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Sensation as Civilization: Reading/Riding the Taxicab

Monique Roelofs

Abstract

Aesthetics, race, and nation are densely imbricated with one another. This essay examines their interactions in a newspaper column that describes an aesthetic confrontation between a presumably Arab taxi driver and his passenger, a white European-Dutch columnist. In this column, taste engenders acts of identification and abjection, transmits projections of fear, and underwrites a division of labor and virtue. It thereby serves as a racial border patrolling technology and institutes racial boundaries. To clarify the racial power of aesthetic constellations in the taxicab case, the paper turns to the dualities and integrations that theorists such as Addison, Baumgarten, Schiller, and Hegel have historically located at the center of their conceptions of the aesthetic. Unwrapping the disciplinary operations sustained in the taxi scenario by differentially available separations and integrations between mind and body, public and private, individuality and sociality, the essay investigates what follows for an understanding of aesthetic disciplinarity.

Key Words

abjection, Addison, aesthetic disciplinarity, Amsterdam, Baumgarten, Bril, city, community, damaged aesthetic experience, dualities, Hegel, integrationism, labor, mind-body split, music, nation, the public sphere, race, Schiller, sociality, taste, taxi

1. Introduction

Aesthetic performances of race inhere in the common run of things. The aesthetic wiring of everyday existence propagates the racial being of social subjects. [1] In the following, I show the aesthetic at work in its racializing operations in the column, "Taxi Ride," written by the Dutch writer Martin Bril for *De Volkskrant*, a left-of-center national newspaper in the Netherlands in December 2004. [2] The column implicitly envisions an aesthetic delineation of cultural citizenship. Aesthetic modalities thereby serve as technologies of race. This raises questions about the nature of aesthetic disciplinarity. How does it take effect? What are its conceptual preconditions? What kinds of labor does it enlist? With an eye on historical constructions of the aesthetic, this essay examines how the taxicab case can advance our understanding of such disciplinarity.

2. An Aesthetic Clash

"Taxi Ride" is the story of an aesthetic confrontation between the autochthonous, white Dutch writer Martin Bril and his possibly Arab, Dutch-speaking taxi driver, as described by the author. On a Saturday evening, Bril has to go somewhere and hails a cab in the streets of Amsterdam. An old VW Jetta stops. He instantly regrets his decision but continues as planned. A hot cloud slams into his body when he enters the car. It smells of toilet cleaner. What he calls "loud Arabic whiny music" is playing on the radio ("Arabische jammermuziek"). A plastic sheet covers the back seat to protect it against puking passengers. Everything in the car rattles. The driver speeds and takes a detour. "We arrived at an intersection where we had to go straight, yes, I know my city. But the driver took a left. . . . With lightening speed we approached the next intersection, and I assumed we were going to take a right. We stormed straight-on." At this moment, Bril protests. When the driver turns around to answer his passenger's objection, the car zigzags. In "virtually accentless" Dutch, which the writer finds hard to square with the whiny music, the driver replies, "This is fastest, or do you want to walk?" Bril doesn't want to. He notes he is being tremendously screwed. "On the other hand," he remarks, "it was also a beautiful feat of free-market policy." He asks if the heat can be turned down. "'It feels good here!' the driver shouts, 'or do you want to walk?'" Reluctant to walk, Bril keeps silent for the rest of the ride. The column concludes with the following observation: "I looked out of the window, and my own city appeared to me strange and uncanny. The music offered no other point of connection than vague memories of other metropolises I had roamed by taxicab at an ungodly hour: Paris, New York, Athens. I

felt like a stranger--duped and fucked over."

3. Aesthetic Collectivity, Racial Abjection, and the Figure of Damaged Aesthetic Experience

Bril's investment in the aesthetic qualities of a proper taxi trip and his distaste for the sensory affronts committed by the driver differentiate a zone of aesthetically legitimate conduct from an abject realm of aesthetic undesirability. Aesthetic experience, in the column, distinguishes Amsterdam as it is known and loved from the city it has become (or is at risk of becoming) under the influence of a disagreeable sensibility. Through the pejorative reference to the music, the text codes the latter style negatively as culturally different and, more specifically, as Arab.

Bril's aesthetic, as it appears in the text, embodies the position I call "racialized aesthetic nationalism."^[3] This stance enlists aesthetic interpretations and experiences in the service of nationalist and racist attitudes. The column articulates a variety of racialized aesthetic nationalism that expects to be able to organize the environment in accordance with its own taste. This sensibility recognizes "my city" as my city insofar as it is arranged in conformity with my aesthetic norms. I am entitled to feel at home in my own, Dutch way. I thereby acknowledge a single Dutch style of being Dutch, namely *my* style, which I share with those who I take to have been civilized in accordance with my norms, values, and traditions. The city should have a distinctive cultural character in that it observes stylistic criteria that have been set by white, autochthonous inhabitants or, in any event, a representative, authentic subgroup of them. Such citizens ought to be able to experience the city as their cultural property. Amsterdam is expected to exude a phenomenal feel that these individuals can experience as recognizably "theirs." They must be capable of joining one another in an affiliation with the city that sustains the sense of being congregated in what counts as "our" habitat. An aesthetic vision along these lines implicitly posits racial and nationalist norms. It aspires to an aesthetic organization of culture that supports racialized identities and nationalist longings.

Bril's article shows how a racial, nationalist aesthetic can organize experience around an aesthetically inflected sense of cultural ownership, violation, and strangeness. Aesthetic norms and scripts thereby regulate states of racial desire and acts of abjection that engender identificatory positions. Monitoring flows of affiliation and disavowal, judgments of taste line up the furrows of the racial community to establish a distribution of virtue and labor. Aestheticization converges with racialization.

In the cab, the city becomes strange to Bril in a way other cities are normally, appropriately strange. But Amsterdam does not thereby become strange in an ordinary way. It turns strangely strange.^[4] The strangeness that in other cities can be an object of desire, in Amsterdam is difficult to take. The city acquires a foreign character that dislodges Bril from his customary aesthetic inhabitation of the environment. His identificatory feeling of affinity that makes Amsterdam "my city" is disrupted. Strangeness infuses the familiar. Because the strange uncannily approximates the ordinary, it appears even stranger: the conjunction of "Arabic whiny" music with a virtually accentless language, ostensibly hard to distinguish from the autochthonously Dutch, presents a conundrum for Bril. Immersed in strange strangeness, the author becomes a stranger to himself, a person who feels "like a foreigner" in his own town.

