ART AND THE OTHER: AESTHETIC INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN GADAMER AND STEIN

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Engaging with Hans-Georg Gadamer and Edith Stein, this article argues that art offers us a glimpse of the interiority of both the artist and the community of connoisseurs who share in a love of art. By tarrying with the other in the artwork, the other becomes enmeshed in the meaning of that work and herself becomes a facet of how art is meaningful and world-making. This process does not claim to know the entirety of the other. Rather, the other, like the artwork, is seen only in part. A trace of the other's interiority affirms our suspicion of connection to the other but always maintains her mystery and autonomy beyond our totalizing conceptualization.

Né d'une collaboration entre Hans-Georg Gadamer et Edith Stein, cet article soutient que l'art nous offre un aperçu authentique de l'intériorité de l'artiste et de la communauté de connaisseurs qui partagent leur amour de l'art. En s'attardant avec l'autre dans l'art, l'autre commence à s'emmêler sur le sens de cet art et il devient eux-mêmes une facette de la richesse de l'art et de la transformation du monde. Ce processus ne prétend pas connaître l'autre dans son intégralité. Au contraire, l'autre, tout comme l'art, est vu seulement en partie. Des réminiscences de l'intériorité de l'autre confirment notre suspicion de connexion à l'autre mais préservent toujours son mystère et son autonomie au-delà de notre conceptualisation totalisante.

> Dear Robert,
> Often as I lie awake I wonder if you are also lying awake. Are you in pain or feeling alone? You drew me from the darkest period of my young life, sharing with me the sacred mystery of what it is to be an artist. I learned to see through you and never compose a line or draw a curve that does not come from the knowledge I derived in our precious time together. Your work, coming from a fluid source, can be traced to the naked song of your youth. You spoke then of holding hands with God. Remember, through everything, you have always held that hand, grip it hard, Robert, and don't let go….
> —Patti Smith, *Just Kids*

In his work *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis describes how we make a friend: "Friendship…is born at the moment when one man says to another 'What? You too? I thought I was the only one.'"[1] It is a sudden unification with another, a camaraderie that says, *there is a piece of you that I understand, and I see as worthwhile or even beautiful*. Friendships that form such a bond through shared artistic creation or art appreciation contain a profound mutual recognition. Certainly, there are other ways to share one's life, but the shared world of a work of art holds a unique kind of connection. If, as Patti Smith claims, we create art "because we cannot simply live,"[2] then to share in a work of art with another is to recognize a shared reason for living.

This article will establish the so-called *centre* of the artwork and how it affects us as human beings using Hans-Georg Gadamer's description of art as festive time, communal play, and mystical symbol in *The Relevance of the Beautiful*.[3] Gadamer posits a unified connection to all of humanity but he does not pinpoint a shared artistic world for specific individuals through a work of art. For this, I will turn to Edith Stein's account of empathy in her later writings. Unlike the account in her dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy*,[4]

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[1] C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: G. Bles, 1960), 77.
[2] Patti Smith, *Devotion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 93.
[3] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*, (ed.) R. Bernasconi, (tr.) N. Walker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as RB.
[4] Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, (tr.) W. Stein (Washington: ICS Publications, 1989).

Stein's later account of empathy in *Introduction to Philosophy*[5] shifts her notion from a *full* understanding of the interiority of the other to a *partial* understanding of the other's interiority. In this second account of empathy, Stein brings in art as a possible vehicle of empathetic communion with the other.[6]

Engaging with these works of Gadamer and Stein, I will argue that art offers us a genuine glimpse of the interiority of both the artist and the community of connoisseurs who share in a love of art. By tarrying with the other in the experience of the artwork, the other becomes enmeshed in the meaning of that work of art and herself becomes a facet of how the artwork is meaningful and world-making. This process does not claim to know the entirety of the other. Rather, the other, like the artwork, is encountered only in part. A trace of the other's interiority affirms our suspicions of connection to the other, but, as a trace, always maintains the other's mystery and autonomy beyond our conceptualization. The artwork allows us to approach the other, as friend, and maintain an interiority of alterity and a glimpse of shared understanding.[7]

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[5] Edith Stein, *Introduction to Philosophy*, (tr.) A. Calcagno (Washington: ICS Publications, forthcoming). For the German, see Edith Stein, "Einführung in die Philosophie," in *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, Vol. VIII*, (ed.) C. M. Wulf (Freiburg: Herder, 2004). Hereafter referred to parenthetically in the text as IP with the first page number referencing Calcagno's translation and the second page number referencing Wulf's edition.

