellectualization as human beings, it could speak to us precisely because it flouts these basic emotional propensities. Should it founder on these propensities, however, then large parts of modern music may come to fulfil Hegel’s prophecy of the end of art, though ironically for reasons which are the exact reverse of those proposed by the philosopher. Thus more recent music and art in general⁸³ may spell out an end of art, not because they are, as Hegel thought, unavoidably “infected by the immediate sensuous element”⁸⁴ and hence of no further use in their essential task of “bringing to utterance the Divine Nature,”⁸⁵ but, on the contrary, because art itself has finally been contaminated by a denaturalized art theory propounded by philosophers from Plato through Augustine, Kant, and Hegel to the present.

This brings us to George Dickie’s “artworld,” a concept he borrowed from Arthur Danto. “A work of art,” he defines, “is an artefact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public.”⁸⁶ What does such a definition, or even its fourfold enlargement, separately defining “artist,”

“public,” “artworld,” and “artworld system,”⁸⁷ amount to? If “artworld public” stands for the status quo conglomerate of old time misconceived aesthetics, snobbery, and speculative art collecting, as in large part it does, might one not argue with greater plausibility that a great artist often creates a work of art, not as something to be presented to the artworld, but rather as one that deliberately ignores, offends and sometimes reverses the standards of that artworld? What, after all, does the definition of any given word like Dickie’s “artworld” suggest to us except the need to further define each of its words, then proceed in the same manner with the words in the subdefinitions until, by exhausting the dictionary, we come back to the original word?⁸⁸ Otherwise, we all use or imply working definitions of concepts to be falsified by factual evidence or invalidated by the unpersuasive role they play in an overall argument. Anything else like a free-standing definition such as “art or beauty is,” even if conceived in strictly heuristic terms, seems to me ill-conceived, at least for now. Recent evolutionary, environmental, and neurological reassessments of aesthetics, of which more in my afterword below, have revealed just about enough to make us realize that we need to know a great deal more before making such attempts. The same, as this book tries to document, is true of traditional aesthetic theorizing starting with Plato and continuing to this day. For if Nietzsche is correct, then that traditionally denaturalized understanding of art and beauty has to be subjected to a complex process of renaturalization before such definitions might become possible. I stress the word *complex*, for such a renaturalization will not work by simple reversal, as sometimes erroneously attributed to Nietzsche. Neither will it work via a Heideggerian *Destruktion* or Derridean deconstruction which, as we shall see in detail later, have only led to a revival of the ascetic ideal. Nietzsche himself speaks of a general shifting of the ground (*Grundverschiebung*)⁸⁹ or of processes of relearning (*Umlernen*)⁹⁰ or backward translation (*zurückübersetzen*).⁹¹ How such practices might have to be implemented in detail would be the task, not of this, but of a future study.

The ongoing overintellectualization of aesthetic issues which I spoke of is the more surprising since talk about a reevaluation of the body, sensuality, and sex has become a by now hackneyed fad propagated by self-help gurus, psychologists, feminists, philosophers, and even aestheticians.⁹² There are books entitled *Thinking Through the Body*,⁹³ *The Making of the Modern Body*⁹⁴ and *The Semantics of the Body*⁹⁵ as well as related feminist studies like *Bodies That Matter*,⁹⁶ *Imaginary Bodies*,⁹⁷ or *The Resurrection of the Body*.⁹⁸ Like other postmodern catchphrases such as text, *écriture*, power, *différance*, or language games, the mere mention of “body” in a piece of critical discourse carries an aura of profundity to the initiate taken for granted as much as the supposedly vital relevance