Indeed, Bril is in danger of being thrown out of the taxicab ("Do you want to walk?"). The driver mediates his access to the city. He is in charge of Bril's mobility. The possibilities of the evening are in his hands. An aesthetic script typical of a taxi ride stipulates that the chauffeur should provide a perspective from which the passenger can imagine witnessing a city, a country, a culture. His designated role is that of a liaison with the environment, as when a cab driver supplies reporters or tourists with materials for informal ethnographic studies. In such a scenario, the ride enhances the consumer's grip on his surroundings, expanding his vision and broadening his cultural repertoire. Bril's driver violates this aesthetic contract. He refuses to adjust his comportment to the representational demands of his job. Whereas he is to *facilitate* the writer's freedom of motion, he in fact restricts it, controlling the aesthetic parameters of the situation. This

role could be a source of delight if assisted by the requisite cultural cachet. As it happens, however, the driver's choices receive a negative racial valence in Bril's estimation and fail to be to his liking. These two assessments by Bril are one of a kind. The racialization legitimates the dislike. The lack of aesthetic appreciation underlies the racialization. Aesthetics and racialization conspire together. Consequently, a freedom of the ethnic worker in the recently deregulated taxi market^[5] is imagined to prevail over a freedom of the white consumer at the cost of the latter's aesthetic pleasure and racial sense of belonging. A racialized aesthetic offense has occurred, which amounts at the same time to an aestheticized racial infraction, a limitation of the racial and aesthetic power to align life's details with white European desires.

The driver appropriates another privilege that a racialized, nationalist aesthetic counts among the entitlements of the white cultural connoisseur. The authority to adjudicate what qualifies as normal and deviant shifts from the writer to the driver. Judgments of aesthetic appropriateness fall under the driver's jurisdiction. Taste-setting power is wrenched away from Bril. The driver is in the know about the right way to go and the correct level of climate control: "This is fastest!" "It feels good here." In writing the column, Bril reclaims the aesthetic authority that was withheld from him in the car. The aesthetic experiences and judgments he describes in the text express a sensory knowledge of cultural identity and difference.

Locating the taxi ride in racial territory, the designation 'Arabic whiny music' and the reference to the hot temperature rhetorically make plausible Bril's feelings of strangeness. They appear to justify his comparison with other cities and to account for the temporal and spatial shift from an ordinary Saturday evening to a nobody's land where, in the dead of night, anything can happen. The racialization of the music transfers to the other senses, the imposture, and the urban environment. Taste implements racial boundaries and serves as a racial border-patrolling technology.

Bril casts a racially-coded aesthetic confrontation and the broader political themes it reflects in language that speaks to the reader's affects. Cultural difference becomes tangible as aesthetically inflected foreignness and unseemliness, an ethnically tagged refusal to play by everyday aesthetic rules. More generally, while questions of immigration and community owe their reality in part to things like laws, rights, treaties, work permits, and passports, our persuasions about these matters simultaneously spin through the wheels of aesthetic interpretation and desire. We tailor ourselves to aesthetic models of identification and disidentification in which we are invested. Under modernity, identity, difference, and conflict are wriggled into shape as aesthetic products and processes. Bril's expression of alienation reveals that his sense of self and otherness demands aesthetic sustenance. The presumptive aesthetic defects of the taxi and its driver undercut the possibility of aesthetic identification for the writer. Conversely, we can assume that his failure to identify with the music and the temperature contributes to his more general perception of aesthetic impropriety. Absent the "Arab" music and the heat, the fast speed might have appeared exciting to him, perhaps efficient; the detour might have morphed into an expansive, bird's eye conception of the town; possibly the plastic and the old, rattling car could have seemed to punctuate Amsterdam's customary orderliness with a slight, enticing grunginess.

As it is, Bril's aesthetic affiliation with his environment has been disturbed. His being duped draws its affective meaning from the disruption of a proprietary cultural sensibility. The rip-off, in turn, loads the aesthetic arrangement to which he was exposed with the weight of moral wrongdoing. The estrangement between him and "his city," the city he knows intimately, signals the effects of an aesthetic and ethical maladjustment. The racial subject demands an adequately racialized organization of his surroundings, and this depends on the right kinds of aesthetic conditions. Racialized and nationalist aesthetic wishes, readings, and habits underlie our sense of who we are and are not. They are responsible for a sense of place.

Vis-à-vis the reader, the column reasserts the distinction between proper and improper taste that has been breached in the cab. The article juxtaposes an apparently correct Dutch style, which is understood to stand in need of protection, and a foreign mode of conduct that is perceived to threaten European-Dutch accomplishments. Bril proposes a

racialized polarity of social and aesthetic virtues and flaws: via the musical signifier and the lost sense of aesthetic ownership, admirable traits such as sensory delightfulness, honesty, reliability, and elegance are implicitly contrasted with problematic characteristics such as sensory overbearingness, asocial behavior, incompetence if not criminality, incorrigibility, a lack of responsiveness. The honorable attributes are comprehended as authentically Dutch, while the disagreeable ones connote a culturally different, possibly Arab background.

In short, "Taxi Ride" negotiates racial power on aesthetic terrain. The text offers an articulation of what counts as an adequately Dutch mode of social comportment, which it attributes to a white, autochthonous public intellectual, and formulates a conception of a problematic moral and stylistic habitus, which it associates with a presumably allochthonous, probably Arab worker in a relatively low-status service position. The column traces how the true Dutch way of being is unjustifiably and inexplicably violated by foreign behaviors.^[6] It outlines a position of victimhood with which it invites the reader to identify. The public is solicited to experience indignation and concern about an ethnically coded aesthetic misdemeanor, and about the threat such transgressions pose for the cultural good. White racial anxieties, less than two months after filmmaker Theo van Gogh's murder by the Moroccan-Dutch Muslim activist Mohammed Bouyeri in the streets of the Dutch capital, could reasonably be counted upon to recruit feelings of unease on the part of the reader in defense of human accomplishments construed in terms of the city's authentically Dutch character (social grace, good form) and in opposition to dangers characterized as alien and Arab (rudeness, deceit, bad form). The designation "Arabic whiny-music" facilitates the projection of fear onto a supposed aesthetic danger, which then legitimates the felt threat.^[7] Its allusion to the presence of Arabs in the country supplies an object for generalized feelings of cultural unease, the sense that one's own city, style and culture are under siege. The reader is invited to empathize with Bril's victimhood, and to respond with moral and aesthetic disapproval to the lot that befell the author that Saturday evening in Amsterdam, which the reader knows could have been hers on any evening, in any town in the Netherlands. Offering the public an object for racial and aesthetic repulsion, the text goes some way toward restoring the demands of taste on which the driver had infringed.

It is worth briefly further unpacking the nomenclature "Arabic whiny music." The conjunction of an ethnic designation ("Arabic") with an aesthetic marker ("whiny") creates the impression that Bril is informing us of his engagement with a certain cultural entity, a genre of music. The label is suggestive of a connection between "Arabic music" and "music that whines," insinuating, for example, that "Arabic music" typically whines and is distasteful in that regard, or that among the varieties of whiny kinds of music there is this type, "Arabic whiny music" that whines in its own Arabic fashion and is aesthetically objectionable in that sense. Ontologies of this sort, however, are a reflection of the aesthetic resistance of the listener, not of the nature of a category of music playing on the radio. Note the simplification inherent in the label "Arab." Is it folk music, religious music, court music, classical music, Egyptian, Moroccan or Lebanese pop-music that is playing in the cab? The denomination "Arabic music" tells us little about the sound that was actually heard. The notion "whiny," likewise, says more about the perceiver's undifferentiated experience of the sound and his dislike for this sound, than about the music itself. There is no category "Arabic whiny music," apart from the music that a listener for some reason experiences as both Arab and whiny, or as whiny in what seems like some typically Arab way, presumably on account of its microtonal intervals.

