# Grasping the Wind?Aesthetic Participation, between Cognition and Immersion

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> "Vent ininterrompu. Que peut-on souhaiter de plus? Le vent, c'est de la poésie immédiate." (Cioran)[1]

Aesthetic theory looks for concepts that are able to grasp (Latin: *concipere* – to conceive, but also to grasp, seize, capture) a specific experience that is renowned for its ineffable character. Such attempts to elaborate conceptually what is known without concepts (Kant) may inspire a skeptical attitude since a completely satisfactory conceptualization of the aesthetic experience is eventually as impossible as catching the wind. At the same time, it is precisely the poetical potential of the wind that may exemplify diverse aspects of aesthetic engagement. In its own way art succeeds in grasping the wind by representing, reflecting and engaging with the wind. Thus, just as a "soft side of stone" can be found in art, so can art manifest a "graspable side" of the wind. [2] That the wind exemplifies aspects of aesthetic engagement is essential for the present approach. Engagement "offers not argumentation but exemplification" because it is based on experience and requires an "empirical demonstration."[3] In particular, the wind poses a challenge for the analysis because it has neither sides, parts, nor dimensions, no form and almost no matter. Because of its shapelessness and invisibility it hardly can be considered an object. I [D1] It is still a force that is experienced as a dynamic presence. But before going into the typology of aesthetic engagement, let us start with an example in which several forms of engagement are inextricably linked to each other.

## 1. Attunement and engagement

The protoaesthetic situation of feeling a gentle breeze seems to confirm the Kantian requirement of disinterested contemplation. At first sight, also Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *The Eolian Harp* endorses this assumption. The poet and the "pensive Sara" are sunk in contemplation, watching the clouds and the sunset, smelling exquisite flowery scents, listening to "the stilly murmur of the distant Sea" that "tells us of silence," and to "that simplest Lute"

> How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
> Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
> It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
> Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
> Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
> Over delicious surges sink and rise,
> Such a soft floating witchery of sound
> As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
> Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land […]![4]

As a matter of fact, the mood of tranquility evoked by the poem stems from the continuity and communication between the author and his multisensory environment; the gentle light and fragrances, "the soft floating witchery of sound," and the caress of the breeze all pass on the lovers' mood and fill them with cosmic harmony. Instead of focusing on the distinction between the subject and the object, such an experience is based upon a deep, almost mystical feeling of union between humans and the world, which is described as love for "all things in a world so filled." The breeze that "warbles" in the "mute still air," producing music, is but one of the symbols of "the one Life within us and abroad / Which meets all motion and becomes its soul." Once this higher unity is attained, the differences between the senses are converted to a synaesthetic experience ("A light in sound, a sound-like power in light"), without generating confusion but evoking the well-known motif of the music of the spheres: "Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where."

In such a tranquil atmosphere one is entitled to ask where traces of the subject's activity can be found? First of all, contemplation is by no means a passive attitude but an extremely intensive one that requires *concentration*. It is possible to listen to the melodies only if one constitutes the melody in a polythetic structure (in several steps) and the unity of the melody as a process. The identification of its acoustic patterns and rhythms requires *perceptual syntheses*.[5] Also the relaxation unleashes "full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd, / And many idle flitting phantasies" that "traverse [the poet's] indolent and passive brain, / As wild and various as the random gales / That swell and flutter on this subject Lute." Listening leads to the synchronization or attunement (German: *Einstimmung*) between one's own feelings, rhythms, and thoughts and the music the eolian harp randomly produces. This state of mind suggests to the poet a stunning analogy and makes him *reflect* on the nature of the universe. Immersion and cognition become inseparable:

> … what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic Harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

The metaphor of God as "one intellectual breeze" that animates nature is consonant with the symbolism of the wind in several religions, including Christianity, where it is closely related to the epiphany of the Holy Spirit.[6]

**2. Perceptive constitution of the object**

Strictly speaking, the wind does not exist *as such*, but has to be verbally identified *as* wind. The same goes for the wind as an object of the natural sciences and an object of arts. However, the aesthetic dimension of the wind is inseparable from the *experience* of the wind, which is subjective, yet not strictly individual, since we usually agree whether the wind blows or not. Only the sensation is strictly individual and unverifiable, not the perception, which has a public, intersubjective dimension. According to the reinterpretation of aesthetics as *aisthetics* or theory of perception (Berleant, G.

