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**Singularity, Universality and Inspiration
in their Relation to Artistic Creation**

Abstract

This article opens its discussion of inspiration by giving an outline of the extended theory of singularity in aesthetic experience that has been presented in a number of lectures and papers given or written over the last two years by the author. The second section of this text discusses the sense in which singularity and inspiration can be brought together. A third section is dedicated to the relation between inspiration and the aesthetic experience of universality, which, according to the author's theoretical framework, can sometimes emerge after the experience of singularity.

Keywords: generality, inspiration, particularity, singularity, universality

For about 20 years – roughly between 1980 and 2000 – when I was developing my work as an artist, I wrote quite a lot about it and I gave several interviews. I must confess that during that period, in those texts and interviews, I never used the word inspiration. And this omission was on purpose. Not using the word was a deliberate way of wholly stressing the artistic action and the very few moments of absolute discovery that the artist can experience during her or his activity. This experience exists because that activity is being developed, and of course because the artist's attention is totally concentrated in her doing, waiting, so to speak, for that special instant of discovery. This discovery – so I used to think – is something that comes out of the work which is being done and, so to say, hits the artist at some level of her intelligence of the artwork; in this sense, the discovery should not be conceived of as a gift or a glimpse inspired by any factor situated outside the material process of plastic doing. By that time, such exceptional moments were already conceived as singular instants, but only by the end of that period – in 1998 and 1999 – have I been able to take the first steps in a comprehensive theory of singularity as a consequence of my interest in hermeneutics. For the present purposes, the interesting fact is that from then on the long tradition of reflection on the topic of inspiration could be reevaluated in the light of the theory of singularity, and the topic of instantaneous discovery in art now seemed much closer to inspiration than it did before, provided that the idea of the materiality of the process would not be abandoned.

I shall begin this contribution to the discussion on inspiration by giving a brief outline of the extended theory of singularity in aesthetic experience that I have presented in a number of lectures and papers given or written over the last two years. The second section of this text will attempt to discuss in what sense singularity and inspiration can be brought together. The third section will be dedicated to the relation between inspiration and the aesthetic experience of universality which, according to my theoretical framework, can sometimes emerge after the experience of singularity.

1. Aesthetic experience. From singularity to universality

From the point of view that I adopt, singularity is a fact of experience. This means that my treatment of this topic will not be grounded mainly on considerations originating from the field of logic. Logic can help us to understand some aspects of singularity but here it will not be given the foreground. On the other hand, the singularity of aesthetic experience can be understood from the point of view of the receiver of the artwork or from the point of view of the artist. These two perspectives have much in common, but they also have their own specificities. In this paper – and precisely because our aim lies on the connection between singularity and inspiration – I shall adopt only the point of view of the artwork's producer.

Singularity can be defined in a set of oppositions: singularity vs. particularity; singularity vs. generality; singularity vs. universality. It goes without saying that this set of oppositions also means there are other oppositions that can be of some interest to us, in spite of not directly involving the topic of singularity; this is the case namely of generality vs. particularity, generality vs. universality and particularity vs. universality. But we will not deal with these last oppositions as they have little to do with our main purposes in this paper.

The first opposition to be defined here will be the one between singularity and particularity, on the one hand because the two terms are quite often understood as synonymic or almost synonymic, and on the other because this will lead us almost directly to a first and basic understanding of singularity. I call particulars those facts of experience that basically do not communicate. They do not communicate with each other and they do not communicate with other facts of experience. Particulars of experience are so to say private and mute. If, in the development of her activities, the artist incorporates in her work immediate data of perception, or of imagination, which do not give rise to any type of plastic discovery capable of amplification in the creative process, then she is dealing only with particularities, which in fact can be accumulated, but will not – as such – be open to instances of communication (or, as I also call it, instances of movement or functioning) at the level of the artwork or of a set of artworks. This is what I understand as the muteness of the particulars of aesthetic experience. But particulars are also private, in the sense that they remain totally encapsulated in the individual's deepest regions of existence, incapable of establishing any active or reactive connections with experiences of

other human beings. Nevertheless, although I will not specifically address the problem in this paper, particulars of experience can sometimes be sufficiently unstable so that, under certain conditions, they may exceptionally evolve in the direction of generality or even in the direction of singularity and universality.