Bril's description of the sound indicates that the specific qualities of the music he hears make no appeal to his listening capacities. The cause of this, his vocabulary suggests, lies with the sound itself: being "Arabic whiny music," it just happens to be the sort of unpleasant music you want to avoid if you can. But this linguistic construction effaces the part played by his distaste for the sound, which is projected onto the object of aesthetic aversion. Bril's musical designation achieves a rhetorical legitimization of his undifferentiated musical experience. The driver's musical choice makes no demand on the columnist's understanding. By attributing the reason for this to the reprehensible music and the driver's diminished aesthetic judgment, Bril's terminology lends him

reprieve from a type of work. His language implies that he doesn't have to perform the labor of comprehension. There is no real need for such labor; the job is easy, obvious: one hears, feels and knows. Should a more serious expenditure of labor be required, it isn't worth the effort. Either way, Brill doesn't have to toil to get his aesthetic desires fulfilled in the cab. It is the driver's task to satisfy these wishes. He bears the responsibility to supply an adequate aesthetic environment; to the extent that he doesn't, the fault lies with him and his aesthetic demeanor, perhaps his cultural background.

Excusing Brill from a particular kind of aesthetic labor, his auditory experience includes an aesthetic disaffiliation from the sounds he listens to. In hearing the music, he is moved to ward it off. His aural disengagement not only limits his encounter with the sounds, but also keeps at bay the meanings and values encoded in these sounds and blocks the symbol systems that materialize in them. These elements fail to lay a claim on his understanding or regard.

It is not that Brill declines to work. In the taxicab and in writing the column, he undertakes the work of abjection and boundary patrolling. Aesthetic experience in the cab, as I have indicated, carries out part of this work; the setting aright of taste in the column accomplishes another part of it. The writer shows a preference for one form of work over another: the disciplinary labor he executes in the form of aesthetic activity justifies his not having to work in the area of aesthetic perception and understanding.

Brill's musical designation would not be able to aspire to the rhetorical effects I have just described in the case of mainstream European or Anglo-American musics. The negative judgment would reflect on the perceiver rather than the perceived. Were the musical label associated with aesthetic forms that enjoy a high level of social recognition, popularity, or respect, the vacuity of the relevant classification would instantly be revealed. The limitations of Brill's musical taste would clamor resoundingly. It would be unlikely that the text could get its readership interested in, let alone worried about the aesthetic breakdown epitomized by the driver. The reader would distance her- or himself from the text's celebration of aesthetic insularity; the wistful affirmation on the part of this reader, "yes, that's the way it is, these days," would be withheld. [8] Love or esteem for some form of "Arabic" music is likely to hinder an empathetic pursuit of the affective trajectory traced by the column. The article's aesthetic success requires that the public can go along in the author's undifferentiated attitude vis-à-vis the object of his musical dislike. The text posits an audience that is ready to be moved by a racialized aesthetically nationalist perspective.

Through abjection--the racially coded disowning of the driver's supposedly repulsive comportment--the column distinguishes the aesthetic of the racial, national self from an aesthetic connoted pejoratively as other. Such otherness (the cab's, the driver's, and the city's difference from the norm) acquires its contours by contrast with the aesthetic codes that mark the favored, Dutch stylistic habitus. Construing racially marked, aesthetically condemnable behaviors and states of affairs as external to the realm of proper citizenship, and holding them responsible for an abridgment of culture, the text imagines a cultural zone that is to be safeguarded. The article calls on the reader to support his cultural property in defense of his sense of aesthetic belonging and his ability to feel at home in town. The suggestion is that it is worthwhile to stand up for these historical achievements.

One might object that the column merely verbalizes Brill's reactions to the driver's aesthetic and ethical misbehavior, neutrally presenting them to the public for reflection. Such a minimalist interpretation, however, misses the participation of antecedent racial constellations in the production of textual form and effect. The column implicitly identifies the city's failure to mirror a fantasy of monoethnically acculturated subjectivity to the passenger as a source of white upper/middle class alienation. It takes no steps to contest the aesthetic and racial preconditions for this feeling. Instead it articulates dismay about the supposed evacuation of white indigenous cultural proprietorship. In the post 9/11 era of increased white racial fear and deepened cultural surveillance, this feeling, unqualified by attempts to complicate or foreclose the readership's empathetic response, carries expansive cultural meanings. These cannot be

bracketed from the text *per se* as the minimalist reading would have it. The column actively polices aesthetic ownership over the city and solicits the audience's imaginative and affective participation in this project. The reader may feel encouraged to take up this work of cultural maintenance, or feel strengthened in her resolve to undertake it.

Bril's text illustrates how a racialized, aesthetically nationalist outlook can give rise to an ethnocentric construal of the hometown. Negatively racialized readings of aesthetic elements, represented by the column, may authorize subjects to close themselves off from objects, forms, individuals, collectivities, and signifiatory systems that are taken to elude the favored conception of culture. Tyrannized by racial intrusions, aesthetic experience can function as an invitation to seal up the cultural field. The newspaper column produces what we may call the figure of "damaged aesthetic experience," that is, the trope of a desirable aesthetic experience that could reasonably have been expected to take place but was prevented from occurring due to somebody's (in this case the driver's) destructive action, or to some harmful condition that came in the way (in the present case, the racial chaos attributed to the contemporary multicultural city). Because this figure can nurse the need to replenish the lost aesthetic flourishing it animates and deplors, it can command a narrowing of one's cultural vision--the aesthetic withdrawal already mentioned, the tendency to seek aesthetic shelter in one's own stylistic confines. The evocation of an aesthetic lack is able to inspire a contraction of the aesthetic community, whether melancholically, through imaginary restoration, or in an activist spirit. It can fuel a diminishment of the shared aesthetic life world, within and beyond the limits of the collective.^[9]

My reading so far has shown that Bril's column puts forth a racialized aesthetically nationalist position by featuring a musical experience that takes a racial twist, and by staging a disruption of aesthetic experience and agency. I have indicated how aesthetic norms can rally feelings, desires, and acts of abjection in support of racial bonds and scissions. The identifications that this involves mandate certain kinds of aesthetic work and virtuous action (the writer's and the reader's cultural labor; the driver's self regulation in accordance with the city's presumed standard of taste). The concomitant disidentifications honor a type of non-work (the writer's withholding of comprehension), while also denouncing dimensions of aesthetic agency that are embodied in a type of work (the driver's deviation from communal standards of taste in the process of carrying out his job).