[6] According to Antonio Calcagno, "The scholarly literature focused on Stein's investigation of empathy is immense, but it largely ignores her second analysis of the act of mind in her *Introduction to Philosophy* (*Einführung in die Philosophie*)." See Antonio Calcagno, "Edith Stein's Second Account of Empathy and Its Philosophical Implications," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2017): 131–47, here 131. Calcagno gives a list of relevant literature that confirms this on page 144–45 n. 3 of the same article.

[7] Both Stein and Gadamer assert art as a relational rather than a strictly essential revelation. In regard to Stein, see Terrence C. Wright, "Artistic Truth and the True Self in Edith Stein," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 82, no. 1 (2008): 127–42, here 140. Wright notes the distinction between Martin Heidegger and Stein in which Heidegger finds the call of conscience as coming from the "I," whereas Stein sees it as a call from God; it is in *relation* to God and never alone that one can experience the beauty and truth of life and art. Regarding Gadamer, see Nicholas Davey, *Unfinished Worlds: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, and Gadamer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 2. Davey here addresses Gadamer's claim on how the artwork addresses the spectator in a relationship.

Tarrying in the Festive: Gadamer's Notion of Art

Gadamer's temporal structure of art is set over and against the banal and measured temporality of the clock. He establishes two distinct forms of temporality. There is the commerce of time that is to be purchased and spent, that runs steadily, measured by ticking clocks. This time is experienced as boredom or as the banal busyness of a "frantic bustle" (RB, 42). This is the imposed temporality that Macbeth feels weighing on him upon the death of his wife: "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day."[8] But alternatively, there is the fulfilled or autonomous time that Gadamer associates with the festival and with art.[9] Here, time is offered up and the "calculating way in which we normally manage and dispose of our time is, as it were, brought to a standstill" (RB, 42). For Gadamer, the banal experience of time is fine for managing our societal obligations, but art should "proffer time, arresting it and allowing it to tarry" (*ibid*.). This second temporality of the festive is described by Gadamer as a particular form of dwelling with the artwork:

> [I]n the experience of art we must learn how to dwell upon the work in a specific way. When we dwell upon the work, there is no tedium involved, for the longer we allow ourselves, the more it displays its manifold riches to us. The essence of our temporal experience of art is in learning how to tarry in this way. And per-

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[8] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, (ed.) B. Mowat and P. Werstine (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2013), Act V, scene v, lines 19–20.

[9] The notion of autonomous time in Gadamer reveals what David P. Haney calls "decidedly Romantic roots." According to John Arthos, scholarship has wrongly assumed that, due to Gadamer's subversion of Kantian aesthetics in *Truth and Method*, he is opposed to subjective, fluid readings of art. This is incorrect according to Arthos. Gadamer wishes to preserve both the Kantian aesthetic judgement and the subjective consciousness, but to ground them in language and history. See David P. Haney, "Aesthetics in Gadamer, Levinas, and Romanticism: Problems of Phronesis and Techne," *PMLA*, vol. 114, no. 1 (1999): 32–45, here 38. Also see John Arthos, *Gadamer's Poetics: A Critique of Modern Aesthetics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). For further examples of scholars overturning the notion that Gadamer's critique of Romanticism and aesthetics involves a disavowal of Romanticism and aesthetics, see Kristin Gjesdal, "Against the Myth of Aesthetic Presence: A Defence of Gadamer's Critique of Aesthetic Consciousness," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 36, no. 3 (2005): 293–310; Davey, *Unfinished Worlds*. My article aligns with these readings of Gadamer, which suggest he is open to Romantic and Kantian aesthetics and is certainly not opposed to subjective readings of artworks.

> haps it is the only way that is granted to us finite beings to relate to what we call eternity. (*Ibid*., 45)

The temporality of tarrying [*Verweilen*] stands out in Gadamer's essay as a state inherent to art that observers can participate in either spontaneously or by learning how to dwell in a particular way. Indeed, Nicholas Davey argues that it is only through tarrying that a truly transformative subjective encounter with the artwork can occur alongside the revelation of an objective aesthetic truth.[10]

This exemplary hermeneutical eventfulness of tarrying is taken up in the later 2001 text, *Gadamer in Conversation*, in which Gadamer remains optimistic about art's ability to continue offering us a temporality of tarrying despite the looming totalizing structure of the culture industry.[11] Even as humans become increasingly isolated in technology and its regimented measuring of time in both everyday busyness and cultural leisure, Gadamer maintains the possibility of art breaking through into festive temporality.[12] In her text *The Temporality of Tarrying in Gadamer*, Sheila Ross notes that while tarrying is described in predominately negative and paradoxical terms in *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, it is given a more positive, robust meaning in Gadamer's 1992 essay, "Artworks in Word and Image: 'So True, So Full of Being!' (Goethe)" In this essay, Gadamer explains,

> To tarry is not to lose time. Being in the mode of tarrying is like an intensive back-and-forth conversation that is not cut off but lasts until it is ended. The whole of it is a conversation in which for a time one is completely "absorbed in conversation," and this means one "is completely there in it."[13]

To tarry with art is not simply to take one's time or dawdle before art. It is not to "spend time" before art, because this would be to

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[10] Davey, *Unfinished Worlds*, 16.

