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**Conceiving: Art and Trust**

A Thesis Presented

by

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to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

**Master of Arts**

in

**Philosophy**

Stony Brook University

December 2008

**Stony Brook University**

The Graduate School

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Abstract of the Thesis

**Conceiving: Art and Trust**

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This thesis explores a fundamental connection between trust and aesthetic experience, positing trust as a conception of or judgment about beauty. Using Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just* to provide necessary context, I situate trust and aesthetic experience within a psychoanalytical framework through an analysis of Donald Meltzer's *Apprehension of Beauty*. In the first section, I invoke Kant to establish a definition for judgments on beauty and to emphasise the role of imagination in aesthetic judgments. I subsequently draw from Elaine Scarry to elaborate judgments as responses to beauty and to articulate a logic of debt whereby beauty and judgments on beauty engender additional beauty and judgments thereon. I proceed to frame this discussion of trust and aesthetic judgment within Meltzer's field of object relations psychoanalysis. Following Meltzer, I argue that trust in fact operates *as* aesthetic judgment; the capacity to trust is the capacity to confer beauty. Meltzer shows that with respect to children, judgments on beauty are interwoven with judgments on fertility. I investigate one of Meltzer's case studies to elaborate how trust is ordinarily established in early childhood development. Of particular consequence here is the success of what Meltzer terms "aesthetic reciprocity:" the mutual conferral of beauty between mother and child. Finally, I argue that the interactions between mother and child serve as a prototype for more formal instances of aesthetic experience and that the relationship between artwork and audience is analogous to that between mother and child. The artwork is in fact not only the mother/artist but also the audience/child; it is the site of communication between them. The physical procreation by which a child is produced by a mother and father has its parallel in the mental procreation of an artwork by the combination of artist and inspiration. I describe instances of an audience's trust or distrust in this process not to enumerate instances of trust in art but as literal exemplifications of trust's inherently aesthetic character.

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## **Introduction**

John Keats famously wrote: “truth is beauty, beauty truth” (qtd. in Meltzer 20). What, though, of the relation, slightly removed from - and far less vaunted than - Keats’, between trust and art? The relation between trust and art derives from the relation Keats articulates between truth and beauty: trust is vicarious truth, and art vicarious beauty. Indeed, trust asserts truth where the evidence is dubious or inconclusive, and art creates beauty where it was not or was not obvious before. Moreover, trust asserts truth artfully and art creates beauty trustingly.

In elaborating a definition of trust, and in establishing its connection with art, another meditation of Keats’ is illuminating. Analysing “what goes to form a Man of Achievement, especially in literature” (qtd. in Meltzer 20), Keats coins the term “negative capability.” He describes negative capability as the ability to “remain in uncertainty without irritable grappling after fact and reason” (qtd. in Meltzer 20). Keats’ analysis could be taken to describe a capacity necessary to sustain a relationship of trust. Trust is the positive articulation of Keats’ negative capability. Negative capability resists; it is defined according to what it does not do, it relinquishes “fact and reason.” Like negative capability, trust also resists grappling after fact and reason. More, though, than tolerating uncertainty, trust asserts certainty. Whereas Keats’ negative capability allows one to hold oneself back, trust proceeds positively, allowing one to leap forward.

Indeed, to trust is to posit certainty despite having no fact, reason, or otherwise objective basis of verification. If I trust a partner’s fidelity (trusting that he or she is ‘true’), it is not that I am content to abide in uncertainty. I do not tell myself: perhaps he

is true, perhaps he is not. Rather, I assert, with confidence, without evidence, his “truth.” Understanding trust as a positive phenomenon is crucial in understanding its connection to art, for in its positivity – by its positing – trust is creative. Trust asserts, produces, and constructs. This creative, constructive essence of trust lends it a critical aesthetic dimension.

Without grappling after facts and reasons, trust and art (re)present truth and beauty where they otherwise would be absent. In this way, trust and art carry truth and beauty beyond their natural sphere of influence. Allowing something new or novel, both trust and art accomplish the work of procreation. We might say that the asserting, producing, making, and constructing of trust and art occur as conception. This notion of a connection between birth and beauty is ancient, and is elaborated in Diotima’s speech in Plato’s *Symposium*. Diotima defines the purpose of love as “physical and mental procreation in an attractive medium” (48; 206b). She explains that “every human being is both physically and mentally pregnant” (48; 206c); everyone has the capacity to produce both biological offspring and ideas. To this effect, Diotima refers both to children of “the human kind” (53; 209b) and to “the kind of children [the poets] leave behind” (53; 209d).

Diotima explains that both types of procreation seek beauty: we “[go] around searching for beauty, so that [we] can give birth there” (52; 209b). The search for beauty (and the equivalent, as Keats would argue, search for truth), initiated by the urge to procreate, culminates in trust and art. The successful search hinges on one’s capacity to make a judgment: we *find* something (to be) true or beautiful. On Keats’ equation of truth and beauty, trust’s judgments and art’s judgments become interchangeable: trust posits not only what is true but what is beautiful; art asserts not only what is beautiful but a

version of truth. Although the two configurations imply one another, this thesis will primarily elaborate how trust establishes beauty. The discussion will develop across three texts that address beauty explicitly: Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*; Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just*, and Donald Meltzer's *The Apprehension of Beauty*. Taken together, these texts furnish the argument that trust is necessary to aesthetic experience and that, in fact, trust is itself an aesthetic experience.

My argument proceeds as follows. In the first section, entitled *Trust is Finding Something Beautiful*, I employ Kant's *Critique of Judgment* to show how the search for beauty that Diotima describes is the making of an aesthetic judgment. Although Kant does not make trust a central part of his investigation, I identify trust as a necessary, if latent, component in a judgment on beauty. We cannot *know* definitively that something is beautiful. Instead, we trust that it is so. Kant calls this a form of judgment, and I argue that this capacity to judge is in fact a capacity to trust. Translated into Kantian discourse: the basis for determining our judgment is subjective, but we present it objectively. I locate trust especially in the aesthetic judge's presupposition of a common sense and in her confidence in her own ability to judge. I emphasise that both these tasks are ultimately accomplished by the imagination. The ability to imagine furnishes the ability to trust; imagination conceives what trust accomplishes.