Böhme, Welsch), the wind has already an aesthetic dimension as a perceivable phenomenon. Moreover, even on this level the subject is not merely receptive but has to perform perceptual (and, following Merleau-Ponty, not intellectual) syntheses in order for a certain flow of sensations to qualify as wind. In other words, having the experience of wind requires the subject to engage with the environment, and become aware of certain aspects, that is, pay attention to them, to activate a selection of traits, to observe them, and to constitute (not produce!) the object phenomenologically.

Further, the phenomenon identified as wind receives a specific aesthetic dimension when it produces pleasant effects, given that pleasantness may be regarded – against the Kantian dichotomy between pleasure, *Lust*, and aesthetic satisfaction, *Wohlgefallen* – as a protoaesthetic value. The pleasant effects of the air currents are mostly tactile and thermal, but they can be also indirectly auditory (for example, when, in cold winter weather, one sits in front of the fireplace and listens to the wind blowing outside), or olfactory and even gustatory (when one fells the salted water brought by the wind coming from the sea). The famous image of Marilyn Monroe's with her windblown dress records the tactile and thermal pleasure of feeling a refreshing wind on a hot day presented as a narcissistic, autoerotic experience or as the erotic engagement with a non-human partner.

Also the multisensory dimension of the wind requires one to amend the subject-object-dichotomy of modern philosophy and aesthetics since the wind is not perceived as an object placed in front of the subject, as in visual experience. The perceiving subject is the body itself, which is immersed within an environment and engages with the natural surroundings. Nevertheless, such an environmental perception proves to be pleasant only within certain limits. To follow the Kantian theory of the dynamic sublime, a strong and dangerous storm is hardly to be appreciated aesthetically by one who is not in a secure shelter.

In addition to this, the effects of the wind and weather in general are both physical and psychological: weather changes are felt with the entire body. Meteo-dependent people know from their own experience to what extent weather may affect their mood, state of spirit, sensibility and *Gemüt*, power of concentration, blood pressure, etc., and invalidate once more the Cartesian abstract cleavage between body and soul. It is interesting that Leonardo da Vinci deliberately chose the wind as a metaphor for the soul that can never achieve good effects in a weak or sick body, just as the wind can never produce good music on an organ when one of its pipes is broken.[7] The soul is dependent of the body as much as the perception of the wind is dependent of an instrument to "capture" its movement and translate it into music.

Frequently the perception of the wind is culturally embedded: a current of air is identified as *Föhn* or *Bora* on the basis of an entire collective historical experience. Further, the wind is also a cultural phenomenon, whose natural perception is influenced by the history of a community and its corpus of knowledge, literary, or mythological sources. According to Herder and to Tetsuro Watsuji, the cultures are even determined by the

climate, including the wind. For Watsuji[8] the "climate" (Japanese *fudo*, "wind and earth") belongs to the structure of the human *Dasein*, in the Heideggerian meaning, and cannot be reduced to its scientifically objectified dimensions. Watsuji even classifies the cultures according to their climates into three types: 1. The peoples from the Far East (India and South-East Asia), who are influenced by the extremely humid "monsoon climate," are prone to passivity and resignation, and to a contemplative and emotional attitude. 2. The unfriendly "desert climate" in the Arabian and African cultures forces humans to conceive life as a struggle with nature, to praise the power of will, and to adopt a practical orientation. 3. The "meadow climate" in Europe, in particular around the Mediterranean Sea, induces an anthropocentric, tranquil, introspective, and intellectual life.

Watsuji's theory, which has often been rejected as poetic speculation, is indeed subject to various objections; one of them concerns the one-directional relationship between culture and weather. According to Watsuji, the natural environment is a determinant of the culture, while people – in spite of the ambitious projects of geoengineering – exert no influence on weather. Nevertheless, apart from this interpretation of the weather from the perspective of philosophy (Watsuji) or of the history of culture[9] (Behringer 2010), the possibility of an aesthetic experience of the wind attests that we are dealing with a culturally molded phenomenon.