[11] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gadamer in Conversation*, (ed. and tr.) R. Palmer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 71.

[12] Unlike Emmanuel Levinas's notion of asymmetrical dialogue in *Totality and Infinity*, Gadamer asserts a reciprocal notion of dialogue that buoys his optimism in our ability to continue conversing with artworks. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, (tr.) A. Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013), 51.

[13] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Artworks in Word and Image: 'So True, So Full of Being!' (Goethe)" (tr.) R. Palmer, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2006): 57–83, here 71.

remain in the temporality of banal commerce. Ross explains that it is not passive "but is a function of the fullness and intensity of attention and engrossment."[14] To learn how to tarry is to learn how to read art, is to engage in a Gadamerian hermeneutics that experiences the artwork in a different temporal structure. To read Gadamer's hermeneutics is to cultivate temporal tarrying. People can randomly have experiences of such a tarrying at festivals, listening to music, standing before great artworks, attending the theatre, reading a great work of literature, etc.; but through this hermeneutical approach, people can learn to cultivate this sense, to dwell with the work in a way that partially opens up the fulfilled or "autonomous temporality" of the art. Autonomous time is the eternal in a world of finitude because it stands alone and is not burdened with a teleological structure or a rigorous measurement. The art has an absolute freedom because it comports itself without regard for the strictures of the clock or the calendar. As such, the viewer can take part in this autonomous temporality by tarrying but cannot fully grasp the art in its resistant autonomy.

The notion of play is the second key element of art for Gadamer, and it necessitates communication. To play is to play "along-with" (RB, 23) the game in a way that amounts to an "inner sharing in this repetitive movement" (*ibid*., 24). The play of art requires the audience to play along with the work of art and the self-prescribed rules or parameters that art sets out. A person watches art's repetitive movement, learning its rules and then begins repeating them back, playing in and with art. As the temporality of tarrying suggests, the genuine viewer of art is not a passive consumer, but "performs in an active way" (*ibid*., 26). Only through such a performance of "profound intellectual and spiritual activity" (*ibid*.) can a person be truly changed by art. This movement of communal play marks an openness and a vital engagement with art that helps humans to conceptualize how to actively cultivate the always playful temporality of tarrying.

Alongside the festive temporality of tarrying and the communal activity of play, Gadamer introduces a third element of art: the symbol. The symbol in great art is "that particular fragment that has always been sought in order to complete and make whole our own fragmentary life" (*ibid*., 32). Gadamer's use of the symbol is similar to the literary device as a representation of multiple meanings layered on top of one another and pointing toward multiple interpretations

[14] Sheila Ross, "The Temporality of Tarrying in Gadamer," *Theory, Culture & Society,* vol. 23, no. 1 (2006): 101–23, here 109.

and worlds. The symbol is not just its literal meaning, nor is it just the most obvious symbolic meaning. For example, Robert Frost's dark, deep woods are not merely trees at night, nor are they simply the notion of death.[15] Reading the symbolism of the poem as only one of these things, or even as both of these things and nothing more, is reductive and flattens the lively layers of symbolism at play. When the symbol is well used as a literary device, it directs the reader to multiple layers that suggest but do not reify a whole. In a sense, the symbol is always symbolic of that which makes the art beautiful. The beautiful in art is never a particular system or answer but an "invocation of a potentially whole and holy order of things" (RB, 32), which is precisely the veiled potentiality of the symbol. Gadamer's language here is very important. An invocation is an asking, a prayer, an invitation. It is a request to see the whole, not necessarily as it is, but as it has the *potential* to be. The symbolic in art is not a work, but an invocation, a prayer. It is a mystery and a source of awe. It does not give a meaning but *is* a meaning by its mere existence. In fact, what the art shows us is the *impossibility* of seeing the whole:

> The fact that it [the art] exists, its facticity, represents an insurmountable resistance against any superior presumption that we can make sense of it all. The work of art compels us to recognize this fact. "There is no place which fails to see you. You must change your life."[16] The peculiar nature of our experience of art lies in the impact by which it overwhelms us. (*Ibid*., 34)

The symbolic in art serves to jolt us into the temporality of tarrying by pulling the "petty pace" of a totalizing temporal certainty out from under our feet and allowing us to recognize the vast gaps in our knowing. Rainer Maria Rilke's poem in the above citation performs the role of symbol for Gadamer by standing in as a potential whole or a unifying source for a fragmented life. The poem reaches out to the reader. It sees the reader. It animates the world surrounding the reader and it invites the reader to live by the symbol of the poem: *you must change your life*. Rilke's poem performs the symbolic in Gadamer's account. Within the poem, the statue of Apollo's torso performs the symbolic. Rilke's poem begins by admitting that which

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[15] Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," in *Robert Frost: Collected Poems* (New York: Random House, 1930), 275.

[16] Gadamer's footnote: Rainer Maria Rilke, "Archaic Torso of Apollo," in *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, (tr.) S. Mitchell (New York: Random House, 1982), 61.

is absent from Apollo's archaic torso: the face, the eyes. And yet, despite this absence, Rilke's protagonist stands before the fragment with a sense of the whole. The sculpture's whole encloses the viewer, drawing him into its autonomous temporality as eternity: "for here there is no place that does not see you."[17] The symbol does not offer a structure or an answer but a possibility. It is a device that invokes a potential whole.

The symbol gives us one sliver that hints at a whole that is wholly unknowable. This sliver is enough to shake us into the time of tarrying with art by giving us not a meaning, but rather an excess that cannot be "recuperated in intellectual terms" (*ibid*., 37). Like the action of play, Gadamer's symbol teaches us how to tarry. To overcome the levelling down of linear, regimented time, people must listen to art. In this process of listening, one can make the language of a work of art her own and become a part of the community that speaks the language of this art.

In creating the work of art, an artist forms her own community and the members are those who have listened to the artwork, have played with the artwork, have tarried with it, and can speak its language. I see a stranger in the library with a copy of Patti Smith's *M Train* tucked in her bag. The mere presence of the novel does not mean that she is necessarily a member of the book's alliance. Perhaps she has not yet read it and never will, but perhaps she too…. I do not reach out, but the possibility brings with it a trace of autonomous temporality. With this glimpse into another's bag, I encounter an enigma. In the confines of her external and quotidian satchel, she holds a book that may contain a potential glimpse of her interiority. This possibility of breaching another's interiority through an incompletely latched handbag is where I draw on Stein to continue the thread of my argument. To explore the possibility of artistic intersubjectivity, I will take three elements of art specified by Gadamer—festive tarrying, playful communion, and symbolic mystery—and bring them forward into Stein's account of empathy.

Edith Stein's Empathy through Art

In an article on Stein's later work, Antonio Calcagno brings to light the second account of empathy that Stein sets out five years after her dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy*. This second account is found in Stein's *Introduction to Philosophy* recently translated into

[17] *Ibid.*

English for the first time by Calcagno and forthcoming for publication. This publication will give English readers of Stein an understanding of how her work on empathy evolved and how Stein understands art as a potential vehicle of empathetic connection to another. Calcagno defines empathy as it occurs in Stein's second account to be "an act of knowing, living, or experiencing the interiority of another, without the motivation of external or direct perception."[18] Stein sets out the notion of empathy as a *presentifying consciousness* of the flow of lived experience of the "absolutely individual unity that feels immanent time; it is originary and conscious in an originary way" (IP, 179/150). Using Gadamer's terms, I suggest that empathy is a glimpse of the other's ability to tarry. After all, if tarrying is an autonomous temporality that leads to a glimpse of eternity, then the immanent temporality of empathy is this very experience, but shared with another person in a way that is unique not just to that person or to me, but to the relationship between us. I will unpack this suggestion further in the final section of this paper.

According to Stein, the specific mode of empathy in art happens through phantasy: "In *phantasy*, a presentified lived experience is posited as neither a past nor a future reality, and there is therefore no need for any demonstration. The reference contained in such a presentification asserts only that a lived experience of this type is possible, a possibility guaranteed by the intuitive character of phantasy itself" (IP, 179/155). To empathize is to place myself *as if* I am at the centre of another's lived experience in a free internal phantasy that does not contradict the other's external movements and yet makes understandable her internal movements.