In section two, *Giving Birth Invokes Debt*, I invoke Elaine Scarry in enumerating the many kinds of judgments about or conceptions of the beautiful. Three instantiations of judgments include: a child, who stands as the mother's judgment on the father's beauty; an artwork, which stands as the artist's judgment on some aspect of the world's beauty; and a person staring, who stands as the contemplative subject's judgment on the



perceived object's beauty. Each of these examples represents a response to beauty, and, moreover, each reveals the judge's exercise of her responsibility to beauty. Scarry's major contribution here is her articulation of a "reciprocity" of beauty (77). Scarry elaborates the way beauty gives rise to further beauty through a logic of debt. Paying this debt, through judgment, requires an attention that makes us vulnerable, and this compounding vulnerability is the necessary burden of trust.

The third section, *The Position of Trust*, frames the discussion of trust and aesthetic judgment within the object relations psychoanalysis of Donald Meltzer. The condition of attentiveness and vulnerability that Scarry describes are here discussed as defining characteristics of "the depressive position" (*AB 1*) the attainment of which is necessary for healthy development. Notably, Meltzer argues that the depressive position resolves the violence of the paranoid-schizoid position that precedes it. This shows that both Scarry's vulnerability and Meltzer's "depressive position" play critical roles in the development of capacities to trust and to experience beauty.

Meltzer's work is revelatory insofar as his description of development suggests not only that trust is operative in aesthetic judgment, but that it operates *as* aesthetic judgment. Like Meltzer, I make the strong claim that the capacity to trust *is* the capacity to confer beauty. For Meltzer as for Kant, conferring beauty requires an imaginative positing of what is not objectively available. Within the psychoanalytic scenario, it is the mother's interior that is paradigmatically inaccessible. Section four of my work, *Search for Beauty as Sexual Research*, explains how the child's development of the capacity to trust and judge beauty is directed towards the mother's inside and, ultimately, towards her invisible womb and the mysterious activities that transpire there. In this way,

the search for the beautiful becomes a search for the fertile. The child's 'sexual research' functions as a literal rendering of the Diotimic search for a place to conceive. This research, though conducted on the mother, ultimately seeks information that is valuable to the child's sense of self and his or her own sexual viability; the inability to confer the mother's beauty collapses into an inability to consider oneself beautiful.

In section five, *Mother and Child*, I introduce a specific child, Claudia, into the discussion by way of one of Meltzer's case studies. Claudia manifests a radical inability to trust, and this inability is indicated by her inability to confer beauty. Working backwards from her case allows us to examine how trust is ordinarily established. Of particular consequence is the success of what Meltzer terms "aesthetic reciprocity" (AB 42). This parallels Scarry's articulation of reciprocity, and particularly her account of staring: mother and child are two staring subjects who, in ordinary circumstances, show with their gazes that they appreciate the other's beauty.

In the final two sections, I suggest that the interactions between mother and child serve as a prototype for more formal instances of aesthetic experience. In *Art and Audience*, I draw on a particular episode from Claudia's analysis to suggest that the relationship between artwork and audience is analogous to that between mother and child. Elaborating this analogy, I propose various factors that constitute the work's mysterious inside; these are aspects that the audience, if trusting, construes imaginatively. These factors include the work's history, its physical interior, and, ultimately, its artist. With *Artist and Art*, I modify the analogy so that the artwork is in fact not only the mother/artist but also the audience/child; it is the site of communication between them. Accordingly, the physical procreation by which a child is produced by a mother and

father has its parallel in the mental procreation of an artwork by the combination of artist and inspiration. Just as the mother is the focus of suspicion or trust for the child, so too is the artist for the audience. In expounding this aspect of trust, I consider the phenomenon of art forgery. Finally, having established a fundamental connection between trust and aesthetic experience, I indicate potential directions of study furnished by this thesis, alluding especially to its theological, art historical, and linguistic implications.

## **I. Trust is Finding Something Beautiful**

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* elucidates the search for beauty that Diotima claims "every human being" (48; 206c) undertakes. Kant's discussion of aesthetic judgment explicates the process by which we find something beautiful. Kant does not explicitly develop the role that trust plays in this process. Nevertheless, trust holds an indispensable place in his theory of judgment: trust bridges the subjective basis that determines a judgment on beauty and the objective character of its presentation.

Kant insists that an aesthetic judgment is "a judgment whose determining basis *cannot be other than subjective*" (44; Ak. 204) because it is determined exclusively by the judging subject. Beauty "is not a property" of the object (145; Ak. 282). Despite this necessary subjectivity, judgments on the beautiful are typically presented objectively. The one who judges does not acknowledge the subjective basis of her judgment, but instead she attributes the beauty perceived to the object itself. By imputing beauty to the object, she presents it as detached from her own individual subjectivity and, consequently, she can assert that any other subject encountering the object should confer and confirm the beauty she perceives.<sup>1</sup>

In Kant's account, objectivity connotes conviction, while subjectivity is associated with fallibility. Indeed, to present a judgment subjectively – as we present a judgment of taste of sense – is to be "modest enough not even to require others to agree (even though there actually is, at times, very widespread agreement in these judgments

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<sup>1</sup> To adumbrate a later point on the character of beauty as a necessarily deep phenomenon, we might construe this objective presentation of subjectivity as an attribution of depth to a flat surface. In viewing a painting, we concede depth because the position from which we view it is conducive to this illusion. Furthermore, we insist that others share this position; we do not find it acceptable, for example, to perceive the painting from the back.

too)” (58; Ak. 214). The ‘modesty’ of judgments of sense is their admission of possible fallibility. Against this diffidence, Kant asserts the “conviction that accompanies” (87; Ak. 238) *pure* judgments of taste or judgments of the beautiful, which we treat as infallible and, in fact, universal. If to present objectively is to present with conviction, then in our judgments of beauty, we judge with conviction something that should be fallible. In judging something to be beautiful, we posit certainty in the unverified; we trust.

Through trust, we claim universal validity for our judgments on the beautiful. Trust is a kind of presupposition, and the claim to universal validity is “a subjective necessity that we present as objective by presupposing a common sense” (89; Ak. 239). This presupposition posits that other rational beings capable of judging beauty operate with the same faculties as we do, such that when they apply their faculties to the object we judge as beautiful, they reach the same conclusion that we have reached. We trust other judging subjects: we posit an identity with them from which follows our ability to predict and to assent to their judgments about beauty. An ethical dimension opens when we consider the claim to universality built into Kant’s conception of the pure judgment of taste: to demand that others agree with us – to insist that they do – impedes the freedom of others; the insistence is a kind of violence. In judging beauty, however, we identify with their faculties and predict their judgments without violence by trusting.

