

LINGUISTIC DIMENSION OF PLASTIC ARTS:
THE NAMES OR LACK OF NAMES OF ARTWORKS

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I investigate the linguistic dimension of plastic artworks focusing on their names. My analysis of names follows Ludwig Wittgenstein's arguments in his books *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*; and Martin Heidegger's views on work of art and world play a complementary role. The "tension" between the image and the word is the main focus throughout this study.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, Language, Names, Art, Untitled

ÖZ

PLASTİK SANATLARDA DİLSEL BOYUT: SANAT ESERLERİNİN ADLARI VEYA ADSIZLIKLARI

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Bu tezde plastik eserlerin dilsel boyutunu adları üzerinden soruşturmaya çalıştım. Adlandırmayı Ludwig Wittgenstein’in *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* ve *Felsefi Soruşturmalar* kitaplarını temel alarak yürüttüm, bu esnada Heidegger’in dünya ve sanat eseri üzerine görüşlerini de soruşturmayı tamamlayıcı rolde kullandım. İmge ve söz arasındaki en iyi “gerilim” olarak tanımlanabilecek bağ, bu çalışmanın ana konusudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Wittgenstein, Dil Felsefesi, Ad, Sanat Eseri, Adsız

to my beloved partner in life, Cem Örsel,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Aim and the Scope of the Study

Plastic artworks like sculptures, paintings or installations usually bear a linguistic part: Their titles or names. Some originate from the artist, some given by the art dealers, some by the public. They become one with the work, and in the aftermath, they take part in our experience. Some artists wish to emancipate their works from the language, but is it actually possible? The titles became a need when large amounts of works began circulating but what do they mean to us now? Wittgenstein, as a philosopher put language into investigation to figure out the philosophical problems because he had the insight that through language philosophical questions can be understood. Maybe an investigation of the linguistic component of the plastic artworks can shed a new light under which works of art can be discovered.

Throughout the study, works of art are not regarded as the mere illustrations of theory which is formulated; their role is essential. The aim is neither making this work a practical research, nor a complete theoretical evaluation. Putting equal emphasis on both sides is sought. With the help of Heidegger's arguments, the unity of the plastic artwork with the word is intended to be underlined.

Wittgenstein ends his *Tractatus* with the famous 7th argument: “What cannot be said, must be passed over in silence” (TLP §7). He points out that his book is to be used as a ladder to climb, and after the climb is over, one must throw away the ladder (TLP §6.54). Even though his way of stating the facts one after another, like commandments from a prophet in the *Tractatus* changes in his latter book, the *Philosophical Investigations*, I am convinced that he does not betray his own commandments in the *Tractatus*. The *Investigations* does not deliver his statements in a way that the *Tractatus* do, because it deals with games rather than facts. Even though the facts of the *Tractatus* are still valid, they fail to explain everything about language and its limits. The term “language game” Wittgenstein introduces in the *Investigations*, fills many holes which is left unclear by the *Tractatus*. In this study, I aim to refer these both books not as two books of the same author with differing philosophies, but like Wittgenstein said in the introduction of the *Investigations*, as “sketches of the same landscape from different points of view”.

Absolute value as he states in *A Lecture on Ethics*, cannot be expressed or interpreted with the words we use to make philosophy. So even if art is in itself a noble cause, a philosophical discourse about it might turn out to be just meaningless sentences. What can we talk, then? Wittgenstein placed great importance on the discussion of language. In the *Tractatus*, he draws the limits of language. In the *Investigations*, he investigates the mechanics of language. Then is it possible to investigate the plastic artworks from a linguistic point of view with his arguments on language in mind? Language might be the most important thing about humans. We perceive, think and express ourselves mostly through language, and even the plastic arts are not devoid of it. Like

Wittgenstein philosophizes on world through philosophizing on language, we may philosophize on plastic arts through language.

A possible critic can be made on artworks' materialistic qualities. But what differs art from the everyday objects is rarely something about their materialistic nature. The experience of the artwork differs from the totality of materialistic qualities. In the coming sections, the discussion of how a urinal can be regarded as a work of art just by admitting into a different language game will illustrate this more vividly. Complementary to Wittgenstein's arguments, I find it valuable to consider Heidegger's elaborations on artworks in his essay "Origin of the Work of Art" to understand the interaction of word with the image. His insights to see two aspects in the works of art, the spatial aspect (thing-being) and the work it required. The word, which accompanies the image can be seen as a part of the intellectual effort in the creation of the artwork. To see the words that accompany the artwork as a part of the work-being of the work of art, can illustrate the role the words in the wholeness of the artwork.

Throughout the study, the main focus is on the plastic arts, which rely on the image and my examples are mainly paintings and sculptures. The image and the word are at first sight most unlikely to relate and they each can stand on their own without the need of relating to the other, or so is the common approach. The aim is to expose how the language is stealthy in action in our comprehension of the image. Different types of artworks are not investigated thoroughly because of various reasons. When it comes to musical pieces, which do not involve words, they still share a lot with language, the main component is sound, and symbols like notes are used to transfer them on the

paper. Likewise, in language, being heard is closely related to being seen in music. The naming of musical pieces has a history of their own, various approaches have been formed for naming them during the history. Numbering can be the most popular one of these habits. There are many musical pieces titled *Opus*, which means work in Latin. Usually a number is assigned denoting the chronological order of composition. Another frequent titling tradition is adding a corresponding number after denoting the type (symphony, concerto, sonata, etc.) of the piece. *Nocturne* addresses the night being the source of inspiration for the composer, whereas *Etude* refers to its mechanical quality; *Etudes* are short and usually focus on a single technique. There are titles which step out of the technical or traditional naming of course. Schumann has given titles to his musical pieces promoting visualization. *Bunte Blätter* (*Colorful Leaves*) or *Bilder aus Osten* (*Pictures from the East*) can be counted among them. These titles indicate that his aim was painting a mental image with his music. Rather than assigning just an *Opus* number to his work, he makes use of the words for the mental image he aims to create. A more contemporary composer, Eric Satie took the titling to an extreme when he named one of his piano suites *Three pieces in the Shape of a Pear*. As I stated earlier, investigation on the naming of musical pieces can be another subject of its own which cannot be rightfully covered in the scope of this thesis. Names of buildings could also be an interesting investigation. Gombrich illustrates different kinds of naming habits for buildings in example of museums. He mentions Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as commemorative name, Museum of Modern Art as an example of transparent name, Metropolitan Museum being an institutional one, and denotes The Cloisters as descriptive. When it comes to architecture, which is spatial as the other exemplified plastic works of art, the problem rises from functionality. My discussion throughout the thesis about the works of art completely

disregards their use. Architecture can rarely be thought free from functionality. The named creature is experienced from inside and outside. In the example of museums, they host many organizations: exhibitions, panels, performances and many others. The building is not mobile but has a life within itself of its own, which is pretty contradictory with the plastic artworks I am trying to comment on. Therefore, I am limiting the discussion to sculptures and paintings, in order to achieve a complete linguistic investigation.