As long as particulars do not (exceptionally) evolve in one of these directions, and in spite of being sometimes unstable, they are fundamentally static. In a certain sense they remain outside the dimension of time. This is not the case with the singularities of aesthetic experience. Singulars involve an internal movement; they are essentially part of a process. We shall call this process a train of thought or a train of perceptual activity. Let us imagine that the artist, in the course of her activity – which is necessarily developed along the dimension of time –, maintains a homogeneous train of thought in a straight forward direction, and at a certain moment that very same train of thought meets an obstacle of some kind that does not allow for the progression to continue in the same direction. The interruptive effect of the obstacle can be brief or long, but the consequence will be that sooner or later the previous train of thought will be deflected, and a new direction of thought will be engaged. If the deflection does not take place and the artist does not overcome the obstacle, we can say that a particular of experience has established itself without being able to communicate. On the contrary, when the deflection does happen we can say that a moment of absolute discovery has taken place and the previous train of thought has assumed a totally new character. This instant of newness and radical discovery is what we should call a singularity of aesthetic experience. It can only happen in the course of a process which has a certain duration, but nevertheless it is a fact of what Deleuze has characterized as an *instantaneous velocity*.

Let us focus now on the opposition between singularity and universality. What is universality from the point of view of experience and, in particular, of aesthetic experience? Formulated in this way, the question immediately sets us apart from those philosophical traditions that try to understand universals exclusively from a logical point of view. My claim is that universals of experience do exist, and that they can be defined in opposition to general concepts and in a specific relation to the singulars of experience. I shall begin my argumentation by elucidating this relation.

To use a common expression, universals of experience occur whenever we get the sudden and illuminating impression that “we have seen it all.” Here another *instantaneous velocity* is involved, but it is quite different from the previous one, since the effect of universality is obtained by a leap, a constitutive discontinuity, and not by a deflection of the train of thought or of perceptual activity as was the case with singulars. We can describe the relation (and simultaneously the difference) between singularity and the effect of universality by means of a sequence involving continuity and discontinuity. Let us suppose that the artist in the course of her work has had an experience of singularity as we have described it above. It can happen that the new train of thought or of perceptual activity that she has now engaged in as a consequence of that experience goes on being developed until the moment when the type of novel

but nevertheless circumscribed discovery that she has experienced suddenly gives way to a second type of illuminating event that opens a whole range of new possibilities, an unlimited field of creativity, which on the one hand derives from the previous experience of singularity, but which on the other hand can only be attained as a result of a radical discontinuity in relation to the train of thought being developed after the experience of singularity. This discontinuity, to use an expression dear to Kierkegaard, can be called a *leap*. Such a leap, to be sure, is a fact of intuition. But, from the point of view I adopt here, it is a consequence of two instances: first, if there is not a previous course of work dealing with plastic or conceptual materials and providing the necessary inputs for artistic decision-making, the intuition, as a part of the artistic productive process, will not have a ground from which it can depart in its specific movement – the metaphor of the leap also means that a material basis is needed so that the elastic movement can take place; second, the previous course of work has to be shaped – or (in)formed – in such a way that we can understand it as discursive, not necessarily in the sense that it should be of a linguistic nature, but in the sense that it has to contain a certain set of internal connections that can be detected and described. When these two conditions are not met, the effect of universality may still exist but it will be of an “irrational” nature (as it happens in mystical experiences or in phenomena of conversion either religious or political). And when universality is basically irrational, an important trait of aesthetic experience will be missing: freedom. This means that the experience of universality – provided that it occurs as a discontinuity on the basis of a sequence involving the materiality of the work and the type of linkage that we called an experience of singularity – offers the artist an unlimited range of possibilities for the subsequent development of her work. On the contrary, the “irrational” universals establish a closed and narrow set of possibilities that can only stimulate repetition in the poorest sense of the word.