Stein posits that the artist's task is communally to "uncover and describe the individual sense of a person along with all of the effects she produces in the world" (*ibid*., 262/216). Pointing toward the centre or unity of a person or another spiritual object is the goal of artistic truth. Art always offers a *spiritual life,* which is a potential imaginative truth, and Stein distinguishes this from *psychic reality*, which is an embodied truth of the material world. Artistic truth is not a reified absolute truth, but rather shows that a spiritual truth *could* unfold in such a way. In pursuing artistic truth, the artist, thus, does not necessarily need to begin with external expressions, as "she can begin from the centre of her own subjectivity" (*ibid*.). This spiritual truth, as with Gadamer's symbolic mystery, is only ever a fraction of the individual's interiority in Stein's second account of empathy. As an alternative to this partial spiritual artistic truth, Stein

[18] Calcagno, "Edith Stein's Second Account," 140.

notes that knowing a person's interiority in a *historical* context is a mixture of spiritual life *and* psychic reality that may appear mysterious but can become clearer through a combination of empathy (the interior spiritual judgements) and direct perception or empirical sciences (the exterior sensuous experiences). But unlike the historical context of interiority, a person's interiority as revealed through art may be only the spiritual life, though it can include some of the psychic reality as well.

In her analysis of the sciences of the spirit, Stein places art alongside history as disciplines that interpret spiritual individuality, but the majority of Stein's energy and attention goes toward history rather than art (*ibid*. 257/212). Stein sees history as grounded in psychic reality as well as spiritual life, whereas art is situated in the spiritual domain alone. However, the degrees of reality brought into art's spiritual truth allow for even seemingly non-iconic or ahistorical art to be applicable to Stein's aesthetic interpretation.[19] Artistic truth can be expressed with historical mythic relevance, as in *The Coronation of Napoleon* by Jacques-Louis David,[20] but it can also be expressed in a purely spiritual way, as with Mark Rothko's *Orange, Red, Yellow*.[21] In his work, *The Crossing of the Visible*, Jean-Luc Marion argues that art can act as the visual icon that points the viewer towards the invisible and he pinpoints Rothko's enigmatic rectangles as an example of this phenomenon.[22] For Marion, the invisible means the divine or God—as it ultimately does for Stein, but this ultimate meaning arrives specifically through the interiority, the slice of truth of another's spiritual life.

Despite Stein's less exhaustive treatment of it as a subject, art is not less important than history for her; it simply plays a different role. Art offers Stein a gateway into the experience of empathy without the immediate presence of the other. A commonly experienced, concrete connection through art between the viewer and the artist who is personally unknown and not physically present is the bridge to Stein's claim of experiencing empathy for or with the divine

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[19] Wright notes that while she is not explicit on the matter, Stein's understanding of art in *Finite and Eternal Being* points toward an acceptance of art as mimetic and representative. He goes on to note that although Stein does not engage with issues of abstract art, this does not stop her theory from being applicable to this type of art. See Wright, "Artistic Truth," 135.

[20] Jacques-Louis David, *The Coronation of Napoleon*, oil on canvas (Paris: Louvre, 1805–1807).

[21] Mark Rothko, *Orange, Red, Yellow,* acrylic on canvas (private collection, 1961).

[22] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, (tr.) J. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

in the absence of a physical divine manifestation. After years of philosophical study and work in a secular academic career, Stein's interest in a life of devotion to God grew: she converted to Catholicism in 1921, became a Carmelite nun in 1933, was killed for her Jewish heritage in a gas chamber at Auschwitz in 1942, and was finally canonized by the Roman Catholic Church in 1998.

I argue that the spiritual truth of art as the interior possibility set out above, is phenomenologically connected to experiencing the interior possibility of the divine in Stein's work. Stein's thought does not exist in two separate realms: philosophy; a *turn*; and then religion. Instead, the two interplay and inform one another in Stein's life and work. Art, with spiritual life as its only necessity for truth, is a key aspect of that link because it allows her to connect the human experience of art, a key aspect of many secular philosophical systems, to the experience of God, a commonly suspended notion in the phenomenology of her era. In her phenomenological system, the experience of God is epistemically linked to the experience of art: they are both potentialities in Stein's second account of empathy, which is possible without the physical presence of the other (as artist, as art enthusiast, or in her later work as God) with whom one empathizes. Thus, the implications of the phenomenological experience of art in this moment of Stein's work proves to be immensely important both in itself and across her oeuvre.