My analysis will be structured as follows. In the chapter following the “Introduction,” I will focus on various aspects of the concept “name”. How naming the works of art became a common practice will be discussed and later I will elaborate on the power a name possesses. In taxonomy, name giving renders a thing as an object of knowledge. Distinction between particular and universal will be interpreted as another aspect of name giving. Afterwards, the meaning of a name will be evaluated with respect to Wittgenstein’s arguments in the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*. Later, my focus will be on the question if naming artworks can be considered as a language game. The concept of language game is introduced by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*. As a connection to language game, the concept of family resemblance for which Wittgenstein got inspiration from Francis Galton will be discussed. Contemporary studies related to Galton’s photography will be examined. Last subtitle of the Chapter Name will be “Rebaptism: Changing the Name”. In this section, I will focus on the artworks, whose given names by the artist is changed, either by the patrons or the receiving public. The next chapter is titled “Untitled”, as many contemporary artworks are. The historical background to understand this interesting naming habit will be discussed. Why do the artists seek to emancipate the image from

word? Heidegger's ideas about the concealment and truth will be recalled to answer this question. Wittgenstein's arguments both in the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* will help to assess the role of language in aesthetical experience. In Chapter 4, the topic will be the names of the lost works of art. In contrast to the former section, this chapter focuses on the artworks, whose image is lost, but its title lives on. The meaning of the lost artwork's title will be discussed. In Chapter 5, the names will be evaluated from a Heideggerian point of view. Heidegger depicts plastic artworks as having both work-being and thing-being. In which of the aforementioned dimensions linguistic part can be included? Or can the intellectual work be considered as a part of work-being of the work of art in Heideggerian sense? The parallel aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of artwork and Wittgenstein's interpretation of meaning will be discussed. Lastly, in the 6th chapter reserved for conclusion, I try to collect the comments I made throughout the thesis and underline the importance of linguistic dimension for the artworks, even in the ones that one is least unlikely to encounter, namely in plastic arts.

A criticism of plastic arts from a linguistic point of view making use of Wittgenstein's concepts might bring us a fresh comprehension of artworks. A critic that one can make without the discussion of value, but also beyond the material qualities. A critic about a dimension of the artwork, which is neither material, nor heavenly. The name of it, or the lack of name; a dimension most humanely.

Wittgenstein is an artist of language, more than a philosopher of it. He makes use of language in a genius way; through his philosophy of language he touches the very essence of the intellectual act we call philosophy. This thesis aims to bring a linguistic

discussion to plastic artistic creation focusing on their names, with respect to Wittgenstein's arguments on language.

CHAPTER 2

NAME

Language is how people communicate and understand; and this understanding affects how we experience the works of art. The first linguistic quality which opens up when experiencing the artwork is its name or its lack of a name.

The naming of a work of art, along with the terminology used in discussions and discourse, affects the way how a work of art is perceived. Modern plastic art seems to have emancipated itself from the binds of language. Now in contemporary art, it is usually a “Let it speak for itself” situation, but we do speak about the works and how we speak of them matters. As the art gets more abstract, the importance of what is verbal and written increases. A work of art is not something completely different than the discourse built around the artwork. In Heidegger’s terms, the state of being is always a being-in-the-world. Beings gain their intelligibility in a world, alongside other beings (Heidegger 2008: 78-82). Artworks are always bound up with the discourse they are involved in. This notion will be elaborated throughout the coming sections which focus on Heidegger’s views of work of art.

The focus of this work will be on the literary aspect in the works of art, beginning with the names. Naming is a strange process, assigning a linguistic part, in this case to a work of art. This text aims to interpret the sense and meaning of the names given to the works of art, with respect to Wittgenstein’s argument on language. In Heidegger’s

terms; “naming beings brings them to the world” (Heidegger 2002: p.46). What is in the world opens up to us either as present-at-hand or ready-to-hand in our everyday dealings, according to Heidegger’s arguments. In his essay “Art-Names and Aesthetic Judgments”, Khatchadourian recalls an incident that Brancusi’s work *Bird in Space* is not regarded as sculpture by officials in United State Customs. The justification was “a hunter wouldn’t shoot at it if he saw it; i.e. that it did not look like a bird” (Khatchadourian 1961: p.31). The expectancy here is that the plastic aspect of the artwork should mimic its literal aspect. The title promises a representation of a certain subject, and the viewer demands from the works of art to keep that promise. Is a name only understandable through resemblance? Should it be nothing more than a repetition of what was shown in the image with words? In his 1980 lecture *Image and Word in Twentieth-Century Art* which he gave in Guggenheim Museum, Gombrich recalls the relationship between word and image as “tension”. There is no shortage of words or images in twentieth century art, Gombrich denotes. He presents the tension in between them as the subject of his lecture. His emphasis of the relationship implies that it is built in numerous ways and not limited to representative nature in the artworld of twentieth century. The name stands as more than just a description of the artwork, or affirmation of the subject. Elaborating on the nature of relation between the image and the word and exposing the power of the word over the reception of the artwork will be one of the main tasks of this thesis. Custom officer’s behavior illustrates dramatically how easy it is to approach a work of art as ready-to-hand, in Heideggerian terms. Can naming introduce concealment to a work of art, after the admission of the work into the world? There is always a possibility to approach a work of art as present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. Is leaving the artworks unnamed better for exposure of the truth?

The possible answers will be discussed with the help of Martin Heidegger's and Ludwig Wittgenstein's arguments and examples.

2.1. Need of Name: Mobility of the Artwork

It is common to expect a title above a poem, or a title on the cover of a book. Unlike these examples, paintings or sculptures lack a "title space" where you expect the title to be. Though it is common to see a label somewhere in contemporary exhibitions of artworks, the title does not share the same medium with the plastic artwork with contrast to literal works of art, namely literature. These title labels in exhibitions or museums tend to be in a certain distance from the artwork, which further strengthens the impression of not being a part of the artwork. Nevertheless, an onlooker in an exhibition tends to search for that little label when the first encounter with the artwork occurs. And that custom has given birth to an interesting situation in the last decades: The artworks which are titled *Untitled*. The title space is there, and the work needs to be named to become a piece of the exhibition. The artist chooses not to give a name to the work, but still the words *Untitled* are written in that space, as if it was a statement. As a matter of fact, the label tag does not even need to be there, since the work of art was not given any name. But it stands there and declares the lack of a title. There will be more elaborative commentary on this issue in the section dedicated to untitled works of art. First question of discussion is how the naming of plastic artworks has become a common practice in time.

Before the 18th century, not giving a title to a painting was not a deliberate refusal, but the standard procedure (Yeazell, 2015). The artworks were constructed within a certain

setting like murals. The works of art produced for patrons or the church did not need special titling in their permanent place of residence; the context was enough to interpret it. The portrait hanged on the hall of a rich merchant's house belonged to a family member, and the bearded guy in the arms of a sad woman shown in the fresco of a medieval church was definitely Christ. The artwork mostly had an intended place for display, and the audience who expected to receive it mostly lived close by and shared a common culture. When the public art exhibitions became common, the deviation from a shared visual culture and context started to occur. The hanging style was much crowded and there was no place in between the frames for name labels. One had to consult the catalogue, in order to get any information about the painting including its title. Displaying the paintings close to its title is of recent fashion, Yeazell claims. Although titles were there, they did not exist in the same space with the work of art. Yeazell gives Rene Magritte's famous work as an example: The painting which depicts a pipe and has the sentence "This is not a pipe" written under it. The painting is known in the public usually by the name *This is not a Pipe*. The same painting inspired Foucault's book which bear the same name and has Magritte's painting on the cover page in most of the editions. Even though the famous sentence was written in the painting, the actual title which was written in the catalogue of the exhibition for the painting was *Treachery of Images*. The sentence depicted within the painting became the strong literary aspect of the artwork, and the name which did not share the same space at the time of exhibition, persisted only in the catalogues and minds of the art critics. For most of the public, it was and it will be *This is not a Pipe*. The resonance of image and the literal rejection thereof is so strong, even if the first exhibition yielded title spaces, I am not sure any other title would have rivaled and persisted against the sentence within the painting.