4. Aesthetic Integrationsm: Addison, Baumgarten, Schiller, Hegel

Aesthetic disciplinarity takes a further form in Bril's column and the encounter it describes. This stands out if we consider the Dutch taxicab case from the perspective of the history of aesthetics. In the theories of foundational writers in the field, such as Joseph Addison, Alexander Baumgarten, Friedrich Schiller, and G.W.F. Hegel, aesthetic experience occupies a middle ground between the dualities of mind and body and related oppositions.^[10] These thinkers have defended what I will call an "integrationist" view of aesthetic experience. Combining reason and affect, sensation and imagination, public and private, and individual and society, the aesthetic in their accounts conjoins polarities philosophy has typically distinguished from one another. Thereby the aesthetic can be seen to both observe and resist hierarchical normative codings that have historically been inscribed in these binaries. I will briefly illustrate this point in the case of each theorist.^[11]

Joseph Addison develops a conception of aesthetic experience by tracing parallels and differences with the senses and the understanding. He considers aesthetic contemplation or, more precisely, the "Pleasures of the Imagination" "not as gross as those of Sense, nor so refined as those of the Understanding."^[12] Furthermore, like our cognitive pleasures and unlike our "more sensual Delights," the pleasures of the imagination, in his view, don't give rise to negligence, sloth, and idleness. However, like sensory pleasure and unlike the pleasures of the understanding they don't require labor or entail difficulty. Being more conducive to work than the senses and less demanding of it than the understanding, in his theory the pleasures of the imagination have a favorable influence on mind, body, and the state of our emotions.^[13] Yet he considers the imagination not as compendious as the understanding. This defect, he suggests,

may not be due to the soul, which harbors the faculty of taste, but to the association of the imagination with the body.^[14] Addison thus holds parallels and differences with the senses and the understanding responsible for various benefits and disadvantages that he takes to accrue to aesthetic experience.^[15]

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten defines aesthetics as the science of sensory cognition, aimed at perfecting it.^[16] Comprehended as a sensory form of cognition, the aesthetic participates in reason as well as sensation and would seem to bridge the divide that separates these functions. Nevertheless, Baumgarten's theory replicates traditional distinctions between mind and body and reason and sensation. Writing in the rationalist tradition of Leibniz and Christian Wolff, he understands sensory cognition as a lower cognitive faculty that is to be governed by the higher faculties of understanding and reason.^[17] While narrowing, interrupting, and dislodging the divide between sensation and cognition, Baumgarten's account of the proper aesthetic functioning of the lower and higher faculties simultaneously affirms hierarchies between mind and body, and reason and sensation.

For Schiller, the aesthetic reconciles mind and body, reason and emotion, imagination and sensation or perception, individual and society, and private and public. The so-called play drive allows for the development of rationality and morality by integrating reason with sensation and affect.^[18] It thereby overcomes the fragmentation and specialization with which humans have had to pay for the development of learning and civilization.^[19] According to Schiller, the modern individual inhabits the state like "an ingenious clockwork, in which, out of piecing together innumerable but lifeless parts, a mechanical kind of collective life ensued."^[20] Harmonizing the subject's sensuous and spiritual faculties, taste restores the integrity of the individual as well as that of larger society.^[21] Beauty grants human beings a social character, which is conducive to their harmonious co-existence. Under the influence of the aesthetic, Schiller concludes, "society becomes united by relating to what is common to all" and can be made "real."^[22] By integrating over time a set of interconnected polarities, aesthetic activity, accordingly, is capable of accomplishing an emancipatory path of social and political development.^[23]

Even if Schiller accords the rational and the sensuous drive each a necessary role in the development of the individual and the collective, a development that is to culminate in the realization of our full humanity, he ultimately ranks the sphere of reason above the realm of imagination, emotion, sensation, and matter. In his view, the "war against Matter" is to be played in "the very territory of Matter itself."^[24] The sensuous domain, for him, connotes capriciousness and formlessness.^[25] Rejecting an overemphasis on rationality (which betrays "barbarism") as well as the dominance of sensuousness or "brute Nature" (which entails "savagery" and the "primitive"), he associates the latter with initial strata of development, whereas he links the former with a more advanced stage of civilization.^[26] Materiality is to be distanced by a pure, autonomous aesthetic on the part of artists as well as observers.^[27] Schiller's aesthetics privileges the domain of reason over that of the sensuous.

Metaphysical differences with the aforementioned theorists notwithstanding, Hegel shares with these thinkers a view of aesthetic experience that positions such experience between rationality and sensation. In his account, art constitutes the sensuous appearance of the idea. Charged with the task of displaying the highest reality sensuously, art must bring to expression the deepest and most comprehensive truths of the spirit.^[28] So conceived, artworks constitute a "reconciling middle term" between pure thought and the sensuous.^[29] Furthermore, according to Hegel, artworks aim to achieve a unity between spirit and the senses and feelings. In other words, the artist is to harmonize spiritual content with sensory form.^[30] He believes that classical art, that is to say, the art of the ancient Greek epoch, had indeed achieved this harmony.

Despite the significance Hegel accords the senses, the superiority of rationality is a prominent tenet of his system. Reason's preeminence is exemplified, among other things, in the higher place art occupies in the metaphysical order, compared to the mere sensory appearance of things, due to art's participation in spirit.^[31] The superiority of reason can also be witnessed in the subordination of art's sensuous

shape, that is to say, its material aspect, which originates in nature, to its spiritual dimension.^[32] In addition to this, reason's supremacy manifests itself in the restrictions art's sensuous commitments impose on the representation of spirituality, which during the romantic era, that is to say the period in which spirit advances to its most selfconscious stage, cause art's prominence in expressing the deepest spiritual interests to be supplanted by philosophy. ^[33] Hegel's account of the artistic reconciliation of rationality with sensation and feeling thus clearly preserves a hierarchical ordering of these elements.

Whereas rationality, sensation, embodiment, and affect acquire different definitions in Addison, Baumgarten, Schiller, and Hegel, these four theorists render normatively coded oppositions and integrations between these functions central to their understanding of aesthetic activity. For each philosopher, aesthetic experience derives distinctive capabilities and limitations from its participation in these polarities.

5. Dualities and Integrations as Disciplinary Forces

Returning to Bril, we can see that the oppositions and integrations that Addison, Baumgarten, Schiller, and Hegel locate at the heart of their conceptions of the aesthetic perform a disciplinary function in the cab and the column. These dualities and syntheses accord the aesthetic with an all-embracing scope. They make available multidimensional vectors of power that can be put to work toward the production of racial delineations.

Racialization, in "Taxi Ride," is carried by several senses (hearing, smelling, touching, vision, thermoception, proprioception). It rushes along the pathways of various affects (irritation, repulsion, fear). These emotions include perceptions, imaginings, reasonings, and desires concerning the temporality of the journey and the vehicle's motion through urban space. These feelings also keep pace with states of bodily proximity, exposure, vulnerability, mobility, and stasis (driver and passenger are stuck together in a contained space for the duration of the ride).