2. Singularity and inspiration

Inspiration can be thought of as an event that starts outside the artistic process and which interferes with this process at a certain moment later in time. This is not the main trend of my understanding of inspiration, but it exists, and I shall begin by trying to describe it.

From this point of view we are precisely at the level of the particulars of experience. A particularity of experience, for instance, on account of its repetition or precisely because of its obsessive isolation, can in some circumstances impose itself so strongly that it leads the artist – compulsively or not – to repeated use of certain data extracted from that particular experience. In such cases, the common usage of language tends to identify this use of particular data as a phenomenon of *inspiration*: the artist has been *inspired* by one aspect of the particularity of her experience.

When I say that this inspiration event starts outside the artistic process I am thinking of an artist who is already an artist leading an artistic course of work

of her own and who suddenly is lead to incorporate in that work something that derives from a particular experience which in itself is not primarily artistic. But the same applies to the non-artist who suddenly decides to undertake an artistic activity motivated by an experience of particularity of the same nature. The point is that in such situations it is not the artistic activity itself that gives rise to the experience of discovery involved in the productive work.

On the contrary, when a singularity of experience takes place, the inspirational event is of a completely different nature. In this case, the sudden discovery which happens for the artist and illuminates her work, presents itself totally anew and opens a whole set of previously unexpected possibilities; this does not flow from an external fact, but rather from the effect of deflection of the previous train of thought or train of perceptual activity which, as we have seen, is the consequence of an obstacle and of the insistence the artist places simultaneously on the overcoming of the obstacle and on the continuity of the process already in progress. In the experience of singularity no discontinuity is involved, but there is a fundamental change of direction (which is also to be evaluated as a change of sense or meaning) of the previous train of conceptual or perceptual activity. On the other hand, the deflection and the continuity of the process is only possible because the artist has had the experience and the consciousness of the obstacle and because she did not merely abandon the problematic event of meeting an obstacle, but instead she has persistently persevered in finding a way of getting rid of the obstacle without simply eliminating it artificially and without losing all the acquisitions she has obtained, namely during the process that led her to that precise obstacle. This means that the experience of singularity and its creative effects are brought about through the very sequence of work that the artist is developing. The singularity of aesthetic experience suddenly appears before the artist as a discovery emanating from her artistic activity, but also as a discovery that – at least partly – cannot be grounded in a positive manner or deduced from anything according to a logical process. In this sense, I would say that the singularity of artistic or aesthetic experience involves an element of *mystery*, something that can be described to a certain extent but that cannot be fully explained. And this is precisely what the singularity of aesthetic experience has in common with the notion of inspiration. We will need to come back to this conglomerate and to the mystery that it involves.

Traditionally, inspiration is depicted as a descendent movement. The Greek *epíphnoia* was conceived as a kind of blowing or breath coming from above, namely from a god. The fact that inspiration came from a divinity – the Muses or Apollo – was a manner of stating that the primitive origin or grounding of the movement was out of reach for human understanding; it was a mystery. And the fact that it was seen as a descendent movement only stated the very same mysterious character of the occurrence. What interests me in this moment is the fact that a modern conceptualization of inspiration, while dispensing with the interference of a divinity, can and should maintain the notion that the phenomenon is not totally explainable – or reducible to an exhaustive linguistic string – but at the same time will have to completely invert the direction of the event. The movement of inspiration is no longer descendent; on the contrary,

inspiration emerges to the surface out of the underlying sequence of work and thought in which the artist is involved. The movement is fundamentally ascendant.