Treachery of Images is from a time when displaying the name of the artwork on a close by label was not a common practice like it is today. The connection of the image or figure with the language was through the mediation of the catalogue. The physical distance between the work and its name was greater so to say.

Even if the name is just in a descriptive fashion (e.g. *The Blue Boy*), or simply the subject of the painting (e.g. *The Last Supper*), the image became associated with those words (Gombrich, 1980). These markings are not exactly being the titles given by the artist, similar to parents baptize their offspring with a name. Those titles were mostly given by the middlemen, who were involved with the trade of the artworks. Names like *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* shows clearly that the titles were not given by the artists at that times (Yeazell, 2015).

When works of art began to travel, words started to accompany them. The catalogues involved entries about the artworks. It served to describe and classify the work of art. When the title ended and description started within the text which accompanied the artwork was vague in the early booklets, Yeazell underlines. At first, the descriptions were given by the maker of the catalogue. The display was mostly limited to a group of intellectual elites. Later on, when “democratization” of the Salon begins, as Yeazell calls it, the receiving public became more heterogeneous and the need for titles increased. Still, those descriptions were written by the people who prepared the catalogue, not the artists themselves. Yeazell points of an early example of a call for entrants from 1798, which demands from the artists who send a work of art to the exhibition to provide a description in writing to enter the catalogue. With this demand

from the Royal Academy, creation of the word which will accompany the image becomes an extension of the artist's creative process.

The original work of art was not the only thing that became mobile. The reproductions, mostly in form of prints made from the engravings of paintings also started to circulate. The accompaniment of words to the prints was more common than the originals. In some cases, the engraver gives a title to the print which was modeled after a painting that has not been titled yet, and the engraver's title ends up being associated with the original painting in time (Yeazell, 2015 p.56-59).

Another factor beside the mobility of the artwork was increased percentage of literacy in the society. If the receptors of the travelling image could not decipher what was written as the title, naming would not become a habit for the plastic works of art.

2.2. Power of a Name

The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. (Genesis 2:20)

The name giving is regarded as a ritualistic process in many cultures. We baptize objects and concepts with names and make them available in the realm of language. When they are available to us, we can use them in our propositions, or pictures of realities as Wittgenstein addresses them. The named thing can be an object of thought which can be communicated in the form of a proposition. In 2011 John Cristopher Lavell wrote a doctoral thesis titled *Power of a Name*. As an art graduate and with a

doctoral degree in philosophy, he focuses his research on names with theoretical support from Foucault.

This name-giving practice seems like the first step of gaining dominance over nature. Lavell calls this phenomenon as manifestation of power in the semiotic process.

Science is possible through naming and taxonomy. The aim is rendering what is named understandable and admitting it into the realm of logic. Titles become necessary after the mobility of the artworks is increased. As mentioned in the previous section, title did not appear near the artwork at first; they were printed in the catalogues originally. This classification of the artworks with their titles in the catalogues resembles heavily taxonomy textbooks on biology. Like plants classified under a same family name, artworks are being grouped under the same art movement title, even in contemporary catalogues the practice continues.

There is always the implication of putting things in their place in taxonomy. Only after successfully designating what it is and giving the proper name, the name-giver gains the knowledge of what it is and what it is not. Where it should be, and where it does not belong is clear. Lavell (2011) emphasizes the importance of system of naming with a quote from the French philosopher Michael Foucault: “to tame the wild profusion of existing things”.

The scientific taxonomy sometimes relies on code names established with letters and numbers when the massive number of objects demand naming. A similar trend can also be observed in art. Kandinsky can be given as a perfect example to this kind of naming habit. He has a series of paintings named *Improvisations*. In most cases, the

name is followed by a number like *Improvisation 7*. There are some cases that further denotation seemed to be required, like *Improvisation 28 (second version)*. These naming pattern appears to be invented only to solve the problem of referring the paintings without implying anything; no language game whatsoever. Even though that taxonomy brings the inherent hierarchy among the class of paintings titled *Improvisation*; the 7th one is made prior to the 28th. We realize some numbers of Improvisations are missing; either they have never been exhibited or get lost somehow in time. Where they belong in a long line of improvisations is established with the attached number. The number does not give a formal description, but it gives a classification. Even the code like character of the name communicates with the spectators.

The language is shaped to make distinction. Even a descriptive name given to a figurative painting has massive effects on the reception of the artwork because of the distinguishing character of the language. In his lecture, Gombrich gives two basic alternative titles for an imaginary painting of a tree. The artist can choose to call it *A Tree* or *The Tree*. One was pointing the universal as the other one denotes a particular. What did the artist have in mind? To draw a representation of a tree which would show treeness or to display the qualities of a specific tree through painting? The name he gave will bear the clue to this question. Images do not carry the distinction between the universal or the particular inherently. But a little article before the name given to the painting communicates the artist's intention and shape the perception of the viewer one way or another (Gombrich, 1980).

Gombrich (1980) also recalls that in many cultures knowing the names of spirits or ghosts is regarded as having power over them. Humankind has not been satisfied with naming all the plants and animals, we also want control over what we cannot see. And we have an idea about how to achieve that domination: Through naming. It was a pretty tough job, but humankind did it surprisingly well. Most of the spirits that haunted people, brought them fear, uneasiness and caused them to lose their mind have names today, thanks to the science of psychology. Living haunted by spirits has a new name: Mental health problems. Now the monster who causes you to live in constant fear has a name: Anxiety disorder. These disorders have been named, organized and strategies have been found how to defeat most of them. If not yet found, how to cope with them is advised by the professionals. Gombrich mentions Paul Klee as a painter who manages to tame his monsters. In his painting *Dance You Monster to My Soft Song!* Klee “takes the measure of his ghostly visitors and remained in charge” according to Gombrich. In the painting, a piano player is depicted with a bigger “monster” figure, floating above him. Klee’s gentle domination over the untrustworthy one can be read in layers, first the soft music of the piano player urges the creature to dance, secondly Klee depicts this scene to us in the painting and thirdly we became aware of the whole situation by the words he scabbled bottom of the painting: “Tanze, Du Ungeheuer zu meinem sanften Lied!” In medicine, the first step of healing is diagnosis of the disease. Knowing the name of the illness grants the expert the power to overcome it. Klee, acknowledges the existence of the monster. He makes the monster visible with his painting, but the idea of domination of the now-visible monster is introduced with his words. Words tame the monster and render the work of art intelligible. The language distinguishes, orders and commands.



Figure 1. Paul Klee, 1922, *Dance You Monster to My Soft Song / Tanze Du Ungeheuer zu meinem sanften Lied!*¹.

¹ Image source: Guggenheim. Accessed at 18.07.2019.
<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/2139>

2.3. Meaning of a Name

The claim here is that not only do the names of artworks have a sense, but they also have a meaning. Where must one look for this search of meaning? The *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* have slightly different answers for this question. First, we must analyze the meaning as distinguished from the sense of a name.