The simultaneously public setting and private enclosure of the taxi activates general norms that govern a meeting between strangers. At the same time this liminal site calls for individualized scripts by way of which the participants in the encounter generate an exchange that remains in some respects indifferent to the specific propensities of concrete persons. The radio, for instance, reveals this doubleness. On the one hand, the radio in a cab is a type, a classical part of the taxi environment and image, a standard thing for the driver and the passenger to contend with, to take delight in, or to ignore, as the case may be. On the other hand, the radio represents an object of intense personal attachment--people often have strong feelings about the kinds of music they hear. Accordingly, the taxi combines public and private elements, opening up a space where tensions and alignments between these spheres must be juggled. This conjunction and negotiation obtains also in the forum of the newspaper column, which, pitched in an autobiographical voice, offers up a personal anecdote for reception by the paper's readership at large.

Bril puts together an extensive, normatively charged array of elements to achieve a racial organization of individual and social space and time. He implements racial demarcations by way of aesthetic codes that regulate the movement of people through space; the deployment of vehicles, radios, and household materials; and the driver-passenger relation. Racial delineations are anchored in the structuring of time and in the environment. Racialization in the cab finds expression in a network of bodily conditions, physical objects, social roles, psychic functions, and phenomenal states. As a technology of race, the aesthetic has at its disposal multidimensional registers of embodied relationships and encounters that shape our being-in-the-world. The conjunction of what have often been considered separate spheres of existence endows racializing aesthetic activity with a comprehensive range of signifiatory modalities.

Enlightenment dualities and their aesthetic integrations perform another disciplinary function in "Taxi Ride." They give rise to racial effects that reproduce hierarchies with which these oppositions have traditionally been imbued. A pattern of divisions as well

as collaborations between reason and the realm of affect, materiality, and embodiment, between the public and the private, and the individual and the social structure the column's disciplinary workings. The text associates the uncommunicative, apparently allochthonous driver with the material and affective side of existence, and the passenger with the more rational aspect. While the driver answers polite requests by way of dirty looks and threats, Brill remains on top of his feelings. The columnist lays out the events calmly. He arrives at interpretations of the sensory dimensions of the encounter, offering inferences, hypotheses, and judgments as to the point of things. He is a source of ethical and aesthetic assessments as to the way a journey ought to go. He engages in deliberation about his own actions, reactions, wishes and feelings, and puts forth reflections concerning the driver's behavior. Conclusions are reached.

Meanwhile, Brill gets to give the driver a dirty look. As noted before, the column recounts how the driver challenges his client's aesthetic sensibilities on multiple fronts-- he is taken along at high speeds in an old, rattling vehicle, seated on plastic, subjected to tropical temperatures, barraged by loud, unpleasant music, and bathed in the smell of toilet cleaner. In addition to this, Brill remarks that the driver presents a body that, in his words, "looks bad," displaying a face marked by "thick lines under the eyes, a stubble chin, baggy eyes, a mouth that was grinding chewing gum."^[34] Empowered by his command over the stylistic norms of public life in the forum of the newspaper, the sensible Dutch man of taste publicly airs the dirty look he casts under the cover of equable, evenhanded rationality.

In the spirit of the reasonable, furthermore, Brill makes a whiney lament, nostalgically deploring the injury inflicted on his home territory. Yet his unruly sensibilities neatly fold into a levelheaded exposition. His feelings do not disrupt the composure of his tone. While the medium of a newspaper column enables the author's anecdote to transcend the moment of the personal incident, the driver, who fails to observe the rules of public life, remains situated in the private sphere of the body and its material trappings. Speaking in a public voice, Brill hears the music as the driver's music, steeped in ethnic difference, and implicitly witnesses here the racially uncontrolled overflowing of aesthetic alterity onto the urban landscape.

The sociality of musical preferences consists partly in the fact that musical affiliations involve a dimension of imagined and desired companionship with like-minded audiences and a distance from those whose tastes take different directions. This does not entail something as drastic as that if you condemn someone's music you thereby necessarily insult that individual's personhood or his social being, but it does mean that an ethnically coded musical dislike is not altogether independent of a musically coded racial aversion. I have already mentioned the intertwining of these feelings. What concerns me here is the more general point that the ethnic classification and the aesthetic resistance captured in the label "Arabic whiney music," together with the alienation expressed by Brill, evoke racialized social dimensions of musical life. It is in virtue of the confluence of individual and social registers of meaning in aesthetic experience and judgment that the text posits a contrast between Dutch and Arab aesthetic companionship and bonding, whereby the latter comes to signify a racial danger the article warns the reader against. The sociality of individual aesthetic preferences partially underwrites the text's racializing force. Individual aesthetic sentiments, within the medium of the newspaper column, capture broader racialized social structures. The convergence of individuality and sociality functions as a source of aesthetic power.^[35]

In the cracks between rationality and sensuous embodiment, individuality and sociality, and the private and the public, the column replicates traditional pejorative connotations of materiality as uncivilized, unruly, crude, gross, formless, and restrictive, and reinstitutes honorific connotations of rationality in terms of understanding, knowledge, civilization, morality, and truth. The column personifies these differences in the figures of the driver and the passenger. Historical integrations and dualities underwrite a specific disciplinary logic that spans the encounter in the cab and the story in the paper. The conjunction of differentially available registers of publicity and privacy, sociality and individuality, rationality and affectivity or embodied being underlies the column's racial workings.

If the driver makes a detour, the passenger takes a shortcut. I have suggested that the figure of damaged aesthetic experience offers the reader an object for the projection of anxieties and aversions that stem from racializing and nationalist sensibilities. It locks into emotions and desires that are able to call forth a white defensive cultural posture without needing to offer a convincing reason or to elaborate much of a story that would warrant a sense of endangerment. It suffices to show how the sensory malfunctions sustained by an apparently autochthonous aesthetic reprobate infract upon the achievement of everyday Dutch cultural respectability. The sense impressions described in the column short-circuit deliberative rationality and narrative detail. Mobilizing rich cultural meanings by addressing a wide spectrum of human functions, Bril's aesthetic judgments catalyze a web of incipient ideas, reasons, imaginings, and feelings. Taste and distaste perform a racializing function against the backdrop of a racial, nationalist aesthetic that shapes the reader's experience without having to be spelled out.

In virtue of the multidimensional resonance of the aesthetic, the figure of damaged aesthetic experience condenses the requisite evidential and affective work.^[36] This effect would be undercut by further expository detail. Given the encapsulating force of aesthetic experience, the column puts into gear a full-blown racial apparatus while touching the theme of race fleetingly, so lightly that the column may not even seem to concern race. On the surface, it may just appear to call into question some minor aesthetic annoyances. However, the encompassing scope of aesthetic experience underwrites the racial power of the threat of aesthetic degeneracy, implementing social hierarchies in an expansive, densely knotted web of interlacing cultural functions. Here we encounter again the all-embracing reach of the aesthetic, which, in collaboration with the tendency of the aesthetic to replicate categorially entrenched forms of domination, must be counted among its disciplinary powers.