The movement being ascendant also means that the metaphor of breath, which was originally at the root of the inspirational event, tends to disappear and be replaced by another type of metaphors: those of the semantic field of light. Thirty five years ago, in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Richard Rorty has shown very clearly – and critically – the importance of metaphors of light for what is usually called modern philosophy,¹ and in the field of arts and creative processes the concept of *illumination* put forward by Rimbaud is much more than a mere appendix to the poet's concept of poetics. In both fields, the typical blindness involved in the ancient metaphor of breath (or blowing) has completely lost its applicability. But the metaphors of light, in spite of Rorty's and other philosophers' criticism, have maintained a great deal of efficacy. What I have said in the first section of this paper about the illuminating effect of the aesthetic experience of singularity finds here its most striking consequences. The singularity of experience is illuminating precisely because it gives rise to an event of inspiration. Inspiration is the link here that connects the process of deflection, which we have described, with the subsequent artistic creative activity. From the point of view of artistic creativity, the consequences of the deflective moment cannot even be fully outlined if we do not recur to the concept of inspiration. And this is so because a deflection in the previous train of thought or perceptual activity can easily happen without consequences at the level of plastic or poetic doing; this is what happens, for instance, if the experience of singularity takes place in a viewer rather than in an active artist. The active artist needs – besides the experience of singularity – an impulse towards her own artistic activity, and this impulse is exactly what takes place when the singularity of aesthetic experience is accompanied by the experience of inspiration, and all the facts in which inspiration materializes itself at the levels of knowledge, emotion, will, and the activity of the body.

Now, the connective link between the singularity of aesthetic experience in the moment of the deflection and the inspirational impulse that we have just mentioned is nothing other than the moment of mystery we have detected above. I use the word *mystery* in a trivial, but nevertheless instructive sense. A mystery is a fact or a situation that we cannot explain, although it has happened or goes on happening; something that existed or persists in its existence in spite of the fact that we do not know anything fundamental about the emergence of such existence. Some mysteries can be solved; but I would say that those are not the really interesting mysteries from a philosophical point of view. What I find interesting here is the strenuous persistence of our ignorance towards the mysterious event. No matter what we do, no matter what we try, some events present themselves in an impenetrable thickness. They comprise a constitutive hiatus somewhere between what comes before that event and the event itself,

¹ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), e.g. 36-39, 48, 189ff.

and there seems to be no logical operation, be it inductive or deductive, that can bridge that hiatus. This type of situation has been detected at certain moments in the history of philosophy. Leibniz, for instance, in his “*Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis*,” spoke of a certain *nescio quid* which is deeply embedded in what he called *cognitio clara confusa*. Knowledge is clear if there is recognition. But the subject may not know why or how the recognition takes place; in this case the clear knowledge is confused or indistinct, in opposition to what Leibniz calls distinct clear knowledge, which happens when the subject, by means of characteristics (*per notas*), knows exactly why he recognizes the object. Leibniz gives an example of confused clear knowledge recurring precisely to the domain of art: painters and other artists can recognize what is right and what is wrong in an artwork, but it often happens that, when they are asked why, they cannot state the reason of their judgment, and say they miss something, they don’t know what, in the object which displeases them (*dicere, se in re quae displicet desiderare nescio quid*).² Our problem is, of course, not a question of something being right or wrong in an artwork. But apart from this, there is a striking parallel between Leibniz’s *nescio quid* and what we have been calling the mystery involved in inspiration. And this is so because Leibniz’s artist is dealing with something that is absolutely certain for him, in spite of ignorance of the reason why, exactly as the artist that we have been thinking about has an important amount of certainty regarding the direction that her work is going to take, in spite of her ignorance of a final cause for the moment of inspiration which has stricken her or of a fundamental connection between the process of deflection typical of the experience of singularity and that very same moment of inspiration.