Trust replaces violence with imagination; with imagination, we supplement our inability to access the mechanisms of other minds. To this effect, Kant explains that we “compare our judgment not so much with the actual as with the merely possible judgments of others” (160; Ak. 294). We judge aesthetically with recourse to what Keats

calls “one of the most mysterious semi-speculations... that of one mind’s imagining into another” (qtd. in Carson 21). Indeed, imagination goes hand in hand with trust, and both are indispensable to aesthetic judgment. For Kant, judgments of beauty are produced by the “free play” between imagination and understanding (91; Ak. 241). Kant describes the imagination as the “power to intuit even when the object is not present” (note 66 to 91; Ak. 241, from Anthropology, Ak. VII, 167); it is what furnishes objective presentation

The claim to universality requires not only “imagining into” the minds of others but also into one’s own mind. Before one can expect conferral of one’s judgment from others, one must assume the credibility of one’s own methods of judging. Kant explains that this sense of confidence and infallibility is achieved by a ‘consciousness’ of one’s own judging process. That is, a judge of beauty “can attain certainty [in his judgment of beauty] by merely being conscious that he is separating whatever belongs to the agreeable and the good from the liking that remains to him after that” (60; Ak. 216). According to Kant, an object is judged beautiful when “someone likes something and is conscious that he himself does so without any interest” (54; Ak. 211). One claims universal validity for one’s judgment when one “cannot discover...any private conditions” for liking something and concludes that the conditions must be ‘public.’

That this process of inward observation is a somewhat tenuous one is confirmed by the fact that we sometimes err. To this effect, Kant describes “the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones” (160; Ak. 293). Our consciousness sometimes falters: we sometimes “fail to observe these conditions” (60; Ak. 216) of interest, and, accordingly, sometimes make erroneous judgments. That we are not always appropriately conscious of our cognitive processes suggests that they take some effort to

access; they are not automatic or transparently available for circumspection. Is Kant, then, suggesting that judgments on the beautiful require concerted efforts of consciousness?

In place of “consciousness,” I propose reading into Kant a *confidence* in consciousness of our own judging processes. This modification furnishes the possibility of making judgments spontaneously and intuitively, and underscores the role of trust in judging beauty. This confidence, after all, is conviction in the product of a process susceptible to error. Just as the universal validation we expect from others is ultimately imagined, we do not – and perhaps, as psychoanalysis suggests, *cannot* - literally observe our own cognitive processes. Because of Kant’s oversimplification of the degree to which we can observe our own cognitive processes, trust remains unproblematised in his account. If we acknowledge the difficulty of observing mental functions, we understand more fully the vital role of the imagination plays in judgment: it furnishes trust.

Ultimately, trust functions as the imagining that is necessary for aesthetic judgment. Imagining is conceiving; it is what incites us to find something beautiful. Judgment, the product of this method, is conception; this is the offspring that results, like a poem, from the “mentally pregnant” (Plato, 48; 206c). To this effect Kant notes that we pride ourselves on our taste (55; Ak. 212), as, perhaps, an artist might pride herself on her creations. Indeed, in judging the beautiful, we do not have a universal voice but “we *believe* we have a universal voice” (50; Ak. 216, my emphasis) and we use this voice to “talk about the beautiful *as if it were* a characteristic of the object” (54; Ak. 211). The leap from subjective to objective assumes a metaphorical structure; this is the poetry or the *art* of judgment. Kant further remarks that, although logical judgments are distinct

from aesthetic judgments because their bases are objective, judgments on beauty  
“*resemble* logical judgments” (54; Ak. 211) insofar as they seem equally objective.



## **II. The Debt of Birth**

Judgments on beauty are functions of trust and further, such judgment are themselves works of art. They can take myriad forms that range from the simple to the sophisticated. In judging a beautiful object, we may act a certain way toward it – for example, carefully; we may pronounce a certain statement about it – for example, “this is beautiful”; we may produce a tangible thing in response to it – for example, a portrait or an ode. All of these responses proceed artfully. Whether overtly artistic or more subtly so, judgments on the beautiful strive to sustain and let flourish beauty. Thus, to act with care towards a beautiful object is to sustain its existence; to seek assent to one’s pronouncement is to seek beauty’s acknowledgment and proliferation in the minds of others; to commit something to paint is to allow it to persist beyond the duration of a human life. This continuation is the intention of procreation; a judgment is a generation of beauty. Responses to beauty are reproductions thereof, and are themselves beautiful; a cascading lineage of beautiful objects and judgments unfolds. Elaine Scarry takes up Diotima’s view: “beauty, as both everyday life and Plato’s *Symposium* confirm, prompts the begetting of children: when the eye sees someone beautiful, the whole body wants to reproduce it” (4). A child is, ultimately, a judgment on beauty expressed in flesh.

As a child is not an exact copy of its parents, a reproduction of beauty need not be precise; it is enough that both are beautiful. It is not exactitude but quality that matters. In this vein, Scarry characterises reproduction of beauty as reciprocation and emphasises the balance and symmetry maintained by this reciprocation. She writes: “one reason beautiful persons and things incite the desire to create is so that one can place something

of reciprocally great beauty in the shared field of attention” (77). This reciprocity – reproduction, representation, resemblance – is not just a response but a responsibility. As Scarry asserts, beauty “seems to incite, *even to require*, the act of replication” (1, my emphasis).

Beauty instills a kind of debt in its perceiver that is fulfilled by producing more beauty. Whether to a thing or a person, attention is the currency with which we pay this debt. Scarry refers to “the shared field of attention” as a sort of arena for this exchange, as if beautiful objects and the responses they incite are placed there, in the space where the interlocutors’ attentions overlap. Ultimately, though, beautiful objects are expressions of attention. Such expressions are judgments of beauty. As noted earlier, these judgments can attain to different degrees of tangibility. If the field contains beautiful *objects*, the attention might be more complex or sophisticated, but the shared field of attention is beautiful of its own accord, even if nothing tangible is placed there.

This becomes clear with reference to the phenomenon of staring. Scarry identifies staring as the “simplest manifestation” (5) of paying attention and discusses it as a legitimate strategy for replicating beauty. She explains that beauty “incites the desire to duplicate not [just] by translating the glimpsed image into a drawing or a poem or a photograph but simply by continuing to see [it] five seconds, twenty-five seconds, forty seconds later” (6). In considering one beautiful person’s reaction to another, we could construe the simplest shared “field of attention” as the overlap between two appreciative gazes; a child or a portrait is merely a more elaborate placeholder for this overlap.