Aesthetic experience fulfills yet another disciplinary role in Bril's case. This function draws upon Baumgarten's conception of the aesthetic as a sensory form of knowledge and Hegel's notion of the sensory embodiment of ideas. I have shown how the sensory encounter between the driver, the passenger, and the vehicle (sound, touch, vision, smell, heat, motion) exemplifies the perceived erosion of autochthonous aesthetic governance over the city space under the influence of working class immigrant labor. The column invites us to examine the bodily interaction in the cab as an instance of the shifting cultural character of the city. This encounter yields knowledge of a racial change that the text conveys to the reader. Following Baumgarten, we can recognize here the construction of a sensory form of cognition of contemporary race relations. In Hegelian terms, we can speak of a sensory embodiment of ideas pertaining to racial selves and others. Sensory knowing or ideation is fundamental to the workings of the aesthetic as a racial discipline in the cab and the column. The text enables the reader to experience cultural difference as aesthetic inappropriateness. I have argued that this experience contains a disaffiliation from racial otherness in the form of aesthetic distaste. In this experience, the aesthetically desirable self is distinguished from the aesthetically repulsive other, and feels provoked to distance itself. Via aesthetic aversion, sensory social and environmental knowledge of racial constellations aligns affect against racial otherness. The text's racial force can partially be attributed to its production of a form of sensory knowledge.

Sensory understanding thereby functions not merely as a content of experience but also as a technology for the creation of experience. Bril implicitly notes that the ordinary production of sensory knowledge has gone awry in the taxicab. He witnesses an unsettling misappropriation of means of knowledge formation. His voice is no match for the racket generated by the loud radio and the rattling car. Whiny noise invades the soundscape, banishing familiar taxi songs and city sounds. The car itself is an old VW Jetta rather than a newish Mercedes. Domestic items such as the smell of toilet cleaner and the look and the feel of the plastic on the back seat eradicate what could have been appealing olfactory, visual, and tactile images. Blurring a transparent, audible distinction between self and other, virtually accentless Dutch takes over an auditory space that in the usual course of things would be filled by an indigenously Dutch inflection or, for that matter, perhaps by an identifiably and intriguingly foreign-sounding tongue.

Aesthetics, communication devices, domestic technology, and language collaboratively shift the space from the familiar settings of legible Dutch identity (“yes, I know my city”) to the anonymity of what might as well have been any Western metropolitan environment. The passenger’s sensory modes of cognition are thrown into disarray. Sensations fail to embody received ideas. While it may be acceptable that in certain cities anything can happen, that one can’t reliably make out the meanings of the signals one encounters, or finds one’s cultural knowledge to be of diminished applicability, this is a problem if it occurs in one’s own city. In the cab, Bril’s modes of knowledge production do not authoritatively determine how things are or should be done; his stylistic judgment and his special relation to the city lack prescriptive aesthetic power. His ordinary means of making sensory cognition meaningful and of taking pleasure in the sensory embodiment of ideas lose their reliability.

The column cautions us against this breakdown of technologies of aesthetic understanding. Sensory and cognitive unsettlement culminates in moral disorder. Bril’s trust has been betrayed: “I protested. To be honest, this is not my forte. I just always want to go by the idea that people have the best intentions for me. I know it’s a dumb viewpoint, but occasionally advantages cling to it, though they don’t come to mind readily now.” The driver’s actions have ruffled a framework of social virtue that no longer knows its own innocence. A racialized aesthetic affront has swelled into epistemic and moral destabilization, the origin of which is attributed to the taxi driver. Turmoil has taken over the customary sensory embodiment of ideas. “Our” ordinary modes of sensory knowledge production are in uproar. The column diagnoses this commotion as a racial problem.

6. Theorizing Aesthetic Disciplinarity

My investigation of the disciplinary functioning of aesthetic integrations and dualities in the Dutch taxi scenario has several implications for an understanding of aesthetic disciplinarity, which I briefly describe in this section. Cultural theorists and philosophers have argued that mind-body dichotomies and related oppositions often carry social connotations.^[37] One pole represents the norm; the other signifies deviancy. For this reason the dualities underwriting the aesthetic field can be expected to impart hierarchical differences to our cultural encounters, and to make possible forms of oppression. Indeed, Naomi Schor links the functioning of mind-body separations in aesthetics with distinctions between genders and classes.^[38] Frantz Fanon has explored the participation of the mind-body division in a partially aesthetic dynamic of racialization unfolding between blacks and whites.^[39] Yet located *between* polarities that have been understood to be fundamentally separate, the aesthetic would simultaneously seem to be in a unique position to counteract the hierarchical and differentiating functioning of the relevant dualities. This points to a contrary effect, which, in various forms, has been witnessed by writers such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde, who recognize, in the aesthetic, resources for critique and transformation.^[40]

The taxicab scenario testifies to the recuperative workings of aesthetic syntheses and oppositions. Rather than resisting power relations that tend to be associated with the relevant Enlightenment dualities, in this case integrations assist in the production of traditional racial hierarchies and differentiations, presumably because the integrative work remains mainly in Bril’s hands.

This suggests the following proposal: contemporary aesthetic integrations and dissociations are neither oppressive nor transformative in their own right, but achieve a range of effects in collaboration with institutionalized histories of differentially distributed aesthetic oppositions and integrations. In this view, aesthetic acts of resistance to Enlightenment dualities can be assumed to go together with moments of aesthetic reimplementations. Aesthetic forms participate in webs of normatively coded dualities and integrations that are already in place in contingent cultural situations. They interact with concrete constellations of aestheticized and aestheticizing power. A theory of aesthetic disciplinarity must register what happens in these interactions. It must take note of systemic and accidental forms of determination that converge in concrete spaces and times. The above analysis of the taxicab case calls for a fine-

grained, detail-oriented approach to aesthetic disciplinarity that at the same time takes cognizance of the force of broader, historical aesthetic structures.

My inquiry into the role of dualities and integrations in the taxi case bears out yet another conclusion. The city, the encounter in the cab, the newspaper column, and the reading of the column instantiate webs of experience. The resulting experiential textures manifest various routes and directions of separation and integration. As the well-documented faltering of the distinctions between the relevant Enlightenment poles would suggest, there is no one-sided domination of one register of activity by another, and neither are there generic conjunctions or divisions of elements. In fact, it is hard to conceive what these options might amount to, given that the Enlightenment separations ultimately break down and a far more messy, non-dualistic picture is in order on which the mental amounts to the bodily, and dimensions of publicity and privacy and individual and sociality intermesh with one another.