Wittgenstein's claims in the *Tractatus* about the meaning of a name are as follows, which will be questioned and revised later in the *Investigations*:

3.203 A name means an object. The object is its meaning.

3.3 Only the proposition has sense, only in the context of a proposition has a name meaning

Even though Wittgenstein states that the name corresponds to the object, the meaning is claimed to be acquired in the context of a proposition. If we assume that the name of an artwork has a meaning, what is the proposition in which it gains the meaning in? The object itself might be an answer. According to the quotations above, the object serves as a proposition, it supplies the context needed for a name to have meaning. Wittgenstein introduces the notion of "meaning in use" in the *Philosophical Investigations*. The use is not limited to a proposition, all kinds of language games are now to be considered. Can we point out the use of the name in the cases of artworks through which the meaning is obtained? Naming a work of art is a strange process indeed, which will be examined later by examples. In that special case of naming an artwork, its name gains the meaning through the work of art itself.

3.1 In a proposition a thought finds an expression that can be perceived by the senses.
(Wittgenstein 1961 p:13)

According to the quote above from the *Tractatus*, the work of art acts as if it is a proposition. Only in work of art, what is expressed is more than thought: The work of art can also express feelings. This communicative and expressive piece of art itself can be considered as the use of the name. The two different theories of meaning in the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* are two different sketches of the same phenomenon. It is a rare correspondence; since Wittgenstein addresses the logical part of the language and disposes the rest as nonsense in the *Tractatus*, but is intuitive and indirect in the *Philosophical Investigations*, opening a place for games in the language. The artwork is logical indeed, mostly somehow solid and open to experience. It can be described logically. Its name can correspond to it. But there is another layer of an artwork, which can only be grasped intuitively, Wittgenstein's later concepts of "family resemblance" and "language game" in the *Philosophical Investigations*, guides one into a deeper understanding of that aspect. Despite the lack of any family resemblance between the work of art and its name, the name bearer continues to be the use of the name, becoming a single entity with it.

In 1923, Francis Picabia titled one of his paintings as *UDNIE*. The title designated to the painting has no predefined meaning, even the possibility of title being an acronym has been considered by the art critics. The name *UDNIE* first became a name when the artist associated it with his painting. The work of art acts as a proposition in which a word previously nonsensical can gain a meaning. Not only an object of art is created, but also simultaneously a new meaningful name has entered the language. As long as a language game is played with *UDNIE*, it will last as an instrument of the language.



Figure 2. Francis Picabia, 1923, *UDNIE*².

2.4. Naming as a Language Game

Throughout the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives many examples of games. In §2 it is the case of two builders, who are constructing with building stones. One brings the other the denoted type of stone, upon the one-word order the other gave, which is the name of that stone. The aim is not to show the other the stone over there

² Image source: Centre Pompidou.

Accessed at 22.08.2019. <https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/resource/cnyRp4/r4bK9EB>

or to give a name to a stone with a certain shape. The use builders made out of the name is different, so the meaning of the uttered word is different, too. In §7 Wittgenstein explains this process as a language game (Wittgenstein 2009: p.8e). The meaning is not unbound by the use.

He uses chess to exemplify the concept of game multiple times. The pieces, gain a meaning in the game of chess; their characteristic moves are agreed upon. Both players must obey the previously set rules of the game. Only then, the game can be played.

For naming and describing do not stand on the same level: naming is a preparation for describing. Naming is not yet a move in a language-game – any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess. One may say: with the mere naming of a thing, nothing has yet been done. Nor has it a name except in a game. (§49) (Wittgenstein 2009: p.28e)

Pieces of chess or the rules of chess are not the game of chess. Putting the pieces in their starting position is not the game of chess either. These are more of prerequisites for the game. According to those arguments, naming an object is mostly not a language game either, it's an act of admitting the object into a language game, like getting pieces ready on a board before the game begins. In previous section, it was mentioned that in order to involve a work of art in a discourse, it should be referred in the language somehow. According to the *Tractatus*:

3.22 In a proposition a name is the representative of an object. (Wittgenstein 1961: p.15)

Although we need names to represent the objects, propositions -or sentences- fail to say what a thing is, they can only be descriptive according to the author of the *Tractatus* (3.221) (Wittgenstein 1961: p.15). Only the name is powerful enough to mean the object itself directly.

What is essential in a game, in a language game in this case? Wittgenstein asks what it is that is common to every activity we call “games” in §66. A feature which is common to them all is not to be found, according to him. All we find is an array of *similarities* and *affinities*. In §68, he questions the boundaries of the concept of game:

What still counts as a game, and what no longer does? Can you say where the boundaries are? No. You can draw some, for there aren’t any drawn yet. (Wittgenstein 2009: p.37e)

Even though naming is considered only as a prerequisite, Wittgenstein is quite flexible about the concept of game. Naming an artwork is a strange process; but dare we call it as a *game*? It involves the creation of that strange (*seltsam*) connection between the object and the word, ending up as the name thereof. In this case does the game start after the naming? Or is the moment of creation of this connection is worthy of being called a language-game? Discussing various examples of naming an artwork may give some perspective to answer these questions.

Names of 19th century paintings and sculptures are usually descriptive. It is common to find more than one painting from various artists with the same name. There are many “Birth of Venus” paintings, 3 of which are from Botticelli, Barry and Cabanel. Although their styles vary, they depict the same scene. These are rather representative approaches to artwork-naming habits. Another mythological theme, fall of Icarus, is also depicted by various artists throughout the history. For most of the addressed paintings, the name only describes the scene, but in Bruegel’s version, Icarus is depicted only by a splash in the water in the lower-right corner of the canvas, and Dedalus is implied by a sky-gazing shepherd. Without the knowledge of the name of the painting, one would not care to search for any mythological character on an

otherwise peaceful landscape. In this example, it could be stated that name of the work of art is an inseparable part of the experience. In contrast to previous examples, Bruegel's naming of his painting is not a mere representation of the work or is given for the sake of communication, but the name is a language game itself. With this language game, artist exposes the previously subtle relation: the onlooker assumes that the title refers to the subject of the painting. Even if no apparent relations are to be seen, the onlooker continues to search for the subject which supposedly hinted in the title. The search yields results: the onlooker detects the splash on the right side of the canvas down below. Bruegel builds the language game in his title on the previous naming patterns of the artworks. Bruegel's modification of the previous game makes his version of *Fall of Icarus* stands out among the others with the same name.



Figure 3. Pieter Bruegel, ca.1558, *Fall of Icarus*³.

³ Image source: The British Library. Accessed at 02.03.2019.
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/landscape-with-the-fall-of-icarus>

The painting *Treachery of Images* or more commonly known as *This is not a Pipe* by Magritte also possesses an inherent connection between the image and language. The painting makes us aware that every time we name a work of art, we play a language game. Magritte questions the language through the image he creates. When most titles establish descriptive relation with the image, the viewer becomes accustomed with that kind of language games. The descriptive relation is so common, that it becomes the normal and expected way of relating the title with the image. Like the custom officer said that Brancusi's work *Bird in Space* did not look like a bird, the onlooker starts to demand that figurative bond between the name and the image. Magritte's painting exposes this expectation, which become a second nature for the onlooker and pushes them to question that demand. It is not a pipe, it has never been a pipe. If you want to blame the image for being treacherous, its title in the catalogue would encourage you. The image does not have to be a representation and the name does not have to describe it. The image has always been an image, naming it according to what it depicts was a language game. Now that is exposed, another broad range of options for different language games are open to people who interact with art. The role of language in plastic arts is made more visible in that painting.