The only thing that we can say about this connection is that it functions as a tendency. And the mystery resides precisely in the fact that a mere tendency, necessarily involving a cognitive or perceptive hiatus, can be as effective as to point distinctly to a certain creative path. If in this context I speak of a tendency it is because I would like to pinpoint clearly the opposition between this type of connection and any form of a sequential string where we are able to detect the whole set of links between a first causal moment and the final outcome of the sequence. A tendency-like movement such as the one we are dealing with here can be approximately described as an *inclination*, resulting from the discovery involved in the deflective moment of the singularity of aesthetic experience, towards a certain set of possibilities – rather than others – of the inspirational event. In a certain sense, we are talking here about a probability that the inspirational event takes on a certain form and exerts its influence in a certain direction. But a probability of this kind can be wholly contradicted by the mere fact that we never know for sure how the complex inclination-tendency will behave. The discovery resulting from the deflection and the inclination that the discovery provides only establish a field of variation where the tendency that we have mentioned is supposed to operate with relative freedom. We can

² Cf. Gottfried W. von Leibniz, *God. Guil. Leibnitii Opera philosophica quae exstant Latina, Gallica, Germanica omnia*. J.E. Erdmann Ed., Berlin, 1839-40; (repr. Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1974), 79.

call this freedom a restricted one, since the inclination operates in one exclusive sense. But it is nevertheless a type of freedom taking place at the innermost core of the inspirational event, as it is obvious that the tendency, being only a tendency, moves inside a relatively wide range of possibilities, eventually motivated by factors that we cannot control, anticipate, or even describe in the aftermath of the event's outcome.

This situation seems important also from another perspective: the one known as the criticism of the subject in the artistic activity. From the point of view we adopt here, what we have called a tendency is something that is at work – namely in its free choices inside a range of possibilities – independently of the creative subject. On the contrary, the creative subject, who has been active in the continuity of her work prior to the moment of the singularity of aesthetic experience, and who will continue to be active after the intervention of the inspirational event, is so to speak totally passive in her apprehension of the deflection, of the inclination, and of the results of the tendency's activity when it exerts its choices in the field of possibilities opened up by the inclination. In the end, we find that there is a moment in which we can really say that the subject is no longer the artist but, on the contrary, the very core of the inspirational event. In this sense, we can understand how and why the criticism of the subject in artistic activity can go as far as to consider the work of art as the subject of the creative process, because if the inspirational event involves a subjectivity of its own and at the same time leads to the emergence of a definite artwork, then this artwork fully inherits the subjectivity of the free choice that is at play in inspiration.

3. Universality and inspiration

We face a new degree of complexity when we arrive at the problem of the relationship between inspiration and the universals of aesthetic experience. We will have to deal here with two main aspects of the problem: on one side, the *unlimited* set of possibilities opened by the universality of aesthetic experience and, on the other side, the fact that the discontinuity of the *leap* taking place in the constitutive process of a universal somehow duplicates the difficulties that we have met above when we tried to approach the moment of mystery involved in inspiration. In fact, the two aspects, as we will see, are not to be separated.

One of the differences between a singularity and a universal of aesthetic experience is that the deflection which gives rise to a new train of thought or perceptual activity determines a single direction, while the consequence of the leap typical of universals is a multitude of virtually unlimited possible directions. In this sense, an important question is raised about the connection between inspiration and this unlimited openness: is this absence of limits obtained only by means of the leap, or is it a consequence of an inspirational event taking part in the process, and somehow connected with the leap?