What the taxicab case demonstrates, then, are not the operations of a generalized aesthetic integrationism within a fundamentally binary system, but a fabric of experience in which specific, differentially available connections and disconnections among mutually implicated registers of mind and body, individuality and sociality, and privacy and publicity give rise to various forms of aesthetic positioning and power. Within this experiential web, affect, sensation, and perception enable and constrain what is being imagined and thought, and vice versa. Bril organizes modalities of mind, sociality, and publicity to exert control in the realm of embodiment, individuality, and privacy, but disciplinary racial effect also runs in the other direction: the writer is moved to turn from the bodily impulses undergone within the constricted enclosure of the cab, such as his experience of the music, to the wider reaches of the newspaper publication, which articulates a sense of a racially divided community. In sum, aesthetic disciplinarity takes complex, contingent forms that, even if they fail to confirm certain integrationist generalizations, nonetheless draw on the dualities and integrations around which aesthetic theorists have historically centered their conceptions of the aesthetic. This historical dimension of current aesthetic agency is a part of a more extensive story of aesthetic disciplinarity that remains to be told.[\[41\]](#)

7. Conclusion

Putting together the different parts of the analysis I have developed here, we can see that a contemporary logic of racial community formation is capable of recruiting historical, dualist and integrationist constructions of the aesthetic in the service of aesthetic disciplinarity. Musical experience can thereby traverse a racializing trajectory. Bril's estrangement reflects a momentary turnabout of prefabricated cultural borderlines, as a result of which an ordinarily excluded, unassimilable strangeness flickers back at him. A slippage in the racial, national aesthetic allows the driver's designated alienation momentarily to convert into the passenger's own strangeness. However, the normative cultural subject knows his whereabouts among the standards of taste, which have consolidated across the field of affect and perception, imagination and reason. He masters the circuits of aesthetic abjection. Having disoriented cultural being, aesthetic experience can also redirect lines of becoming. Fanning out between the loops of individual judgment and the larger vistas of the public media, and scooping up group anxieties through the aperture of private sensibility, aesthetic norms may get us to repair the damage that is assumed to have been wreaked by undisciplined otherness, in an attempt to quiet racial fear. Unsettled by aesthetic collisions, we can reinstate cultural ownership through ready-made aesthetic scripts that press billowing identifications back into their historically enforced racial and national troughs, which have briefly displayed the tenuousness of their hold. Aesthetic disciplinarity appears to be a powerful instrument of racial community building. Integrationism can advance the project of a racial and nationalist aesthetic.

As my discussion of Bril and Addison indicates, the disciplinary operations of the aesthetic implicate work. They prescribe a division of labor and enforce normative valuations of kinds of work and workers. Recall that for Addison the aesthetic observer need not work as hard as those who devote themselves to the toils of the mind but nonetheless avoids the laziness of those who indulge in the life of the senses. Addison's

comments on aesthetic contemplation appeared in his and Richard Steele's daily periodical, *The Spectator*. With this journal, he aimed to bring "Philosophy out of the Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-tables and in Coffee-houses."^[42] Hitching onto the pleasures of urban leisure time almost three centuries after the publication of Addison's account of spectatorship, the practice of aesthetic judgment, in itself a kind of labor performed for and by reading newspapers and carried out in taxis, cafés, streets, trains, parks, and homes, excuses Bril, the contemporary metropolitan commentator, from the arduous but not necessarily less rewarding work of critical multiracial literacy, while conveying to the reader the need for cultural regulation and ethnic assimilation in conformity with indigenous cultural norms. Theorizing aesthetic disciplinarity involves attending to the labor the aesthetic performs and demands, locally, nationally, and transnationally. It involves exploring the ways in which particular types of work and escapes from work lock into already given distributions of labor to aestheticize racial identities, boundaries, and differences.^[43]

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Endnotes

[1] For arguments to this effect, see Monique Roelofs, "Theorizing the Aesthetic Homeland: Racialized Aesthetic Nationalism in Daily Life and the Art World," in *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader*, eds. Mariana Ortega and Linda Martín Alcoff (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), in press; and "Racialization as an Aesthetic Production: What Does the Aesthetic Do for Whiteness and Blackness and Vice Versa?," in *White on White/Black on Black*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), pp. 83-124. The latter article points also to the aesthetic functioning of racial constructions with which aesthetic strategies of racialization are entwined. See also Cornel West, "A Genealogy of Modern Racism," in *Prophesy Deliverance! Towards an Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982); and Sylvia Wynter, "Rethinking 'Aesthetics': Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice," in *Ex-Iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*, ed. Mbye Cham (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 1992), pp. 237-279.

[2] Martin Bril, "Taxirit," *De Volkskrant*, December 20, 2004. Translations are mine. A hugely popular writer, Bril is the author of over forty books. His death in April 2009 was widely deplored in the Netherlands.

[3] For a discussion of this phenomenon, see my "Theorizing the Aesthetic Homeland." An initial analysis of racialized aesthetic nationalism in "Taxi Ride" appeared as Monique Roelofs, "Plastic, Toileteend en een Omweg: Esthetisch Nationalisme en het Verlangen naar een Monoculturele Orde," in *De Nieuwe Politieke Dimensie van de Kunsten: Jaarboek voor Esthetica 2005*, eds. Bart Vandenabeele, Koen Vermeir, Sigrid Leyssen, Kathleen Vandeputte (Budel, Belgium: Damon, 2006), pp. 93-109; published also at esthetica.nge.nl.

[4] For the notion of strange strangeness, and the distinction between assimilable and unassimilable strangeness, see Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 97, 106-7, 113. For notions of cultural integrity and assimilation implicitly informing the experience of aesthetic strangeness in the cab, see also Linda Martín Alcoff's *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 272-3.

[5] Deregulation of the taxi industry in 2000, which enabled anyone in possession of a driver's license and a declaration of good conduct to get a taxi license, in the Dutch capital has been argued to have caused an increase in the supply and the fare of taxirides, a decrease in the quality of the drivers and the vehicles, and unclarity about the precise calculation of the fare. See J. van der Bij and T. Brandsen, "Te Kort door de Bocht? De Deregulering van de Taximarkt," *Bestuurskunde*, 12.5 (August 2003): 203-

211. www.bestuurskunde.nl/bestuurskunde/jg12/nr5/2003,8,12,5,2.php. From 2003-2008 deregulation has been accompanied by various reregulatory initiatives to support quality and freedom of choice for the consumer. See the timeline for the so-called "taxi law" on the website of the Dutch Department of Transportation and Water Management, www.verkeerenwaterstaat.nl/onderwerpen/vervoermiddelen/taxi/taxiwet_ondernemers/. See also "Taxi Services Regulation and Competition," DAF/COMP (2007) 42, by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), Sept. 11, 2008, pp. 160-1.

[6] That is, by culturally foreign behaviors that are accorded lower class status. Class is a dimension of racialization in the column. So is gender. Brill engages in a masculinized process of competition with the driver.

[7] The result is an aesthetic cycle of self-legitimizing fear. For an account of the effects of a cycle of projections and legitimizing perceptions of fear, see Judith Butler, "Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia," in *Reading Rodney King/Reading Urban Uprising*, ed. Robert Gooding-Williams (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 15-22.

[8] I have observed this reaction in the case of several white, autochthonous and allochthonous citizens of Amsterdam.

[9] The melancholic and activist dimensions of aesthetic culture building are not mutually exclusive. Elsewhere, I examine the workings of the figure of damaged aesthetic experience in relation to other aesthetic productions.

[10] This formulation calls for a qualification, in the case of Schiller's theory, as formulated in his letters on aesthetic education, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). Schiller claims that the polarities between reason and the senses or feeling cannot be bridged (p. 131) and objects to the notion of a midway or middle state between them (p. 123). He emphasizes that aesthetic experience, as realized by the play drive, retains the oppositions between these functions. At the same time, he deploys the language of a middle position (pp. 141, 161). Reason and sensation, in his view, co-exist independently, yet act reciprocally and in unity (pp. 95, 111, 125, 181).