As the language games with the titles become more frequent, more variety of relations between the image and its title occurs in the history of art. Since apparent affinity is not required anymore, distance between the image and the idea expands; Gombrich states. *Bird in Space* by Brancusi and *Still Life with Glass and Lemon* by Picasso can be given as examples to this growing distance. Without the aid of a title, relating the figure with the objects mentioned in the title is highly unlikely. Through title, onlooker adopts a mindset Gombrich suggests. The relation is not always visual, some artists

used the word to connect the image with the sound. Kandinsky and Klee often gave names to their pieces which have musical implications like *Compositions* or *Improvisations*. A rare example of relating a musical piece to a shape through its title is given by the composer Eric Satie. He named his piano suite as *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear*. The plastic works of art are sometimes expected to represent their titles in shape, as in the example Katchadurian gives; but how can a piano piece achieve what that title promises? On top of that, the piece is made of seven parts: Another rebellion against the promise of the title. The relation between the title and the image is neither a similarity nor a promise. The title is a language game, played upon the image and gains a meaning through the image. The convention of denoting the artworks as *Untitled* can be seen as a refusal of direction of attention and any instruction for interpretation; hence emancipation of image from language was sought. Even that attitude can be read as a way to play the language game. I will elaborate on *Untitled* more in the coming chapters.

2.5. Family Resemblance in the Names of Artworks

It is a common naming habit that artists connect their works with words which already have a variety of meanings in daily use. When the distance between the image and word grows, the relation established by the artist gains a metaphorical character. Investigating this form of tension between the image and the word can be made with the light of Wittgenstein's term family resemblance. The use of the words chosen as title is expanded to the work of art which has been baptized with that name. When the onlooker discovers the name of Rodin's sculpture which depicts two right hands rising to connect, the marble figure gains more meanings than its similarity to a body part.

The title of the sculpture is *The Cathedral*. “Prayers in stone” was a common reference used for gothic cathedrals. Architecture is the art of creating space; walls, ceilings, floors all the solid elements serve to define the space for the intended use. Upon learning the title, the onlooker’s attention might drift into the space in between the hands; like a cathedral building does, *The Cathedral* defines the space with solid stones.



Figure 4. Auguste Rodin, 1908, *The Cathedral / La Cathédrale*⁴,

⁴ Image source: Musée Rodin, Accessed at 03.08.2019.
<http://www.musee-rodin.fr/fr/collections/sculptures/la-cathedrale>

Let us investigate another example from 20th century art: a piece by Duchamp called “Fountain”. That controversial piece caused a disturbance in art circles at its first appearance. It was heavily criticized at the time it was created, but today it is admitted to be one of the most important icons of Dadaist art. *Fountain* is a ready-made porcelain urinal signed “R. Mutt”, an alias used by Duchamp at the time of its submission to exhibition. The work evokes the question if a mass-produced everyday object can be a work of art. But it still holds on the underlying idea that a work of art needs a name and an artist, R. Mutt being the artist and *Fountain* being the name. There are some suggestions why Duchamp chose the name R. Mutt as an alias, and what it may mean. But the name *Fountain* somehow seems self-explanatory. Even though one may chuckle at the naming or find the work of art absurd; one intuitively understands the connection between the artwork and its name.



Figure 5. Marcel Duchamp, 1917, *Fountain*⁵.

⁵ Image source: Tate, Accessed at 13.10.2018.
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573>

What makes Rodin's *The Cathedral* a cathedral or Duchamp's *Fountain* a fountain?

Wittgenstein asks the same question, but his subject is game instead of cathedral or fountain. He questions the common feature in every activity which is called a game.

I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family – build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, and so on and so forth – overlap and criss-cross in the same way – and I shall say: 'games' form a family. (§67) (Wittgenstein 2009: p.36e)

Following that part, to explain the concept of family resemblance, he gives the metaphor of a thread, which consists of overlapping fibers. None of them run along the whole thread, but each overlaps one another through the whole length (§67) (Wittgenstein 2009: p.36e) Returning to Duchamp's work of art, the concept of a fountain comprises of fibers residing in the experience of the on-lookers – which form a family resemblance as a whole. The urinal Duchamp sent to exhibition is now actually a fountain itself, and following the fibers of the thread, it becomes a fiber in the thread too. *Fountain* gains createdness by means of the name it is given. In having createdness, the artwork does not become some unnoticed equipment but rather is something whose transformation we observe attentively. When an image search is performed in world wide web with the keyword "fountain", Duchamp's *Fountain* is most likely to be seen, very close to *Fontana di Trevi* in Rome, indeed.

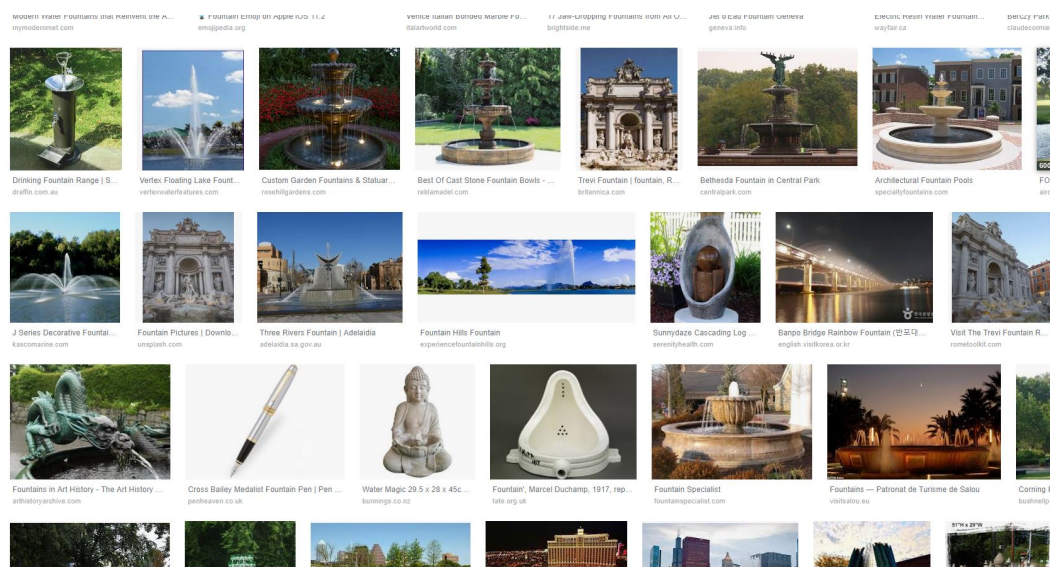


Figure 6. *Fountain*, Google Image Search⁶.

Wittgenstein is aware that, when describing concepts through family resemblance, rigid boundary and exact definitions are to be abandoned. The concept of a game cannot be reduced to the logical sum of corresponding secondary concepts – or in our case, the concept of fountain. The word “fountain” is not inside well-defined borders, but nonetheless it is still meaningful. It is a constant creative action; while naming a work of art an artist draws the borders anew upon the previously drawn ones. Everyone who experiences that work of art invents them over and over.

According to Wittgenstein, every definition attempt falls somehow short and ends up being inexact. Only possible way of explanation of a concept is description (§69) (Wittgenstein 2009: p.37e) In *A Lecture of Ethics*, Wittgenstein refers to Sir Francis Galton’s photography. Galton produced composite portraits, taking photos of many family members on the same photographic plate. The resulting image was showing the common characteristic features of the family. It was reminiscent of everybody in the

⁶ Accessed at 14.06.2019.

family; but not exactly one of them. Wittgenstein believes reciting examples, the more the merrier, may produce the same effect of Galton's photography did: a family resemblance in more than one sense.