Last, but not least, the perception of wind raises interesting questions concerning its representability. Otherwise stated, how can wind be represented in the visual arts or, generally speaking, how can it be represented by a medium, given that its very medial nature *enables* perception only by remaining in itself unperceivable? A first possible answer to this question regards the personification of the wind as in antiquity and on premodern maps when winds were named, received anthropomorphic representations, and became characters of narratives. A second option says that the phenomenalization of a medium is possible indirectly, by means of its effects. Lighted and shadowed sides of objects make light visible, just as "windblown hair, billowing drapery, fluttering ribbons"[10] suggest the animation produced by the wind.

The aforementioned details are specific motifs for the "classical Victories, Horae and, most particularly, Maenads."[11] Warburg called them "*bewegtes Beiwerk*."[12] These motifs "ubiquitously present in classical monuments, lovingly described in classical literature, explicitly recommended to painters by Leone Battista Alberti" around 1435 "become a real vogue" in the Italian Cinquecento, think of Sandro Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. Several other sculptors and painters, such as Claude Monet, resorted to the same strategy to visualize the wind through its effects. In Monet's *Rue Montorgueil*, the flags flapping on the occasion of a celebration in Paris on the 30th of June 1878 evoke a vigorous wind that the spectator almost feels in her face. They suggest an animated atmosphere and create a sonorous image. Modern natural sciences still use the Beaufort Scale of wind speed, whose quantifiable parameters, measured in knots, are accompanied by photographs showing the effects of the wind on water and

by verbal descriptions of these effects.[13]

### 3. Kinaesthetic performance and poetical participation: imagination, empathy and atmosphere

Perception is never mere receptivity, Husserl's *Affizierbarkeit* , but has to be bodily performed. Tactile perceptions require the subject's kinaesthetic engagement[14] and the same goes for sight, the sense of taste, and even smell. The correlation between sensation and movement in general is central to Erwin Straus's phenomenology of perception[15] while Gilles Clément regards activity as an essential attribute of every life being.[16] These movements can be performed either consciously, deliberately, and knowingly or in a habitual way if they belong to the latent memory of the body; or they can occur unwillingly and even reluctantly.

In the *direct* and *aesthetic* experience of the wind, a physical engagement appears to be mostly absent; quite the contrary, the exposure to a strong wind throws someone out of an aesthetic attitude. The aesthetic situation seems to imply a clear division of roles between the active "object" and the passive subject.[17] The situation is completely different when the wind is represented; the subject feels secure and thus free to take an aesthetic stance. In such cases, the spectator is engaged in the movement indirectly in an empathic and imaginative manner, for example,by watching how man and horse struggle to make their way against a gale in the opening scene of the film *The Turin Horse*[18] The onlooker's involuntary identification with the character(s) is enhanced by the length of the scene: when man and horse finally reach their shelter, the spectator feels exhausted, too.

However, psychological empathy is not necessary in order to perform the observed movement inwardly, as kinetic art well knows and shows. The installations exhibited by the Lithuanian artist Žilvinas Kempinas (*Fountain*, *Flux* etc.) are directly linked to air vibrations and air currents). The agitation of the featherlight tapes of a magnetophon that are put into motion by ventilators in gallery spaces is transmitted also to their perceivers who feel light and restless, exposed to outer forces and like dancing with magnetic tapes.

Imagination is universally regarded as having a higher degree of activity than perception, just as productive imagination or fantasy is more intensive than the reproductive imagination in everyday life. This common distinction between two types of imagination becomes blurred when Gaston Bachelard considers that every act of imagination not only forms images but changes them, its object being less the image than the imaginary (*imaginaire*).[19] In particular, the element of air involves the "psychology of the imagination of the movement" and is linked to a strong mobility of images [20]. For example, the wind Bachelard discusses in a separate chapter[21] is able to unleash the power to invent narratives and to produce and combine images. Most dynamic are the images of the "violent air," the storm, the furious wind and the elemental energy when the air is "all movement and nothing but movement," and its effect on the imagination consists in a "participation essentially dynamic that is nothing else than engagement and empathic reenactment"[22].