[11] I further explore the normative operations of aesthetic integrations as forms of racial disciplinarity in my essay, "The Aesthetics of Ignorance," which was presented at the Penn State Conference "Ethics and Epistemologies of Ignorance" in March 2004, and at the session on "The Aesthetics of Popular Culture" of the Central Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association in Chicago in April 2006, and will be forthcoming in *Feminist Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art: The Power of Critical Visions and Creative Engagements*, ed. L. Ryan Musgrave (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010).

[12] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, Vol. 3, ed. Gregory Smith (London: J. M. Dent, 1907), No. 411, p. 277. According to Addison, beauty inspires the pleasures of the imagination in the man of taste, while imperfection elicits dislike (p. 271).

[13] *Ibid.*, No. 411, pp. 277-8.

[14] *Ibid.*, No. 420, p. 304.

[15] Addison's analogy between the mental faculty of fine taste and the taste of the sense of the palate (*Ibid.*, No. 409, p. 270) and the connections he implicitly or explicitly recognizes between the pleasures of the imagination and the activities of the understanding (No. 413, p. 282-3; No. 416, p. 293; and No. 418, p. 297) are also pertinent in this regard.

[16] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Theoretische Ästhetik: Die Grundlegenden Abschnitte aus der "Aesthetica" (1750/58)*, ed. and trans. Hans Rudolf Schweizer (Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983), §1, pp. 2-3.

[17] *Ibid.*, §12, pp. 6-9; §38, pp. 22-25.

[18] Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, pp. 15, 45, 95-99, 103-5, 117.

[19] *Ibid.* pp. 33-41.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 215.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[23] With the provision that this takes more than a century (p. 47).

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 169. Likewise, he considers it worthwhile to create form in activities that are ordinarily the purview of physical impulse and desire (p. 167). He claims that moral law and rational freedom must manifest themselves in the "indifferent sphere of physical life" (p. 167). In virtue of the action of the play drive, the aesthetic state is conducive to the moral state, a more advanced stage of development in which morality and rationality prevail.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 49, 77, 209.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 63, 209.

[27] Schiller claims that "aesthetic semblance must be devoid of reality" (p. 199). True semblance is insubstantial and pure (p. 197); it responds to "sheer appearance," which artworks and human bodies achieve "purely in virtue of their existence as idea" (p. 199).

[28] G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, Vol. 1, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 7-8. Distinguishing the distinctive domain of philosophy--spirit--from the more primitive functioning of the body, affect, and the senses, his idealist framework observes a binarism of mind and body.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 38.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 70.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 29.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-3, 38-9, 49, 71, 75-81.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11. According to Hegel, in the Christian period, which gives rise to romantic art, spirit develops to the stage of inwardness and its artistic unification with sensuous form constrains its expression (p. 79).

[34] The Dutch expression "zag er slecht uit" ("looked bad") refers to a person's looking unhealthy or ill. In the context of the column, this meaning is supplemented with Bril's visual impression that the driver fails to adequately care about his appearance.

[35] Compare musical sociality in "Taxi Ride" with that in an earlier column "Hilton," which appeared in the newspaper *The Parool* on July 12, 2001. In the latter article, Bril takes two cabs. During the first trip, on his way to the Hilton hotel, where the Dutch rock singer Herman Brood had committed suicide earlier that day, music is playing from Brood's band *Wild Romance*. This not only suits Bril's taste but also the commemorative end of his trip: he is on the way to the hotel to join the singer's family and friends in a floral tribute to the deceased musician. We can ask: How loud was the music playing that day? How fast did the cab drive? In what shape was the vehicle? Did the driver look perky and well rested? Did he take the most direct way? Does this matter to Bril? In the taxi on the way back, Bril and the driver have a conversation about Brood, and Bril listens to Brood's voice on the radio again. The atmosphere and the exchange are companionable.

[36] One may wonder about the fragility of Bril's sense of being at home in the city.

Why does this connoisseur of the city surrender the feeling of belonging so readily? The escalation of emotions about a confrontation in a taxi into emotions that are directed at the city indicates that the exchange relies for its significance on broader racial anxieties. Yet, the Netherlands affords an enormous level of recognition to what can be considered autochthonous, white Dutch modes of being. The question remains as to why a prosperous, stable, well-educated, relatively safe country with a public sphere that is founded on centuries-old national laws and traditions has failed to generate a more steady sense of aesthetic security in an aesthetically occupied and empowered, artistically employed indigenous citizen. Of course, given that Dutch wealth has been built on a system of colonial oppression, and the Netherlands continues to benefit from structural global exploitation, the sense of safety that is tied to white Dutch privilege is continually perceived to be in need of maintenance in light of omnipresent signs of ongoing inequality and injustice. Also, a certain level of anxiety is understandable at the time of death threats, a public discourse of increased fundamentalism, and severe international political pressure to participate in a war on terrorism, that characterized the beginnings of the twenty-first century in the post-9/11 period. Yet, it is not as if global power balances are ready to undergo large-scale social shifts that are about to bring Dutch culture down. The absence of a more constant sense of aesthetic control is not self-explanatory. We can recognize here the affective and imaginative impact of the figure of damaged aesthetic experience.

[37] See, among others, Frantz Fanon, "The Facts of Blackness," in *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities*, pp. 273-5; Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985); Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon, 1988).

[38] Such separations and distinctions are exemplified in the aesthetic status of the detail. See Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 6-17 and 21. Terry Eagleton describes the aesthetic in Baumgarten as a prosthetic, feminized "cognitive underlaborer" to higher reason in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 16-7. More broadly, he links the ascendancy of the aesthetic with the emancipation of the German bourgeoisie, pp. 14, 19-28.

[39] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, "The Facts of Blackness." See also pp. 156-170.

[40] See Julia Kristeva, *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 167-249; Luce Irigaray, *To Be Two*, trans. Monique M. Rhodes and Marco F. Cocito-Monoc (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 7, 61, 88; Audre Lorde "Poetry is Not a Luxury," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom CA: The Crossing Press, 1984); Gloria Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter To Third World Women Writers," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Expanded and Revised Third Edition, eds. Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 2002), p. 192.

[41] I elaborate this point more fully in my book manuscript in progress, *The Cultural Promise of the Aesthetic*.

[42] Addison, *The Spectator*, No. 10, p. 32.

[43] Sections of this essay were presented in 2006 at the conference *Close Encounters* of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, at the University of Amsterdam; at the *California Roundtable on Philosophy and Race* at the University of San Francisco; at the Annual Meetings of the American Society for Aesthetics in Milwaukee; and at the *Sites and Citations of Memory* Faculty Seminar at Hampshire College. I thank the audiences at these sessions for their comments. Special thanks for illuminating discussions go to Remco Campert, Deborah Campert-Spelman, Karin Roelofs, Loes Roelofs-Vennekens, and Elizabeth V. Spelman.