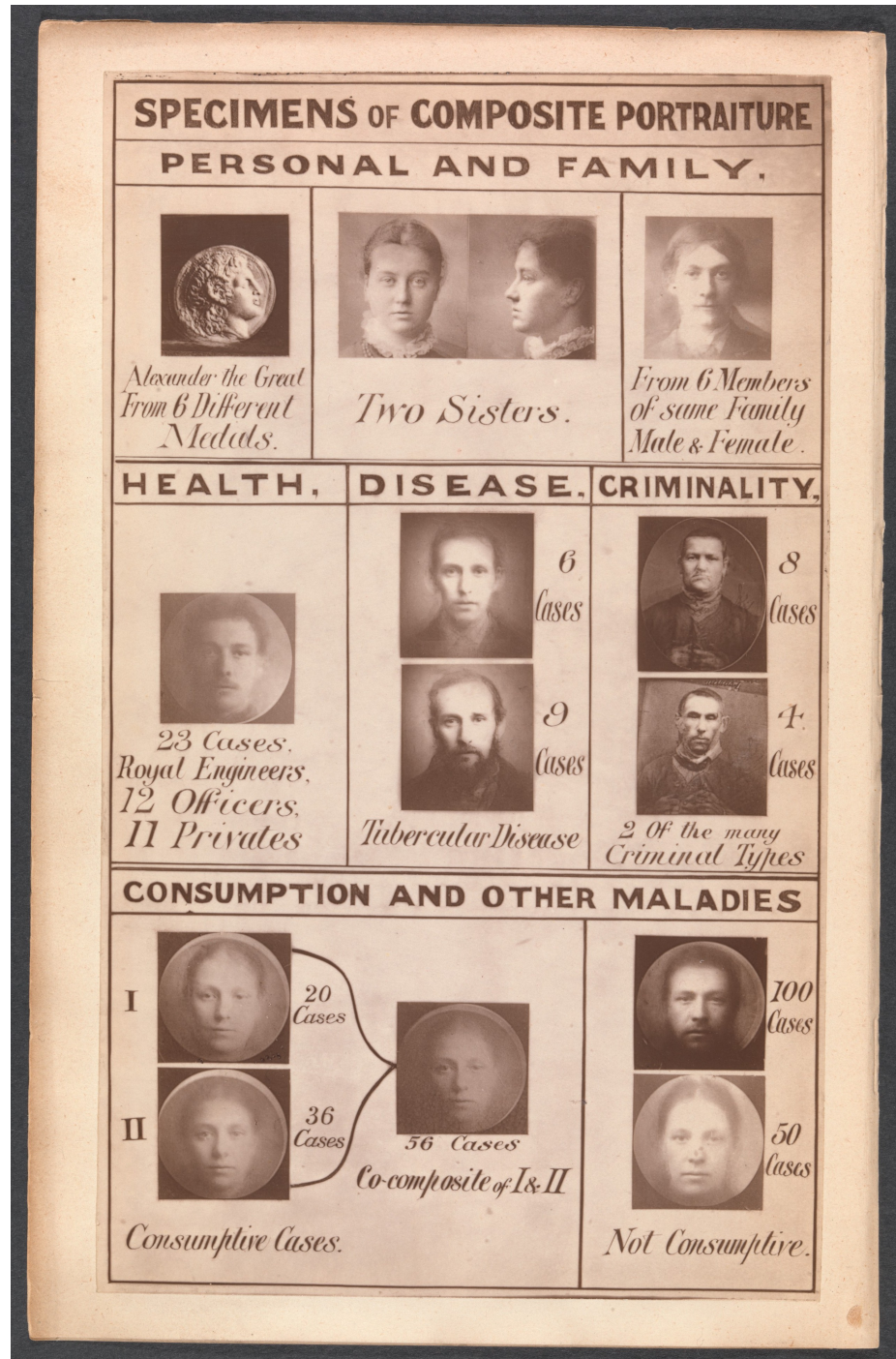


Figure 7. Francis Galton, 1883, *Frontispiece of Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*⁷.

⁷ Image source: The Metropolitan, Accessed at 04.07.2019.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/296278>

It might be useful to get a deeper look on what Galton's work might mean today. Galton was a polymath of Victorian era, who had a much broader spectrum of interest from today's science specialists or artists. His works varied from tropical expeditions to what we call genetics today. His composite portraits indicate his wish to capture something beyond the individual, through the individuals. Today one might define this effort as trying to take the picture of the genetics beneath the faces. The most interesting part is that his wish and effort of making composite portraits is still alive in the scientists of today's society. A "Face Research Lab" was found in University of Glasgow, based in Institute of Neuroscience. A massive variety of publications of this institute are available on their official website (<http://facelab.org/Publications>). The Face Research Lab has since published many articles based on the research made on these composite faces; on attractiveness, signs of health conditions, perception of expressions and so on. But their still ongoing survey in faceresearch.org receives greater attention from the public audience. One can participate in online surveys on face perception, results of which are used by the scientist in the Face Research Lab for developing their theories. It is also possible to make composite faces from combining selected photos of given individual photos. Galton's work is naturally credited in the website, and it is explained how his technology to create composite faces is developed and sharper composites are made possible through modern computer graphic methods. In 2013, the popularity of faceresearch.org has dramatically increased, because an article was published in Daily Mail's website, and the title was "Meet the world's Mrs Averages: Scientists blend thousands of faces together to reveal what the typical woman's face looks like in 41 different countries from around the globe". Lisa DeBruine, the director of the Face Research Lab released an article shortly after the

Daily Mail's story gained sudden popularity. DeBruine explained that free online face averager tool which was available in Lab's website was used to create these images, but the creator of the images was not one of the scientists who were employed in the research. The images were created by Colin Spears as a part of his own art project, DeBruine claims. In the webpage of the blog which these images have been initially published, neither the number of specimens nor the method of choosing these specimens is explained (The Postnational Monitor, 2011). Even though this work obviously cannot be regarded as a scientific research, it definitely shares the same enthusiasm with Galton. What can this current curiosity for the composite portraits tell us? One remark Galton made 140 years ago in his article is still visibly true: The composite images are perceived more attractive than the individual examples. Galton took the composite portraits of murderers and other criminals, with the motivation of capturing something that hints crime or cruelty. Instead, when the photographs of criminals are merged into each other, the crude and dangerous looking features fade and a more relatable figure appears. Galton was amazed of these unexpected results. He realizes that while wanting to take the picture of the crime, he was taking the photo of the human beneath the criminal.