An Intersubjective Account of Art

In establishing its own symbolic language and therein its own world shared between a group of people, each piece of art, if read carefully, is a gateway into a particular collective or community. The artist glimpses a truth at the centre of another person, at the centre of herself, or at the centre of any spiritual being, and she expresses that spiritual truth through a material artistic form. The truth is well articulated in art if the artist has allowed for a discourse between herself and the centre of her subject, if she has tarried with the centre. If this has occurred, then a language, a community, a world has been formed and the viewer of the artwork has the possibility of playing here, of tarrying with the artwork and joining this community. To join an artistic community in this way is to experience empathy with the community's other members. While the artist begins this process as a god of sorts because of her creative power, she does not maintain an absolute dominance over the work; rather, the significance of the community is given over to the artwork itself. The artist, *homo faber*, is the creator. But the creation is always greater

than the particular artist. To enter into the world of an artwork, to listen and learn its language and choose to stay and dwell with it, is to tarry with that artwork. This tarrying slowly colours our intersecting worlds of influence and meaning. It is not compartmentalized as "now I am in the world of Patti Smith but I am about to move into the world of Alexander Pope." Instead it is a colouring of the way one interprets her reality. It stays with her whether or not she wants it to. By tarrying with the art, it gradually penetrates one's life and shapes one's view of both the self and the others.

By tarrying in the festive temporality of an artwork, engaging in communal play, and recognizing the mystery of the symbol, one enters the community and the world of that artwork. It is from this position that the external phenomenon recedes and makes ready for the interior possibility to empathize with the other through the artwork. Stein's use of empathy in her second account does not require the external presence of that with which one empathizes. The process begins with the artist empathizing with the spiritual centre of something internal or external but not necessarily present.

As an observer of an artwork, there are two directions in which our empathy can move: toward the artwork itself or toward particular others. The first potential path is not necessarily intersubjective. I sit on a bus reading a book. It is late and the bus is deserted save a couple embracing at the back and a drunken man softly snoring. Engrossed in my reading, lingering with the language, a phrase repeats over and over in my centre: "How happy is the blameless vestal's lot! / The world forgetting, by the world forgot. / Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind!"[23] I miss my stop and walk home 10 extra blocks in the night air. Who was I tarrying with? Not necessarily the poet himself, nor with the other passengers on the bus. I will never meet Alexander Pope and am unaware of any popularity he may enjoy among the other passengers. I am tarrying with the world Pope created through his poem. Pope formed this world by tarrying with the devotion and unconditional love of Eloise and the intellectual achievements of Abelard. The fragment of truth that catches me is a human being's ability to practise intellectual devotion and love as Eloise does in her letters and as Pope so beautifully portrays. This is not the whole of Eloise. But I know that this piece of her interiority existed, and so did it exist in Pope, and so did and does it exist in innumerable readers of her letters and of Pope's poem. Without any particular person or people present, I have entered a community of a

[23] Alexander Pope, *Eloiesa to Abelard* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1965), lines 207–209.

work of art. This level of empathetic connection in an absolute absence is akin to Stein's empathy with the divine. While it is deeply profound, it is not the empathetic intersubjectivity that I am aiming for in this article. But what it can showcase is how my interior tarrying with an artwork can inform my exterior world. Eloise offers me a way of being in the world as a way of devotional thinking. I begin to divide the world by Pope's measurement: those ignorantly and innocently sublime versus those embittered who know too much of life. I aim toward Eloise, that person who can know and yet still love. My external world is crafted by the suggestions of this symbolic possibility.

The other potential path of the reader's empathy is directed toward a particular person who is also a member of an artistic community. In the example I mentioned earlier, seeing someone with a beloved book, my empathetic intersubjectivity directed toward this other person is merely at a surface level. In this scenario, there is only a potentiality: such a person may or may not have tarried with the work of literature. Perhaps upon engaging with her, the other may confess an inability to get through the first page of the text and so the empathetic possibility is lost. Each person reserves the right to refuse a work of art; and sometimes, despite her best efforts, a work of art refuses her advances. She sets it aside and perhaps tries again another day, or in a year, or in a decade. This example of a surface level empathy with another incited by an unlatched handbag corresponds too little with the external reality of the other's relation to the art for it to generate a meaningful intersubjective connection. However, these interactions could have gone otherwise: they could have led to deeper conversations about the artwork in question and about the centre within each of us that such an artwork illuminates. Every enthusiast knows that moment of elation when she meets a kindred spirit with whom she can discuss the works that have enriched and informed her own life. These interactions are rare and their effects can last a lifetime. They are the aforementioned "What? You too?" moments of C. S. Lewis.