Attention to beauty is an acknowledgement of beauty; the attention that Scarry elaborates is judgment on beauty. As such, it requires trust. The beautiful, which requires

trust to conceive, incites beautiful, trusting responses. In owing beauty, we owe trust<sup>2</sup>.

The cost of paying attention, judging beauty, trusting – as both Scarry and everyday life confirm - is vulnerability. To this effect, Scarry invokes the ancient example, from Plato's *Phaedrus*, that couples attention to beauty with vulnerability. She paraphrases:

A man beholds a beautiful boy. Suddenly...publicly unacceptable things happen to his body.... He is...restrained only by his embarrassment at carrying out so foolish an activity in front of us. Now he feels an unaccountable pain. Feathers are beginning to emerge out of his back, appearing all along the edges of his shoulder blades...it cannot be denied that the discomfort he feels on the inside is only matched by how ridiculous he looks on the outside. (73)

The man's pain, embarrassment and discomfort are expressions of his "radical vulnerability" (74). Scarry contrasts this phenomenon of radical vulnerability with the contemporary condition of "complete immunity" (74) and attributes the latter to an epidemic of inattention; modern citizens are oblivious to and unaffected by beauty. Though inattention eliminates the "unaccountable pain" of vulnerability, Scarry finds this condition lamentable. Calling for a renaissance of attentiveness, she advocates for the reciprocation of trust, stating that "what we should wish is a world where the vulnerability of the beholder is greater to or equal to the vulnerability of the person beheld" (75). To call for reciprocated vulnerability is to call for reciprocated trust; Scarry thus suggests a way in which trust in art is more than merely an interesting phenomenon; it is an imperative.

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<sup>2</sup> In considering trust's reimbursory function, the designation 'faithful' is particularly revealing. To trust my partner is to consider him 'faithful'. What I respond to is at least partially, then, his (perceived) 'faith' in me.

### **III. The Position of Trust**

Like Scarry, Donald Meltzer identifies the costly acknowledgement of beauty as necessary. The attention to beauty that Scarry deems obligatory becomes, with Meltzer – an object relations theorist and psychoanalyst – developmentally essential. For Meltzer as for Scarry, to pay attention is to be vulnerable. For Meltzer, this vulnerability is a feature of what he calls “the depressive position (*AB* 1). While acknowledging the inherent pain of depression, Meltzer identifies a virtue in this position. He identifies the virtue of being susceptible to depression as being simultaneously open to trust, which furnishes conception and which he elaborates expressly as a conferral of beauty.

The value Meltzer attributes to the depressive is the same value he attributes to the artist. The artist might be described as one who takes up – deliberately and non-pathologically – the features of the depressive position. To this effect, Meltzer wonders about a depressive patient whose feeling of perpetual exposure is directly linked with an extreme receptivity to sensory stimuli. Meltzer asks, “is it wrong to say that he suffers? Is it perhaps we who suffer from this narrowing, this scotomization of the world by the skilled employment of our organ of consciousness?” (*CTP* 156). The patient in question “suffers” feelings that, for the artist, indicate fertile creativity. Meltzer describes the depressive patient having “the feeling that his thoughts become material” (*CTP* 155) and the continual sense that he is “sending out colour” (*CTP* 155)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The import of colour is its conspicuousness, and the patient’s sense of “sending out colour” develops from a sense of emitting abstract waves of colour to the feeling of displaying conspicuous, colourful attributes, including a “coloured feather head-dress” (*CTP* 155), perhaps like the feathers of the wings that sprout from Plato’s perceiver of beauty.

The capacity to judge beauty – whether manifest in a sophisticated judgment or in more tacit acknowledgement - plays an integral role in healthy individual development. Reflecting on years of analyzing the aesthetic confidence of patients, Meltzer concludes that the healthier patients appreciate beauty, while the unhealthier ones cannot.<sup>4</sup> ‘Healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ can be schematised here by association with the depressive and the paranoid-schizoid positions, respectively. The attentive, artistic characteristics of the depressive position are salubrious, and contrast the violence and suspicion that characterises the paranoid-schizoid position. Meltzer summarises the essence of the former’s triumph over the latter as “the relinquishment of egocentricity in favour of concern for the welfare of the loved objects of psychic and external reality” (AB 1).

The ability to make aesthetic judgments develops according to the healthy, normal trajectory that Meltzer posits as a return to the initial depressive stance that is interrupted by the defensive interposition of the paranoid-schizoid phase. The cycle proceeds as follows. First, the newborn infant’s vulnerability and receptiveness occasions “aesthetic impact:” the unprecedented and overwhelming exposure to the beauty of the world, and especially to the beauty of the mother. As Meltzer explains in strikingly Platonic imagery, the world “bombards [the newborn] with an emotional experience of a passionate quality, the result of his being able to see [its] objects as ‘beautiful’” (AB 22). In response to the intensity of this experience, the child “recoil[s] wildly” (AB 29), becoming suspicious and suspending its aesthetic judgment. Confronted with her overwhelmingly beautiful façade, the child responds: “ah! But is it so beautiful inside?”

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<sup>4</sup> Tellingly, Meltzer’s clinical observations reinforce Kant’s formula of aesthetic judgments as judgments that, though presented objectively, are subjectively determined. Indeed, the healthier of his patients “recognised beauty...without uncertainty through a powerful emotional reaction,” and, though based in an emotional (subjective) reaction, they presented their judgments objectively, “with confidence” (AB 2).

(*CTP* 153). The child's feeling toward the mother is characterised by "uncertainty, tending towards distrust, verging on suspicion" (*AB* 27), and its attempt to assuage its uncertainty are instances of Keats' "irritable grappling" taken to violent extremes. The child seems incapable of "negative capability." This stage of development is characterised by destructive tendencies, especially those directed towards the mother.

In the healthy course of development, the violence attenuates as the child learns to tolerate the uncertainty that Meltzer calls 'aesthetic conflict.' The child learns first to withhold destructive tendencies, and ultimately, to trust. For the child, the question of the mother's truth and of her beauty are one and the same. The child's question, "is it [my mother] so beautiful inside?" is alternately construed: "are you [my mother] honest?" (*CTP* 160). As if presuming Keats' equation of truth and beauty, the child's concern to establish the mother's beauty as genuine is a concern to establish her truthfulness. The child wonders, more elaborately: "to what degree does the beauty of the exterior of the object correspond to the goodness of the interior, its feelings, intentions, durability? In a word, is it a truthful object?" (*CTP* 159). To confer interior beauty imaginatively is thus to confer truth imaginatively: to trust. Trust here becomes not only operative *in* aesthetic judgment; it operates *as* aesthetic judgment. We do not only trust that something is beautiful, but to trust at all – even in something like the mother's honesty, which does not immediately seem to entail an aesthetic component - is to confer beauty.