Portrait of an individual is pretty comprehensible. If we understand the individual cases, it is easier to draw their mental pictures. Wittgenstein states that "The logical picture of the facts is the thought" (TLP 3). This statement defines one of the key points of his picture theory he developed in the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. This sentence implies one sharp logical picture of the obvious facts, which is a thought. It seems clear and comprehensible. It is easier to think individual cases, because the logical picture is obvious. When it comes to concepts, it gets complicated. Now to

define a concept, for example what a game is, one needs the mental pictures of various games; and then production of a composite image from them is necessary, like Galton tried to create a picture of family traits, or Spears experimented to find how a Turkish woman looks like. Each game is like an individual of the family called “games” trying to define what a game is similar to trying to take a picture of complete family in one portrait. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein defined thought as logical picture of the facts, in the *Investigations* he does not seem to abandon this view completely; but instead this time he uses composite portraits. The logical picture of a board game is overlapped with the logical picture of ball game, the logical pictures of peek-a-boo and even video games needs to be added this composite portrait, in order to find what game looks like. The resulting image would lack the sharpness that 3rd remark of the *Tractatus* implies as an attribution of mental pictures. In the *Tractatus* he collects facts and presents logical pictures. In the *Investigations*, he collects logical pictures and produces composite portraits. Instead of abandoning the analogy of image in his picture theory, Wittgenstein layers it throughout the *Philosophical Investigations*. Even though the notions of family resemblance and language games are more cited in his later book, the analogy of image continues in various forms.

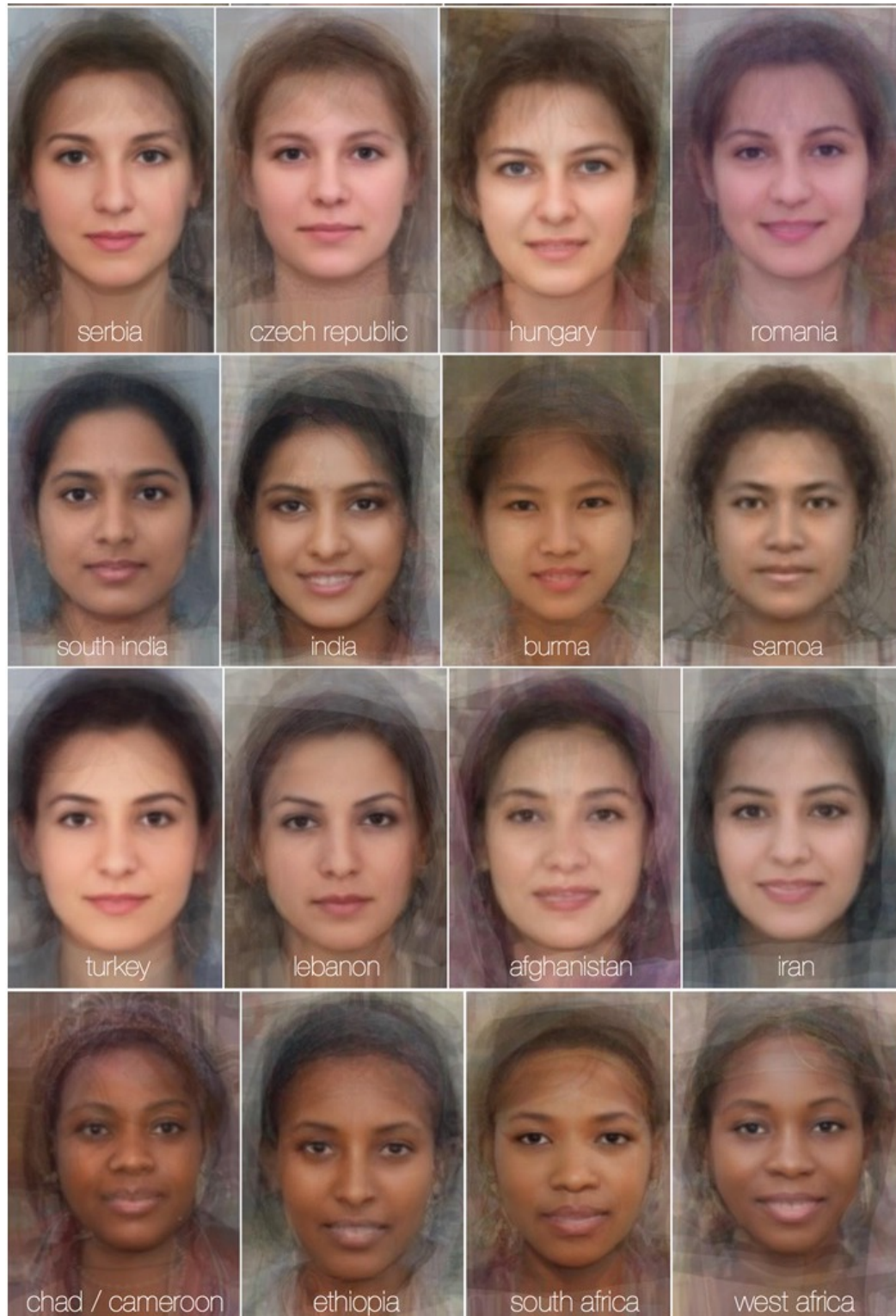


Figure 8. *Composite Portraits of Women from Different Countries*⁸.

⁸ Image source: The Postnational Monitor, Accessed at 14.06.2019.
<https://pmsol3.wordpress.com/2011/04/07/world-of-facial-averages-middle-eastern-and-central-asian/>

Let us bring the attention once more to the works of art. All the previously discussed examples before Duchamp's *Fountain*, although being diverse in terms of relations with the name and the artwork, share a materialistic resemblance. Even though Bruegel plays with the attention of the gazer and provokes the on-looker to find Icarus in the picture, the name is still descriptive like *Birth of Venus* paintings. Duchamp goes for a subtler affinity of the name. A urinal, the object he chooses to make an artwork of, and a "regular" fountain have common concepts like water flow or ceramic base. One does not have these resemblances in mind in the first gaze, one rather finds out while trying to describe it. Nevertheless, the affinity is felt.

There are cases that one artist has more than one work of art which bear the same name. Pablo Picasso can be an example. He has more than one paintings named as "The Weeping Woman". The given name does not address to a specific one, but something that is common in all those paintings; that is resemblances in all of them. These paintings form a family of their own. They are investigations of the concept "The Weeping Woman". Wittgenstein states in Preface of the *Philosophical Investigations*:

The philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long and meandering journeys. The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new sketches made. Very many of these were badly drawn or lacking in character, marked by all the defects of a weak draughtsman. And when they were rejected, a number of half-way decent ones were left, which then had to be arranged and often cut down, in order to give the viewer an idea of the landscape. So this book is really just an album. (Wittgenstein 2009: p.3e-4e)

Wittgenstein is once again constructing symmetry between images and language. The analogy of image to understand thought and language is present in Wittgenstein's writings since the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*. The evolution of this analogy is

important to understand the evolution of his ideas. Picasso would most probably not call his draughtsmanship weak like Wittgenstein humbly did in the aforementioned quote, but a similar approach is to be found in his drawings. A family of depictions carries its message stronger than a single depiction. Galton comments on his composite images as being more attractive than any individual case, even when his subjects for the composite imagery are convicted criminals. Although Picasso's works are displayed separately, the compositeness of artwork is hinted. What makes an artwork composite or simple is surely another discussion, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.



Figure 9 (Left). Pablo Picasso, 1937, *Weeping Woman*⁹,
Figure 10 (Right). Pablo Picasso, 1937, *Weeping Woman*¹⁰,

⁹ Image source: MoMA, Accessed at 04.17.2019.
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/154917>

¹⁰ Image source: Tate, Accessed at 04.17.2019.
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picasso-weeping-woman-t06929>



Figure 11 (Left) Pablo Picasso, 1937, *Weeping Woman*¹¹,
Figure 12 (Right) Pablo Picasso, 1937, *Weeping Woman*¹²,

2.6. Rebaptism: Changing the Name

In her 2013 article “The Power of a Name: In Bruegel's Icarus, for Instance” Yeazell writes about the naming and reception of Jackson Pollock’s *Pasiphae*. In the beginning she reminds Danto’s observation from *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*: “Responding to a painting complements the making of one”.