We do not want to confuse the leap with the inspirational event that takes place at this level. We have stated that the leap requires a previous sequence of effective artistic work that has to be understood as a discursive continuity constituting the material basis out of which the discontinuity of the leap can take place. And we have added that in this case and under such conditions, a universal of aesthetic experience can take place involving a fundamental freedom responsible for an infinite number of productive possibilities. But when we come to the problem of the relation between a universal of aesthetic experience and inspiration, we indeed have to go further in the characterization of the leap: we have to deal with the energies that are at stake in the process – those energies which in Leibniz’s expression were designated as *forces* (French: *force*; German: *Kraft*; Latin: *vis activa*). The leap takes place not through the effect of an obstacle, but because at some point along the train of thought and artistic activity, which results from the singular deflection, an amount of energy is accumulated in such a way that sooner or later an outburst becomes inevitable. This is what happens when the artist, after following for quite a while the direction suggested to her by the experience of singularity and by the inspirational event, starts to experience that she needs more than the mere repetition of something she already knows and dominates. From the point of view I adopt here this does not mean that the trend of thought and the course of artistic doing have lost their energy, but only that that energy – which has in fact been expanding – has possibly become paralyzing and fiercely wants to be redirected towards something else. At this moment of the process, this *something else* is totally unpredictable. In other words, the leap cannot be described in the same quasi-mechanical way in which we have described the deflection; on the contrary, the leap projects the artist to a realm of possibilities that at first sight may have almost no connection with her previous work. But the whole problem is based on this *almost*. And it is so because, from our point of view, the leap and the second kind of inspirational event that – as we shall see – accompanies it cannot happen without the previous course of work that we have pinpointed. This means that at least a *residual effect* of that course of work must be constitutive of the leap and persist after the efficacy of the leap, although perhaps in a transformed shape. In a certain sense we can adopt for this residual effect an expression dear to Vladimir Jankélévitch: it can be in fact conceived as an *almost nothing* (*un presque-rien*),³ but we should not forget that in art and in aesthetic reflection an *almost nothing* is certainly much more effective than any kind of massive event.

The outburst deriving from the energetic tension that we have pointed out as being part of a relatively late moment in the process, which follows the experience of aesthetic singularity, includes elements from the course of work leading to that explosive event. What these elements can exactly be stays out of our present concerns; it is enough to say that they can be formal, conceptual or even technical. The important fact is that such elements are simultaneously part of the artist’s *language*

³ Cf. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais quoi et le presque-rien*, v. 1-3 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1957; 2e éd. aug., Paris: Seuil, 1980).

and part of the difficulty that the artist experiences in pursuing her course of work. When the leap finally takes place, the artist will be able to recognize the elements that have survived the explosion. But what exactly gives rise to the outburst? And how exactly does it happen? Here we are faced with what we can call the *second mystery* in the creative process. All we can say is that an accumulation of energy – which takes place in the material activity of the artist, and should not be seen as a mere psychological event taking place in the artist's *mind* – attains at a certain moment a peak of tension so high that the outburst becomes inevitable (this, of course, presuming that the artist does not simply give in to the repetitive flow of strict sameness). This explosion is what we have called the *leap*. This means that the leap is not unidirectional and does not have a defined ground for its landing. It starts from a material basis and it attains a state of quasi-vacuum where only scattered particles of the previous course of work can be detected: the state of the *almost nothing*. But this *almost nothing* is exactly what is needed for the intervention of the *second moment of inspiration*. The state of the *almost nothing* is not a totally blind or mute territory where no choices can take place. It is – recurring once again to Leibniz's language, namely in the Preface to his *Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain* – a territory of *small perceptions* (also called by Leibniz *insensible perceptions*) where it is only necessary that the artist can isolate a particle or set of particles (thus transforming the *insensible* into something sensible) to be able to have a completely new experience of total illumination, which is what we have called the aesthetic experience of universality. And this is the terrain of the second moment of inspiration: to isolate a particle or set of particles or to transform an *insensible perception* into a sensible one is no longer the leap itself, but a new event taking place in the aftermath of the leap and because of the leap, although without having a completely fixed relation to the leap. This means that the leap does not determine the isolation of the particles and consequently it also does not determine the effect of universality that follows the act or acts of isolation. This second moment of inspiration then opens up an infinite field of possibilities through the fact that an *almost nothing* can turn into an *almost everything* which can be equated with an extremely wide field of action for the artist's freedom of choice.