In these deeper engagements of artistic empathy with the other, I glimpse a slice of the other's interiority and recognize or partially understand it through the link of our shared artistic worlds. Here, Gadamer's tarrying, wherein time breaks free of its strictures and its banal petty pace, is not experienced merely by oneself. As I tarry with the artwork, standing next to and engaging with my friend, the festive temporality engulfs us both. Through shared language, which includes words and silences, laughter and gasps, people create a crack in the solipsism of individual experience. One finds the pres-

ence of the other alongside her in this unmeasured temporality. Suddenly the autonomy of this time is a shared autonomy that pushes and pulls, agrees and resolves, and navigates the parameters of being together in a moment unaccountable to the measuring ticks of the clock. To directly share the temporality of tarrying with another means to draw the external knowledge of the other in the banal time of everyday existence into the immanent empathy and eternal infinity of festive temporality. Here, I can glimpse the interior, that which is eternal, that which I will never fully know.

Tarrying alongside another is one of the most powerful intersubjective forces humans can experience; and from it, that person with whom I speak and empathize is woven into my perception of the artwork. Her interpretations, views, enthusiasm, and love of the artwork inform my own internal engagement with that work of art and thus she crafts my perception of the external world as suggested in the work of art. The spiritual phantasy of the art intermingles with the force of the other. From this point forward, the artwork that I draw upon in a personal artistic empathy is populated by the people with whom I have shared that artwork, those members of the community of that work of art with whom I have spoken in that artwork's tongue. Once I have tarried with the other, I find occasion to bring her along with me the next time that I tarry with that piece of art. Once I have tarried with another in the artwork, she need not be physically present to tarry with me again. Perhaps the work is not present. Perhaps the select people I have met who have tarried with me in the language of the work are not present. And yet, my world is coloured and even subsequently created by them to varying degrees.

To tarry with the other in the art is to invite a mutual glimpse of one another's interiority and to allow the other to colour my own symbol of the whole, to place her own fingerprints on my blueprint of the world, and to move a comfortably external phenomenon into a glimpsed phenomenon of shared interiority. Tarrying together allows for empathy. To tarry with the other in the artwork is to admit intersubjectivity and shared autonomous temporality into our aesthetic experience. When the art is shared and the other joins me in autonomous temporality, aesthetic intersubjectivity is realized in all of its abundance.

Critically opposed to this way of interpreting art is the suggestion that this aesthetics becomes too subjective. This is a claim that can be levelled against both Stein's empathy and Gadamer's aesthetics. If art is a way of knowing not only a truth about oneself, as Gadamer claims, but also a truth about the other, as made possible by Stein's empathy, then there is a risk of ethical hermeneutical violence being

forced upon both the art and the other by a subject who imposes a reading that is counter to what is evident in the artwork. But in both Stein and Gadamer a real objective truth is offered up through the engagement of this aesthetic intersubjectivity. Looking at this problem in Gadamer, David Liakos argues that Gadamer's hermeneutical aesthetics "may not necessarily exclude other, more objective forms of textual interpretation, such as the reconstruction of an author's intention, but rather constitutes a specific phenomenological account of one particular way reading takes place."[24] When an artwork tarries with a person in a dialogue of communal play, it teaches her a truth about herself. Liakos contends that Gadamer does "not equate reading with subjective impositions onto a text because [he thinks] the text forces us to see who we are in a more genuinely accurate light."[25] The truth revealed between the artwork and the individual allows her to see the possibilities of more or different truths. But this enters the difficult territory of individual subjective relativism. This is certainly always a possibility but, I would argue, it is precluded if openness has happened in the encounter with the artwork. There can still be a wrong reading of the art (take for example Charles Manson's reading of The Beatles' "Helter Skelter")[26] because the text has not been truly listened to but has been distorted and mechanized for a particular agenda.

That being said, there is also the aforementioned example of Marion's reading of Rothko that will not be accepted by all viewers of Rothko's work.[27] The experience of Rothko's art as spiritual, reli-

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[24] David Liakos, "Reading Oneself in the Text: Cavell and Gadamer's Romantic Conception of Reading," *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2019): 79–87, here 84.

[25] *Ibid*., 85.

[26] The infamous serial killer read McCartney's song as inciting violence: "Charles Manson, who believed McCartney's 'Helter Skelter' contained coded messages about an apocalyptic race war. There was nothing dark in the raucous proto-punk song's intention: It was McCartney's response to critics who charged that he wrote too many ballads." Zach Schonfeld, "The White Album at 50," *Newsweek* (Nov. 16, 2018), [https://www.newsweek.com/2018/11/16/beatles-white-album-john-lennon-paul-mccartney-box-set-yoko-1201819.html].