However, Bachelard's exemplifications are exclusively literary; the fury and the cry of the wind are most impressive when they are imagined or heard, but not when they are visually represented: "The wind menaces and howls, but it takes a form only if it meets the dust: once it becomes visible, it is a poor misery."[23] Being devoid of figure and form, the wind seems *per se* to be incompatible with the visual arts; its visible image would lend its rage and wrath a rather derisory aspect. In the end the wind is the "imagination without figure" and the revery of the storm is guided not by the eye, but by the "*surprised ear*," since "hearing is more dramatic than sight."[24] Even when it is experienced without the intercession of art, such as when one watches the infernal hunt of the clouds, the violent and energetic manifestation of the storm is still conceived in literary terms: "we participate directly to the *drama* of the violent air."[25] The storm symbolizes the pure energy that successively creates and destroys worlds; to paraphrase Bachelard, the phenomenology of the storm anticipates a phenomenology of the cry that is projected on a cosmological scale. Bachelard's selective imagination of the wind may well be set forth by mentioning different musical works (which he does not), starting with Debussy's *Le vent dans la plaine* from *Préludes*. On the whole the imagination of the wind is a multisensory experience.[26]

Bachelard's conviction that the visualization of the wind is less able to produce aesthetic effects may be regarded as a challenge for the fine arts. Already the personification of winds had enabled their anthropomorphic representation in pre-modern Europe like the representation of astral bodies and unlike rain and thunder. Later on, Góngora's images of the wind that combs the hair inspired Eduardo Chillida's sculpture *The comb of the wind*, precisely by reversing the poet's initial metaphor. The three pieces of metal placed on the coast of the Atlantic comb the wind itself, which is then imagined as being analogous to the hair or to a Maenad's braids that are like snakes. Moreover, their form and material remind one of tongs or pliers that present the unpresentable attempt to grasp the wind. This artwork is interesting not only because it is integrated in the environment, but also because it is no more conceived as end in itself, but as a means for arranging, taming, and eventually humanizing a "wild" element. Moreover, *El peine del viento* shifts the perception from form to the process of forming, from the passive matter to the active masses of air. The artist casts the metal in a mould and the metal itself shapes the natural elements by filtering them as in a chain of reactions. To understand the sculpture is to perform mentally the gesture of using these pieces to comb the air. The same idea may even be reenacted bodily: by spreading our fingers, our hands, themselves, become combs for the wind. If Ulysses once chained the winds and had the *hybris* to try to subjugate nature, Chillida's gesture complies with a natural force and engages with it.

Also the expressivity of Chillida's *Comb of the wind* is much indebted to the atmosphere, for the wind has a strong poetical value precisely as an element that creates atmospheres. The theory of the atmosphere includes the wind among the so-called "half-things" (*Halbdinge*), along with the gaze, the voice, the darkness, the night, and the coolness.[27]

Moreover, the theory distinguishes atmospheres (*Atmosphäre*) from atmospheric elements (*Atmosphärisches*): the wind belongs to the atmospheric elements, which are less vague than atmospheres yet less physical than things, while atmospheres are moods and qualities, half-things that have attributes (e.g. 'balmy wind'). [28] Besides, experience says that different winds, such as Scirocco, Bora, Föhn or the Crivăț – to confine myself to the Mediterranean and Central European space – produce various atmospheres and represented a valuable source of literary inspiration.[29]

From another perspective, storms offer the most appropriate natural background for dramatic scenes, either romantic turmoil as, for example, in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* or sudden and profound historical changes, insurrections and revolutions, etc. The wind is frequently understood as the sign of an imminent change when incontrollable energies produce social disorders, just as strong winds are feared for causing natural disorders [30]. Also, while thunder symbolizes Jahweh's or Jupiter's voice, the voice of the wind is the people's voice, whose shout and violent insurgence terrifies and snowballs. This analogy is widely used in literature and film and touches the reader or spectator emotionally, inspiring fear and aggressiveness, insecurity, or even a feeling of liberation.

**4. Semantic interpretation**

Winds have always enjoyed a rich symbolism, being associated with vanity, instability, inconsistency, and fickleness. Various pneumatological interpretations in Hinduism and Christianity equate the spirit with the breath, whereas Chinese philosophy integrates the winds in complex correspondences with seasons, tempers, and elements. Some traditions assign the wind a cosmological role in organizing the primordial chaos (Bible) and regulating cosmic and moral balance (Avesta). The winds can animate, punish, counsel, and bring messages, as the angels do (Bible, Koran), and they even become deities in polytheistic traditions (Ancient Greece).[31] In the first place, the wind symbolizes the power of empty space: a stream of air usually looks like a void, but its power is stronger than earth, water, and fire, stronger than matter, more like a purely spiritual energy.