The question regarding how an *almost nothing* can change into an *almost everything* is once again a mystery. But this mystery can be understood to a certain extent if we remember Leibniz's words about the *small perceptions*. Leibniz writes the following in the text we have mentioned above (the English translator uses "tiny perceptions" rather than "small perceptions"):

These tiny perceptions, then, are more effective in their results than has been recognized. They constitute that I don't know what (*ce je ne sais quoi*), those flavours, those images of sensible qualities, vivid in the aggregate but confused as to the parts; those impressions that are made on us by the bodies around us and that involve the infinite; that connection that each being has with all the rest of the universe. It can even be said that because of these tiny perceptions the present is big with the future and burdened with the past, that all things harmonize... and that eyes as piercing as God's could read in the lowliest substance the universe's whole sequence of events.⁴

4 Gottfried W. von Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding, Preface and Book I: Innate Notions*, trans. Jonathan Bennett, last modified April 2008, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/leibniz1705book1.pdf>, 6.

As a matter of fact we only need to recognize this enormous efficacy of the *almost nothing* – or of the *small perceptions* – to accept that inspiration, universality, and infinity can combine effectively in a total theoretical picture which enables us to understand the extraordinary wide range of choices that at certain moments can stand before the artist. And this wide range of choices has to be thought of as a level of complete freedom, quite different from the one we have met when we were dealing with singularities and the first inspirational event. At this level, artistic freedom is so wide that the artist can move in several directions at the same time, as we can observe in many contemporary artists who, after having begun their careers within a more or less restricted range of experiments, have been able to immensely multiply their directional perspectives and even create different sets of works that according to a more traditional point of view would seem to be contradictory. This multidirectional type of work in contemporary art is exceptionally striking and I believe that artists such as Gerhard Richter, Bruce Nauman, Pedro Cabrita Reis or Wolfgang Tillmans, just to mention a few, have in different manners undergone an aesthetic experience of universality in-formed by one or several inspirational events of this second level that we have been describing. The constitutive dispersive character of these artists' oeuvre and its frontal attack against the reductionism of unity and of a poetic logos centered on itself would not be possible without what we have called an outburst and the myriad of *small perceptions* involved in the action of the second level of inspiration.

I would like to conclude with a remark on the topic of the subject parallel to the one above, discussed at the end of the second section of this paper. One can say, using Nietzsche's expression, that there is a *will to power* which is active in the process that we have tried to approach in this third section. What is problematic is to locate it exactly and to determine who – or what – is its subject. We have seen that the artist experiences a situation in which the train of thought or perceptive activity deriving from the experience of singularity is no longer effective. This is a constitutive moment of passivity. But this passivity does not stop here. It goes on during the event that we have called an explosion and that we have identified with the first moment of the leap. During this first part of the leap, the artist does not even know where she is going to land. This means that, until then, the *will to power* contained in the expansion of energy and in the outburst of tension has a subject, which is not the artist, but the process itself. But we are not yet at the end of the process. After the explosion, the artist only recognizes scattered remains of that event, which in a certain way could be identified with Horace's *disjecta membra poetae*. So, the artist remains passive. But where the *will to power* shows itself in its whole plenitude is in the moment when the remains from the explosion – the *almost nothing* or the *small perceptions* – become activated and start exerting their function, which is to show that they can transform themselves and appear before the artist as isolated particles of a universal whole. This means that, until this moment, the subject has always been the process itself and, in the last part of this process, the entire subjective efficacy resides in the *small*

perceptions. The artist only intervenes actively as a subject when she is finally able to collect the pieces and start working with them, something that would not happen if the isolated particles did not present themselves integrated in a universality of experience. From this point of view, we can say once again that the artworks that start to be produced by the artist at a certain moment after the explosion and the inspirational event would not exist without an autonomous basis, which is constitutive in their process of production. In other words, the artwork is in itself a result of a subjective process which is to a large extent alien to the artist. And in this sense we can now add that the artist is a product of the universality of aesthetic experience and of the inspirational events that are connected with such universality.

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