[27] An example of a common reading that diverges from the author's intention but not necessarily from the artwork itself is the imposition of female genitalia onto the flowers of Georgia O'Keeffe. In response to this widely held interpretation of her work, O'Keeffe responds, "Well—I made you take time to look at what I saw and when you took time to really notice my flower you hung all your own associations with flowers on my flower and you write about my flower as if I think and see what you think and see of the flower—and I don't." Georgia O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keeffe* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 24.

gious, and even mystical is acknowledged by Rothko himself, but never fully unpacked by the artist: "[T]he fact that lots of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I communicate those basic human emotions. The people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them."[28] Rothko's commission of the works in the *Rothko Chapel* also suggest that he recognized that his paintings can be used as a vehicle to move from the visible to the invisible.[29] I will not unpack or justify Marion's reading here but simply suggest that the reader try to tarry with that artwork and text and determine if Marion's reading holds true for you. This recognition that interpretations can be wrong begins to erode the purely subjective imposition upon the art by the individual in Gadamer; but let us also consider Stein, as she gives an added layer of protection against subjective imposition.

Stein's engagement with art is, like Gadamer's, a revelatory truth. It offers up the experience of truth. According to Terrence Wright, like a life well-lived, art "achieves beauty through the revelation of truth."[30] As Wright points out, in *Finite and Eternal Being* Stein argues that art "can serve as a revelation of the truth of what something is, but the work of art only succeeds when it also reflects what its subject ought to be."[31] Similar to Gadamer, Stein has space in art for both objective revelation of truth *and* a subjective revelation of other possibilities. But the subjective must align with the objective or at least cannot blatantly move against it. Bringing empathy and the other into the equation, recall that the second sense of empathy depicted by Stein allows for alterity to flourish alongside connection.

Angela Ales Bello posits that the word *Einfühlung*, which is commonly translated into English as *empathy*, is not necessarily the best word to describe the vibrant experience that Stein insinuates:

> Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein, for example, use the word in a philosophical sense to indicate the intuitive recognition of alterity. Certainly, this recognition may be the way to a greater understanding of the other, a becoming closer to the other, but this understanding involves other modes of living that approximate sympathy more than intropathy, and may include such things as

[28] Rodman Selden, *Conversations with Artists* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1957), 93.
[29] For more, see Rina Arya, "Reflections on the Spiritual in Rothko," *Religion and the Arts*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2016): 315–35.
[30] Wright, "Artistic Truth," 137.
[31] *Ibid*., 127.

> attention, benevolence and love, all moments that may be simultaneously lived together, but all of which first require the originary recognition of alterity and our capacity to have lived experience.[32]

Given this reading, the foundational nature of alterity in empathy becomes clear. At the heart of this interconnection between the I and the other is a recognition of the gap in our knowledge and the difference that is maintained across the connection. Bello argues that the notion of empathy can cultivate both a respect for the individuated unknowable and the universal interconnection:

> [I]ntropathy [empathy] understood in the phenomenological sense, which includes the lived experience of recognising an alter ego that is both similar to me in all of its essential structures and, at the same time, unique in terms of its personal qualities, permits us to make a leap to the universal level of discourse, for it seeks the intuitive and immediate evidence of that which is common, even within the particularity of the lived experience of the singular, unrepeatable individual.[33]

Thus both Husserl and Stein offer a protection against subjective imposition upon the other and the artwork. Granted, these protections can be abused and there is not an absolute litmus test to determine if a person has tarried with the artwork in a meaningful way or if they are violently imposing upon the work. But one starting point is simply to note whether the spiritual truth implied by the spectator about the artwork or the other aligns with the external movements and reality of the subject in question. To return to the epigraph from the beginning of this article, I can always also simply ask, as Patti Smith does of Robert Mapplethorpe, "Are you in pain or feeling alone?"[34] Following this, Smith explains her own experience of how tarrying and creating alongside Mapplethorpe means that she continues to tarry with him as she creates after decades and miles have slipped away between them: "I learned to see through you and never compose a line or draw a curve that does not come from the knowledge I derived in our precious time together."[35] And finally, she acknowledges the mystery or the unknowable aspect of art that

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[32] Angela Ales Bello, "Dual Anthropology as the Imago Dei in Edith Stein," *Open Theology*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2019): 95–106, here 98.
[33] *Ibid*., 99.
[34] Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (New York: Harper Collins, 2010), 276.
[35] *Ibid*.

maintains alterity: *God*. Smith's world is created and animated by Mapplethorpe and as she tarries with art both in its creation and as a connoisseur, she tarries alongside Mapplethorpe.

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