Given this complex symbolism, artworks and installations that play with air currents allow various speculations about their signification. Visualizing air currents is like picturing space, time, speed, and force. For example, Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures or mobiles delicately respond to the slightest air movement and suggest the pure lightness of being. Other experiments have obvious spiritual connotations and invite the viewer to meditation exercises, such as Anish Kapoor's site-specific installation *Ascension*, which was first exhibited in gallery spaces worldwide (beginning with Galleria Continua in San Gimignano in 2003, and then in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Beijing) and afterwards in a sacral space (Basilica di San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice, 2011).

The transnational artist Anish Kapoor explains the installation as follows: "I*n my work, what is and what seems to be often become blurred. In Ascension, for example, what interests me*

*is the idea of the immaterial becoming an object, which is exactly what happens in Ascension: the smoke becomes a column. Also present in this work is the idea of Moses following a column of smoke, a column of light, in the desert..."*[32] His work challenges the history of sculpture understood as the history of material: "I am making works with the history of the non-material, between illusory and real, between mythology and ordinariness," declared the artist.[33] And critics see in Kapoor's works "the predicament of two contradictory elements of modernism, the materiality of a work of art and its opposite, the ideal and the transcendental."[34]

*Ascension* is not merely an installation to be looked at (and one should add, to be listened to), but to be contemplated in the sense of pondering or reflecting on the dream of modern art to make the invisible visible and sensible. In front of *Ascension*, the spectator cannot avoid the vague feeling that the winding column of air is more than a work of art but is a sign, an epiphany of transcendence, the materialization of the spirit, a kind of Jungian archetype that operates on a subconscious level. The ineffable column is not only hard to grasp physically but also conceptually: it moves between earth and heaven, material and immaterial, form and formlessness, and even – to speak with Kant – between phenomenon and noumenon. If Roman Ingarden assigned an active role to the reader of literature, who has to fill the empty places in a text and specify what the author has left indeterminate,[35] such a column is almost a physically indeterminate place and the place of indeterminacy. Its perceiver struggles with the need to grasp it perceptually and reflectively without being able to apprehend it. Anish Kapoor succeeded in *Ascension* to create a mystery that is at the same time here and elsewhere, that manifests itself without delivering its essence, and reveals itself, remaining at the same time inaccessible, a sign without clear signification.

**5. Poietical engagement: making art**

Art meets modern technology not only in Kapoor's installation but also in several kinetic installations that use the power of the air as, for example, in the previously mentioned installations by Žilvinas Kempinas, in which light materials are moved by the air currents produced by a ventilator. This poietical engagement with the element air is quite common in music, where currents of air produce melodies by touching strings (aeolian harp) or moving through pipes (wind instruments). In the case of the aeolian harp, the wind is natural and the music seems to be produced randomly; the subject's activity consists of making the instrument from several strings with different thickness and then letting the wind blow through them. What we hear in this case is, as a matter of fact, not the tone produced by the friction between the wind and the strings but the tone produced by the vibrating wire followed by a sequence of overtones that are always harmonious from a mathematical perspective, but consonant in the lower register and dissonant in the higher one.[36] Apart from this physical explanation, the aeolian harp remains a fascinating instrument because it makes the air appear as sound and thus converts a medium into a phenomenon.[37] Moreover, the sounds made by the aeolian

harp pour into the space without any frame or border and illustrate most concretely Hermann Schmitz's definition of the atmosphere as something that indefinitely streams out into space. The aeolian harp thus produces atmospheric music in several respects.

In the case of wind instruments, it is the musician herself who produces and modulates intentionally the currents of air or, otherwise put, it is the subject who makes not only the instrument but also produces the wind. The aesthetic engagement becomes here the active use of natural elements, building them into the instrument and engaging physically in *making* music. To paraphrase Watsuji, the wind makes us rush into the temple and pray for protection in the typhoon season, but it also makes boats sail and flutes play.[38].