#### **IV. The Search for Beauty as Sexual Research**<sup>5</sup>

The question of beauty is one of depth; to wonder if the mother is *really* beautiful is to wonder whether she is *deeply*, internally beautiful. This aesthetic judgment requires trust because this information is not objectively available. Meltzer explains: “aesthetic conflict can be most precisely stated in terms of the aesthetic impact of the *outside* of the ‘beautiful’ mother, available to the senses, and the enigmatic *inside*” (AB 22, my emphasis). The genuineness of beauty is construed spatially; it is something three-dimensional, of which visible surface characteristics are not always a reliable indication. To confer beauty thus involves positing certainty in the beauty of an invisible inside, which can only be “construed by creative imagination” (AB 22).

The invisibility of the mother’s is both a circumstantial invisibility – the inside of the mother’s body – and a fundamental invisibility or ‘avisibility’ – the mother’s character, attitude and intentions. The former figures the latter, and the child feels that the mother’s emotional depths lurk in her physical interior. To this effect, the mother’s enigmatic inside is epitomised by her womb; one might call trust a kind of “hysteric” certainty.<sup>6</sup> Distrust, by contrast, is suspicion of the womb. Indeed, it is the remembered experience of the womb’s narrowing and constricting that grounds the child’s reticence to confer the mother’s beauty. The infant is “naturally on guard against unbridled optimism

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<sup>5</sup> I derive this term from Freud’s discussion of ‘the sexual researches of children,’ which Meltzer cites (AB 7, 55). This phrasing helps position sexual research within the search for beauty expounded in Diotima’s speech in *Symposium* and in the way ‘finding’ something beautiful entails ‘judging’ it so.

<sup>6</sup> I intend this etymological designation to allude also to the psychoanalytic sense of hysteria; a parallel, if less productive, counterpart to trust insofar as the hysterical symptom is one that emerges without objective context. Freud’s studies on hysteria would be instructive in developing this aspect, as would his work *The Uncanny*.

and trust” (*AB 22*) because she has “already had one dubious experience” (*AB 22*) of the mother’s inside: the oppression and claustrophobia the child experiences during the final stages before her emergence into the blindingly beautiful external world.

The infant responds to the perceived threat of the womb by attempting to steal its “good things, babies...knowledge and understanding” (*AB 52*). The “babies” here are potential unborn siblings whom the infant fears will be privileged by the mother. Indeed, the child associates the aforementioned oppression with having been “forced to emigrate to make room for some newcomer” (*AB 43*). The possible presence of unborn babies in the mother’s womb threaten to deprive the infant of the care and attention it attempts to monopolise; other babies would compromise the mother’s fidelity to the child. Additional babies would render the mother “untrue” to the first born. The womb is the home of potential rivals and is, more explicitly, the site of conception; it is the parents’ mysterious bedroom mapped onto (into) the maternal body. Meltzer explains that attempts to break into the mother’s womb are attempts “to peep into the nuptial chamber of [the] parents’ relationship” (*AB 48*); the “knowledge and experience” the child seeks are of an explicitly sexual nature.<sup>7</sup>

The child’s sexual research centres specifically around the issue of reproduction. This is because the child, preoccupied with the question of “how babies are made” (*AB 53*), does not consider sexual experience separately from procreation. For the child, reproductive capacity represents interior beauty. The mother’s fidelity is her fertility, and the child seeks to verify the deep beauty of this fertility. The child’s attempts to establish

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<sup>7</sup> Melanie Klein, whose work precedes and greatly influences Meltzer’s, describes the child’s urgent quest for knowledge as the ‘epistemophilic instinct,’ which Meltzer directly addresses (*AB 7*).



whether the mother “is so beautiful inside” is ultimately the attempt to establish whether “the mechanics of coition...[are]...in keeping with the beauty” (AB 53) of superficial reality. Indeed, for Meltzer, the child’s sexual researches are aesthetic insofar as the child wonders not just how babies are made, but how *beautifully* they are made. Truth, beauty, and fertility are all intertwined as positive, deep phenomena and as the objects that trust must subjectively establish.

For the child, the degree of beauty in the process of reproduction determines the degree of beauty in the product. As Meltzer elaborates, the child wonders “what differential of baby-making methods results in some babies being good and beautiful while some are ugly and aggressive” (AB 53). The child’s interest in the product of reproduction indicates her egocentricity; the information the child seeks is ultimately about herself as the product of its parents sexual union. In this sense, the child views herself as a work of art. The child wants to know more than the general character of sexual activity; she craves access to a particular – a *certain* – episode in particular: that of her own conception. This information is crucial to her because she views the details of this conception as determinative of her own identity.

In this way, the child’s urgent attempt to establish the mother’s beauty reflects her desperate need establish her own aesthetic status. The inside of the mother is the origin of the child, and whether her inside is beautiful determines whether the child will be. As the mother’s beauty is at once her sexual viability, the consequent beauty of the child

indicates the child's own fertility. Fear of the mother's internal ugliness is consequently also a fear of the child's own impotence<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Melanie Klein argues a similar point: that "disturbances of male potency (impotence)" derive from the fear of constriction within the mother's body" (12).

## **V. Mother and Child**

Meltzer's case study of the eight-year-old patient he names Claudia elaborates the developmental consequences of the child's fear of impotence. Meltzer describes Claudia as "crushed physically as well as mentally" (AB 42). Born prematurely, Claudia is "tiny" (AB 44), brain damaged, and physically disfigured (AB 44). Meltzer stipulates that "Claudia's material, although rendered exceptional by the circumstances of her damaging birth, is in a wider sense in no way exceptional. It is a particular instance of a general class of questions inherent to cognitive development" (AB 55). These questions, all variations of "is it so beautiful inside?" are deferrals of aesthetic judgment indicative of a lack of trust.