In poietical engagement, the artist does not confine herself any more to feeling the wind or watching its effects but, for research or for practical purposes, makes devices that mediate between the body and the wind. Let us mention a technical and artistic experiment. Etienne-Jules Marey was well-known in the second half of the nineteenth century for his chronophotographs about the movement of men and animals. In 1888 he built a special aquarium in order to investigate the aquatic locomotion of the eel, and in 1893 he published a study of the velocity of fluids. From the water streams he then turned his camera to air currents. He first documented his photographic research in *Le vol des oiseaux* (1890) and then he moved to the very *medium* for the flight of birds. In other words, "he began by photographing the wing moving through the air and ended by photographing the air moving around the wing."[39] Marey's experiments on the movement of air awakened high interest at a time when aviation research was making its first steps. Marey was a consultant, adviser, and for some time even the "éminence grise of French aviation, yet he was aware of his limited capability to interpret his photographs mathematically and physically."[40] Among other photographs, he produced images of smoke fillets and then of air streams that he studied in a wind tunnel he constructed specially for this purpose. Retrospectively it is considered "the grandfather of those still in use today to visualize how air flows around an airplane wing."[41]

Let us move now to the classical example of building screens between the body and the wind: architecture. We begin with the literary description of a residence that was built to protect its inhabitants from strong winds:

> Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling, 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there, at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few, stunted firs at the end of the house, and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and

the corners defended with large jutting stones.[42]

Walls and roofs, arcades, pergolas and other elements provide shelter for the body on one side against wind, precipitation, and extreme temperature, while on the other side, windows enable the air to circulate between indoors and outdoors. Therefore it would be short-sighted to consider that architecture builds only *against* the natural elements. As important as the protection from severe weather conditions is provision for opening oneself to outer space. Apart from border cases, such as bunkers or other exceptional capsules, buildings do not block but only regulate and filter communication with the environment. Houses, like bodies, are open systems with various degree of permeability depending on the climate. In recent decades, architects opposed to the uniformity of modern international architecture have returned to the vernacular traditions of building that integrate the natural elements (light, local building materials, air, etc.) into the construction.[43]

On a larger scale, urban planning has to take into consideration the most frequent direction and intensity of the winds in order to decide conveniently the placement and orientation of what will be built..[44] As a matter of fact, architecture and urban planning are themselves filters or combs of the wind since they build solid masses that hinder the natural air circulation and city highways that become channels for the wind. Thus artifacts do not only manifest (make visible or audible) the air streams; they also conduct the air and eventually shape it. By means of artistic engagement the impossible gesture of grasping the wind is converted into various successful attempts to form and lend sense to the immaterial.

**6. Political commitment**

This vision may well be dismissed as the product of a poetical fantasy. However, a radical change of context occurs when we move to the last type of aesthetic engagement, political commitment. It has already been mentioned that this can be expressed indirectly by using stormy weather as an atmospheric symbol for swift political changes. But the air belongs also to what Arnold Berleant has called "the perceptual commons," the very ground of perception, and this requires a responsible and democratic "aesthetic politics of environment" to regulate the quality, the availability, and the access to basic natural resources.[45] The wish to breathe pure and fresh air instead of being exposed to atmospheric pollution counts among the "perceptual claims" that differ from other claims because of "their immediacy in experience and their primacy for sustaining life itself."[46] One may certainly find examples of artists who make such claims and qualify their ecological and political engagement as an aesthetic (i.e. aisthetic) engagement. However, here again, as in perceptual engagement, aesthetics transgresses the realm of art to become, or rather to rediscover, its initial meaning as a theory of sensibility.

As a matter of fact, all the forms of engagement mentioned above are based upon sensibility, if sensibility is not reduced to the receptivity to stimuli of a passive subject but is

understood as the faculty for reacting to the outer world and producing something new: new images, new emotions, new reflections, and new artifacts. In the case of the wind, this stimulus *activates* various faculties of the subject, those of perceptual discrimination, emotional empathy, reflection, taste, and inventiveness. The famous idea of aesthetic disinterestedness in the sense of the absence of any practical interests does not at all exclude the subject's interaction with the environment and a highly participatory attitude. What eventually distinguishes the art of feeling, (re)presenting, symbolizing, and making the wind from any passive exposure to natural elements is precisely the attempt to capture the essence of the wind in a never-ending adventure.

To view, "The Eolian Harp" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, click here: The Eolian Harp

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**Endnotes**

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[3] Arnold Berleant, "The Aesthetics of Engagement" (lecture delivered at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, typescript notes, May 1993).