Meltzer states Claudia's questions: "'Why do I feel ugly?', 'What kind of conjunction of my parents has produced this, either ugliness or feeling of ugliness?'" (AB 56). Claudia associates her ugliness with her diminutive size; she feels herself an "ugly little clown" (AB 43) and the result of the "ugly method" (AB 43) of her parents' conjunction. Claudia's 'littleness' is also related to her experience and maturity; Claudia "fears that she might never grow up" (AB 47) and, accordingly, fears that she will never have the experiences that adults do. The exemplar of foreign adult activity is reproduction and, in this way, Claudia's feeling of ugliness is at once a feeling of sexual incompetence.

Claudia's case is ordinary insofar as most healthy individuals are "bowled over" (AB 42) by the same concerns that plague Claudia. Her case, however, is exceptional because most are "bowled over but saved" (AB 42). Most are saved in large part because of a phenomenon Meltzer discusses as "aesthetic reciprocity," which Claudia lacks.

Aesthetic reciprocity is an exchange that transpires between mother and child when both view the other as beautiful. Through this reciprocity, the mother validates the child's intuition that the world is beautiful by making manifest her own congruent experience of awe at her child. This aesthetic reciprocity is akin to the staring that Scarry discusses, with the emphasis on a quality of the gaze - the "light in [one's] eyes" (AB 22) – rather than on the quantitative duration Scarry elaborates. As staring is for Scarry a reproduction of beauty, so too is aesthetic reciprocity for Meltzer. Its failure casts doubt on the biologically reproductive capacity of the participants; this ramification is evident in Claudia's case as her fear of perpetual impotence.

Meltzer posits that Claudia's development stalled because her mother "never gave the impression of seeing the spark of *internal beauty* in this child" (AB 54, my emphasis). Instead, she viewed her child superficially, attending only to Claudia's disfigured physicality. Physically, Claudia varies enormously from her mother. Relaying his first encounter with mother and daughter, Meltzer describes Claudia's "squinting, misshapen face [hanging] loosely, drooping, eyes lifeless" (AB 44). This was a "painful contrast to the delicate and elegant beauty of her mink-coated mother" (AB 44). Claudia's outward beauty does not nearly equal her mother's, and preoccupation with this objective disparity evinces, in the mother, a feeling of disappointment and, in Claudia, the feeling of being disappointing.

Aesthetic judgments, though, are not determined by objective bases; aesthetic reciprocity is not the exchange of decisions determined objectively. To this effect, Meltzer notes that, though the mutual attribution of beauty between mother and child is standard, not all mothers and almost no babies are objectively beautiful. He explains: "the

percentage of ‘beautiful’ mothers recorded in the course of psycho-analysis far exceeds the national average [because] this appellation clearly refers back to childhood impressions often completely out of keeping with later more objective judgments” (*AB* 9). Similarly, concerning the child’s beauty: “despite the outraged cries of innumerable outraged mothers ringing in my ears, a newborn baby is not, in its formal qualities, beautiful” (*AB* 57). It is deep beauty that is conferred by aesthetic reciprocity, and this requires a judgment on the invisible inside. It is thus only through imaginative construing that aesthetic reciprocity can be achieved.

Though imagination is enlisted to imagine the ‘deep’ or spatial inside, it is helpful here to understand imagination’s temporal aspects. The imagination – the power of presentation – is enlisted to conjure objects that are absent and times that are not present: the past and the future. The mother’s temporal interior is the past; we have noted how the child’s imaginative renderings of the mother regard her history and, specifically, her past sexual interactions with the child’s father. The child’s imagining into the mother’s past is complemented by the mother’s imaginative contemplation of her child’s future. Meltzer explains that the beauty of the baby is not so much in any physical attribute as in its intense representation of possibility: that it possesses “the potentiality to become a Darwin, a George Eliot, a Rembrandt, a Mme. Curie, a human being” (*AB* 57).

Both Claudia and her mother lack imagination. Meltzer elaborates Claudia’s acknowledgement of this inadequacy: her researches “[have] to do with what Claudia’s mummy and daddy do in the privacy of their nuptial chamber, of which she knows the mechanics but cannot imagine as experience...What is more, she firmly believes that her mother is likewise limited in her conceptions, as evidenced by her not having more

children” (*AB* 53, my emphasis). Here, both the physical and mental senses of procreation collide: Claudia equates her inability to conceive (to imagine) with her mother’s inability to conceive (to have more children).

Claudia cannot, as it were, conceive conceiving, and she is burdened by an acute awareness of this failure. Indeed, Claudia’s imaginative deficiency is not a mere tacit cause of her diffident orientation; it is a conspicuous failing on which she reflects and that compounds her feelings of inadequacy.<sup>9</sup> Meltzer, acting as a ventriloquist of Claudia’s inner voice<sup>10</sup>, explains: “If I could imagine the conjunction of my parents to be a mysterious process possessing a degree of beauty that I cannot as yet imagine, I would be able to see their babies as beautiful, including myself” (*AB* 56). Claudia cannot make sense of the role that imagination plays in procreation. Although she equates beauty and fertility, she does not understand how either comes to fruition subjectively; she mistakenly casts the aesthetic judgments that are art and childbirth as objective presentations of the invisible inside. Indeed, insofar as Claudia allows that procreation is a kind of imaging, the image she associates is extremely technical, unemotional, and even violent<sup>11</sup>: the x-ray (*AB* 46, 51). On two separate occasions, Claudia instigates episodes of ‘make believe’ that enlist ecographical and radiographical equipment as methods of conceiving or inducing labour. Insofar as she understands conception as related to the

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<sup>9</sup> The reflection on one’s own imaginative capacity begs contextualization within Kant’s theory of the sublime. This discussion, however, is beyond the scope of this paper, which limits its aesthetics to theories of beauty.

<sup>10</sup> Meltzer’s presumption of accessing this inner voice is itself an act of trust; to this end, Meltzer speaks of the “imaginative conjecture” (*AB* 57) of psychoanalysis, and argues that “psychoanalysis is truly an art-form, in itself” (*DCI* 132).

<sup>11</sup> Notably, the futurists – whose art glorifies war and destruction – praised x-ray technology for its penetrating powers (Chipp 289).

formation of an image, it is not an image produced imaginatively but one produced mechanically.

## **VI. Art and Audience**

Claudia's inability to tolerate the mystery of conception translates into the inability to tolerate the mystery of art. Accordingly, she is both an inadequate judge of others' art and an unsuccessful artist. These limitations emerge in her therapy within episodes that involve drawing. Though drawings are admittedly a more interpretive form of images than x-rays are, Claudia expects of them a similar objectivity; her treatment of drawing reveals her inability to imagine imagining.

Claudia's unpreparedness to serve as audience or an appreciator of beauty is shown during a session in which she begs the therapist "to make a drawing, a drawing of her own Mummy and Daddy while they were making a baby" (AB 47). The therapist does not indulge the request; she explains that Claudia already knows "the mechanism of the act and its gross anatomy" (AB 48) and maintains that the drawing will not further her understanding. The information Claudia seeks cannot be depicted; "there is, after all, a limit to what can be taught that inheres in the limits of the possibility of verbal or graphic communication" (AB 48). Claudia's problem is her inability to respect this limit; she wants a diagram, like an x-ray, to supply the information she lacks.

A drawing cannot do this. Meltzer notes that "we know from the history of art that [procreation cannot be figured] except symbolically, for any attempt at direct representation either turns out to have a pornographic impact or is so innocently adolescent...as to represent only fun and games" (AB 48). Art cannot help Claudia by displaying the inside (of the mother's womb, of the parents' bedroom) she so desperately



wants to access, for art does not depict procreation as much as reenact it. The act of perceiving does not obviate but rehearses the trust required to conceive.

Accordingly, as the child needs trust to conceive the mother's beauty, the audience needs trust to appreciate a work of art. Claudia's inadequacy is that she lacks this capacity to trust: she is, for example, unable to stand in front of the parents' bedroom door and resist peeking in – she is not content to imagine what transpires there. She cannot contemplate the mother without experiencing frustration at the opacity of flesh, and is unwilling to confer beauty based on mere conjecture of the contents of the womb. Were she to stand before a painting, a similar frustration would likely ensue.

In a similar vein, Scarry notes that we respond to art because of its quality of “almost-aliveness”, and claims that we accord the surface of the canvas a “semi-sentien[ce]” (*AB* 69). Accordingly, she writes that “the mind recoils – as from a wound cut into living flesh – at the possibility that [a painting] might be cut, torn, or roughly touched” (*AB* 69). The ideal audience respects the surface – the limitations - of the work just as, upon healthy attainment of the depressive position, the child respects the mother's surface, vulnerability, and limitations.

Instances in the audience of what amounts to variations of the child's sexual researches abound, and strategies of research range from the violent (paranoid-schizoid position) to the benign (depressive position). On the more violent end of the spectrum, we might consider instances of art vandalism that realise the unthinkable acts that Scarry describes: vandals have in fact slashed paintings, leaving in their wake canvases that are

indeed “cut, torn, and roughly touched.”<sup>12</sup> A similar tendency appears in the curatorial practice of x-raying paintings to reveal what their opaque flesh conceals. What is invisible is the work’s history and its process; the activity, perhaps, of the artist’s studio (the parent’s nuptial chamber). A-visible is the character of the artist, and the audience seeks this too insofar as they are interested in the artist’s biography. Least intrusive– and most indicative of a successful, trusting aesthetic experience – is the audience’s imaginative projection of the intention, history, and import of a work.

Though it is difficult to quantify the information an audience hopes to find or strives to attribute to an artwork’s “inside,” this information can always be traced in some way to the identity or integrity of the artist. The audience’s preoccupation with the artist as the art’s interior may privilege any number of the factors that contribute to the latter’s professional or personal character; perhaps her skill, style, training, or influences. Perhaps the truth of her signature; in attempts to nuance the question that the child/audience’s question poses to the mother /artwork– “are you honest?” – it is instructive to consider the phenomenon of forgery, where the truth of the signature has been compromised. Concern over whether a given piece is ‘authentic’ – unforged - addresses the suspicion of speciousness in an artist who may not be who she claims, in the artwork, to be; this stands as a kind of generalization of a mother who may not be who – or as beautiful as – she seems.

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<sup>12</sup> For an enumeration and discussion of such instances, see Gridley McKim-Smith’s “The Language of Violence, the Rhetoric of Rape”.

## **VII. Artist and Art**

The concern over forgery prompts a modification to the analogy between child and audience, mother and art. For, though we relate to art as if to a living person, there is another sense in which we recognise artworks as mere substitutes for a person; art can be an object behind which a person can hide. The artist is in the work – most explicitly, by her signature – but exists in a more real sense behind it. Nevertheless, the work is the means by which the audience accesses the artist; it is the site of communication between artist and audience. Indeed, for the artist, the invisible aspect of the work is its audience, whose reactions she can only imaginatively construe. The flesh of a painting is no longer the painter's but the painter's flesh at one remove: the artwork is her child in whose potential she must trust. The child is an audience by its inside, and insofar as this is uncertain, so too are its judgments on beauty.

We can read the relationship between the artist and her work back into Meltzer's case study of Claudia. Art is the product of the artist's conception, and Claudia's attempt to establish her own fertility appears as her attempt to be an artist. In an effort to establish her sexual viability, Claudia attempts maternity by creating a drawing herself. The drawing is a portrait of a clown, and, as the case notes relay: the drawing "was no sooner done than she began to whimper 'its ugly! Throw it away!' and seemed very upset. 'Throw it away! Throw it away!' she urgently repeated" (*AB* 51). Meltzer interprets Claudia's rejection of the picture as a disappointment with "either the picture of an ugly or the ugly picture of a clown" (*AB* 56); that is, the ugliness is either the fault of the artist, or is attributable to the ugly subject.

By drawing an “ugly little clown,” Claudia is rehearsing the process by which she thinks she was conceived. The two possible causes of failure just noted are two possible ‘differential[s] of baby-making methods’ that Claudia blames for her ugliness. Artist and subject, modulated to the familial scenario, are mother and father. The mother is the artist; as the mother gives birth to a child, the artist produces an artwork. The father is the subject; he inspires the work but cannot himself bear it; he is the person whom the mother/artist, in Scarry’s words “wanted to reproduce” (*AB* 3).

Insofar as Claudia plays the artist, she plays the mother, but, like her own mother, she fails; she lacks “mother-liness” (*AB* 64). More than biological motherhood, mother-liness entails also “the imaginative...grasp of [the child’s] teeming potentialities to become an evolved human being” (*AB* 64). As consistent with the analogy between mother and artist, mother-liness encompasses both senses of conceiving. Similarly, the successful artist is exemplary in her propensity for creating art and - as Keats establishes and Meltzer repeats – in her capacity to tolerate uncertainty and moreover to positively trust.