[4] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Eolian Harp*, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/183957, downloaded on 10.07.2013.

[5] Alfred Schutz, "Fragments toward a phenomenology of music," in *Collected Papers*, vol. IV (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1996), pp. 243-275.

[6] John 20,22; Acts of the Apostels 2,2.

[7] Leonardo da Vinci, *Philosophische Tagebücher* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1958), p. 103.

[8] Watsuji Tetsuro, *Fudo – Wind und Erde. Der*

*Zusammenhang zwischen Klima und Kultur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), pp. 21-104.

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[10] Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (London: Paladin, 1970), p. 175.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] Aby Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I (Leipzig, Berlin, 1932), p. 5.

[13] For images of the Beaufort Scale, see http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Beaufort_Scale?uselang=de, downloaded on 10.07.2013. However, wind speed may be measured also with acoustic methods, either using vibrating tuner forks, or a tone generator, or even directly by trained listeners (cf. Mins Minssen, "Zur Phänomenologie des Windes und der Windmusik," in *Phänomenologie der Natur*, ed. by Gernot Böhme and Gregor Schiemann, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), pp. 232-255, esp. p. 245.)

[14] Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlaß: 1921-1928*. Husserliana 14 (Dordrecht: Springer, 1973); Géza Révész, *Die Formenwelt des Tastsinnes*, vol. 1 (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1938).

[15] Erwin Straus, *Vom Sinn der Sinne. Ein Beitrag zur Grundlegung der Psychologie* (Berlin: Springer, 1956), p. 238.

[16] Gilles Clément, *Manifest der dritten Landschaft* (Berlin: Merve, 2010).

[17] An exception may be found in a video documenting Anish Kapoor's installation *Ascension* from the Basilica di San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice that shows a visitor stretching her hand to feel or even "grasp" the wind that is technically produced inside the church.

[18] *The Turin Horse*, directed by Béla Tarr and Ágnes Hranitzky (H, 2011).

[19] Gaston Bachelard, *L'air et les songes. Essai sur l'imagination du mouvement* (Paris: José Corti, 1965), p. 7.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 257-270.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[23] My translation, *ibid.*, p. 257.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 256, 259.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 259; my emphasis.

[26] Even the olfactory dimension of the wind is mentioned by Bachelard only parenthetically, at the end of the chapter ("balsamic breezes," "scented winds," *ibid.*, p. 270).

[27] Hermann Schmitz, *System der Philosophie III.5. Die Wahrnehmung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1978), § 245.

[28] Gernot Böhme, *Aisthetik. Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre* (München: Fink, 2001), p. 59.

[29] To mention one single example, the lascivious, erotical, hot, and moist atmosphere in Thomas Mann's *The Death in Venice* is typical for the Scirocco.

[30] Cf. Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 1110–1112, ref. on p. 1112.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 1111.

[32] Anish Kapoor, *Ascension in Venice* 2011, http://www.designboom.com/art/anish-kapoor-ascension-in-venice-2011/, downloaded on 11.07.2013.

[33] Quoted in Partha Mitter, "History, Memory, and Anish Kapoor," in *Anish Kapoor: Past, Present, Future*, ed. by Nicholas Baume (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2008), pp. 104-119, ref. on p. 108.

[34] Mitter, *loc. cit.*

[35] Roman Ingarden, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965), p. 353.

[36] See Minssen, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

[37] "Es ist schon faszinierend wie diese Harfen die Luft zur Erscheinung bringen. Sie verwandeln die Luft in Klang. Wie die Luft ohne Grenze ist, so ergießen sich diese Klänge randlos im Raum. Die Luft ist das Grenzenlose, das apeiron – und ohne Anfang, ohne Ende und die Klänge so Harfe." (Jens Soentgen, quoted in Minssen, *op. cit.*, p. 249).

[38] Tetsuro, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[39] Marta Braun, *Picturing Time. The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 216.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[42] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 4.

[43] For example, Kenneth Frampton's critical regionalism (*Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1985).

[44] For example, the refinery in Schwechat was built in the south of Vienna, given that the winds usually come from the north.

[45] Arnold Berleant, "The Aesthetic Politics of Environment," in *Aesthetics Beyond the Arts. New and Recent Essays* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 181-193.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 186.