Insofar as Claudia identifies with the subject, she identifies with the father. To this effect, Meltzer describes the father as “convey[ing] somehow a tragi-comic impression, not unadmirable by any means” (*AB* 54). He is clown-like perhaps, but not ugly; Claudia’s appearance might be considered a bastardization of his. Indeed, Claudia “was both so blemished and damaged that family resemblance was quite obscured” (*AB* 57). Claudia is more the ugly picture of a clown than a picture of an ugly clown. The burden of blame, then, lies ultimately with the artist, and the charge against the artist is that she could not produce a good likeness.

Claudia's privileging of the criterion of resemblance indicates her unwillingness to concede a place in conception for imagination or interpretation. Tellingly, a portrait that diverges notably from its subject is considered 'unfaithful', and it is precisely an accusation of infidelity that Claudia makes against her mother. Her suspicion of the existence of other siblings who may usurp the mother's care derives from a general suspicion of the mother's character that doubts her faithfulness to the father. The possibility of the mother's sexual infidelity is a differential that, to the child, would affect – indeed, would devastate - the beauty of conception.

Claudia's worry of her ugliness is in this sense a worry that she is a forgery. And indeed, it is the forger's method of conception that is dishonest. This method fails to meet the standard that an audience expects; the work is not propelled by inspiration, and no connection necessarily connects the representing forger to the subject it represents.<sup>13</sup> Peter Schjeldahl, expounding on a famous Vermeer forger, comments on how a fear of forgery undermines trust in all art:

The spectre of forgery chills the receptiveness—the will to believe—without which the experience of art cannot occur. Faith in authorship matters. We read the qualities of a work as the forthright decisions of a particular mind, wanting to let it commandeer our own minds, and we are disappointed when it doesn't. If we are disappointed enough, when the named artist is familiar, we get suspicious. (par. 13)

Though Schjeldahl's comments pertain to a technical definition of forgery, the sentiment he expresses has a much larger application. His elaboration of the fear of forgery reflects

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<sup>13</sup> Plato addresses this concern in *The Republic*, criticizing painters for not knowing their subjects: "the painter paints what looks like a shoemaker, though neither he nor his public know about shoe-making, but judge merely by colour and form (342; 601a).

a more general fear of deception – an unwillingness to trust - that hampers aesthetic experience.

## Conclusion

Schjendahl concludes the above quoted passage on forgery: “But we can never be certain in every case that someone—a veiled mind—isn't playing us for suckers. Art lovers are people who brave that possible chagrin” (par. 13). To brave the possible chagrin of deceit is to imagine the integrity of a ‘veiled’ or inaccessible mind. This is precisely the work of trust and, as Schjendahl suggests, this trust is necessary for any aesthetic experience. Though a triumph of aesthetic experience occurs in the appreciation of a potentially forged Vermeer, successful aesthetic experience occurs also in the contemplation of art whose authorship is not as overtly in question. Furthermore, aesthetic experience inheres in a range of situations beyond the contemplation of paintings. The first and most formative of these is, as Meltzer shows, the decision to trust the mother. Nonetheless, all instances of trust are ultimately a variety of aesthetic experience.

Though Schjendahl attributes capacity for trust specifically to those who love art, the capacity can be applied on a more general basis: it is shared by those who love. What art lovers and regular lovers share is the will and capacity to conceive. As Diotima, through the writings of Plato insists, the purpose of love is procreation. In pursuit of this goal, aesthetic judgments are attempted, and the search for beauty begins. Its end is trust, for trust is conception, imagination, and the experience of finding something beautiful. Though trust is the end of the search for beauty, it is the end as a goal or a purpose and not the end as a conclusion or terminus. Indeed, the goal is perpetuation, and trust is inscribed in a logic of reciprocity by which its judgment or conception incites another.

For the child, the search for the beautiful is explicitly a search for the fertile, and the end of the search is the mitigation of violent methods of sexual research.

In considering the significance of trust to love, a potential arena for further inquiry emerges. Diotima's speech and Schjendahl's remarks, which frame this essay, imply a way in which trust might be considered a 'work' of love. In this vein, we could consider trust the implicit concern of Søren Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*. Kierkegaard writes, for example, against the conceit of not being deceived (5; ix 10) and recommends that we "not inquisitively want to force [our] way in to "love's hidden life" (9; ix 12). He further explicates the duty associated with love and, in particular, of "love's debt" (177; ix 169).

Kierkegaard's arguments resonate with points I have made about trust; his, though, emerge from an explicitly theological framework. The affinities underscore the relevance of theological issues to the topic at hand. The elaboration of theological issues within the aesthetico-psychoanalytic framework established here might include an analysis of the dynamics of - and the beauty attributed to - the Christian holy family. How does immaculate conception figure in a theory of trust as conception? Meltzer alludes to the perplexing effect of this dogma on a child's development of aesthetic judgment insofar as Jesus represents "the most-beautiful-baby-in-the-world!" (AB 48).

Besides theology, a second major avenue opened by this thesis is art historical. Taking the child's judgment of the mother's beauty as a prototype for subsequent aesthetic judgments gives rise to a psychoanalytic methodology for analyzing aesthetic experience. Admittedly, not all aesthetic experience follows the schema proposed that analogises the artist with the mother, the model/inspiration with the father, and the



audience with the child. Analogously, though, the prototype of a monogamous heterosexual couple parenting their own biological child is far from exhausting every possible familial configuration. Might variations in one determine the variations of the other? Might, for example, the movement of – and reactions to – abstract expressionism be analysed according to its deviation from the traditional familial structure? This work is non-representative and, furthermore, takes as its goal the expression of the self. A logic of the self-portrait might be similarly construed. Self-portraits that depict the artist in the process of creation add another interesting dimension; those that depict an artist at her easel might be instructively compared with works that depict mother and child in both secular and religious contexts.

Trust's intertwinings with art, finally, might be situated within a broader context as an intertwining with language. To this effect, Ludwig Wittgenstein remarks that "a language game is only possible if one trusts something" (*OC* 66; §509). Although the work of many theorists of language doubtless have resonance with the theory forwarded here, Wittgenstein's position is particularly apt. Of particular interest is his elaboration of the way that, "if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant" (*PI* 85; §293). In this way we could consider how language, like art, demands trust to supplement the dropped-out object.

The scope of the potential inquiries adumbrated by the theory given here speaks to trust's pervasiveness across human experience. It speaks, at least, to the pervasiveness of the potential for trust that may or may not be actualised, of a psychic and emotional need for trust that may or may not be fulfilled. Where it is fulfilled, there is imagination,

conception, reproduction, flourishing of relationships and the continuation of generations  
of beauty.

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