Yaezell writes about MoMA’s art director’s comments on Pollock’s painting *Pasiphae*. The name originally belongs to a mythological queen, who despite having king Minos as his husband, made love with a bull and gave birth to a Minotaur (a half

¹¹ Image source: Guggenheim, Accessed at 04.17.2019. <https://www.guggenheim.org/arts-curriculum/topic/weeping-women>

¹² Image source: Tate, Accessed at 04.17.2019. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picasso-weeping-woman-t05010>

bull half human creature). As the art director comments on the painting, he used terms like “energetic motives”, “sexual abandon” and “animal passion”. He even commented that the painting implies a mythical ambiance. But the twist of this story comes later. *Pasiphae* was not a name which was given to the painting by the artist himself. The original choice of Pollock was *Moby Dick* for that work of art, but his patron Peggy Guggenheim did not like the ring of it. So, a former art director of the same institution who was present at the moment suggested its current name. Pollock’s first reaction to that name was actually “Who the hell is Pasiphae?” In this case, not the creator but the observer admits the work of art into the realm of language. That accepted name has probably more effects on the observer than artist’s choice of colors perhaps. In a way, the former art director’s response to the work gets attached to the work to affect the later responses.



Figure 13. Jackson Pollock, 1943, *Pasiphae*¹³.

¹³ Image source: The Metropolitan, Accessed at 18.01.2019
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/482518>

Pollock's work of art is not only visual or spatial or performative. From the moment of its baptism with a name, it has also been linguistic. Yeazell points out Lee Krasner's comments on Pollock: "hated titling and tended to put it off until the last moment, usually just before a show". It is hard to imagine for paintings like *Fall of Icarus* named after the completion according to the impressions of its first spectators. This language game was probably a part of the work from the early sketches of the composition. In *Pasiphae*'s case even though the language game does not originally belong to the painter of the work, it is an inseparable part of it. As long as there is a title; be it *Pasiphae* or *Moby Dick*, the shapes Pollock painted on canvas will bear a resemblance in the spectators' eyes, either to a bull or a whale. The title shapes the painting as much as artist's strokes on the canvas. Intentional or unintentional, the work of art gains an existence in the linguistic realm and that existence plays an immense role in its reception by the public.

American-born artist James McNeill Whistler named one of his paintings from 1871 as *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No.1: Portrait of the Painter's Mother*. The painting depicted his mother on gray dominant background with a black dress and white headscarf. One might think that after the authorial titling became common, the middleman or the receiving public would accept the name given by the artist without hesitation. This was not the case with *Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1*. Even today, the painting is frequently referred as *Whistler's Mother*. The artist without a doubt wanted to focus the onlooker on collaboration of colors in the image, who he depicted came second for the audience, he assumed. But the dominance of the figure triumphed his main title suggestion, and the public choose the subtitle with a little modification. Gombrich (1980) mentions a book in his speech, titled *Captions*

Courageous, in which different names for popular works of art are suggested. The suggested title for *Whistler's Mother* is *There isn't Anything on the Chanel 13 either*. The proposed name associates the woman's look with dissatisfaction from a TV show. Even this title suggestion might have a better chance at being accepted by the public considering the story of the painting. The onlooker may confirm the unity of the word and the image or refuse it. Despite the strong presence of the figure, Whistler wanted the spectator attend on the way colors are arranged. Unlike Bruegel's attempt of redirection of attention, his attempt failed. Even though the piece of art stays the same after the creation process is over, the language game with its title lives in the use and continues to be played by the public.



Figure 14. James McNeil Whistler, 1871, *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1*¹⁴.

¹⁴ Image source: Musée d'Orsay, Accessed at 03.08.2019. https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/works-in-focus/search/commentaire/commentaire_id/portrait-of-the-artists-mother-2976.html

CHAPTER 3

UNTITLED [Artwork w/o a Name]

While defining something as “this” or “that”, there is no substitution of the object with a label. The experience is direct with the object, without the mediation of series of words particularly to resemble that object, which is a name. In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein addresses this issue in §38: “Yet, strange to say, the word ‘this’ has been called the *real* name; so that anything else we call a name was one only in an inexact, approximate sense.” (Wittgenstein 2009: p.22e) Through naming, the work of art becomes bounded with various meanings of the name related to one another like a family. Even though that can add some qualities and introduce another layer of meaning to a work of art as mentioned in the previous chapters, some artists choose the way to free their artwork from any resemblance a name might bring. Of course, that strategy has its own negative aspects. In the coming sections, it will be mentioned that the work of art may, in a way, linger after its disappearance, as one can still address it through its given name (like in the example of Colossus of Rhodes). The absence of a name will limit the work of art to be experienced in a specific time and space.

Can the absence of a name prevent it from being admitted into a discourse on art? Heidegger states that: “Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance.” (Heidegger 2002: p.46) In the *Being and Time* only three kinds of beings are in question: ready-to-hand, present-at-hand and Dasein. Work of art comes later into the picture, after the publication of his essay *Origin of the Work*

of Art. One might claim that work of art is somehow an extraordinary being from Heidegger's point of view. In our daily lives, we discover things as ready-to-hands, the being opens itself up as equipment. Present-at-hand beings are merely a deficient mode of ready-to-hands, as a ready-to-hand-no-more they open up either as on our way or demanding our concern. A hammer is used for hammering. The name of the being is a part of its equipmentality. So could bringing a work of art to word pave the way to its enclosure? Because when we encounter beings in our concerned dealings, they are concealed in a world of meaning and likely to enclose its true nature. Without a name, would the encounter be more direct, unmediated, free from concern we tend to feel towards other beings? Lavell (2011) argues that the skill of naming makes taxonomy possible, which admits beings in a certain classification. May we consider it as an act of concealment in Heideggerian sense?

The truth happens in the work of art. Discourse on art has the possibility to become idle talk. An understanding already deposited in the way things have been expressed in language. Idle talk (*das Gerede*) is how everybody talks, what is talked is intelligible but "understood only approximately and superficially". It is how things have been interpreted in everydayness. Idle talk discourages the fresh inspection; it leads to closing off, preventing the possibility of disclosure. (Heidegger 2008: p.211-213)

Cindy Sherman is an American photographer, who is famous for her social criticism in her works. She does not give names to her photos, they are usually referred to as *Untitled*, and a corresponding number follows to differentiate which work is in question. The experience of these works is without a mediation or guidance of a name.

But the effect is only there at the moment of experience. The work of art stands for itself, in this place, at that time and gazes back to the on-looker. Sherman's photos are there, showing the moment of capture, we have no idea of what happened before or what happens after. There are no titles to give us any context, or story. In a discourse, attempting to explain the importance or effect of that specific work, we find ourselves only running against the walls of our cages and what we say does not add to our knowledge in any sense, Wittgenstein states in *A Lecture on Ethics*. Her work of art has a raw givenness that need no name. A judgement about an artwork usually is a judgement of value. Sure, one can describe the material qualities; the dominant colors or discuss the choice of paper or canvas. But commenting on the goodness or absolute value of it would be nonsense, claims Wittgenstein.



Figure 15 (Left Up). Cindy Sherman, 1980, *Untitled Film Still #58*¹⁵.
 Figure 16 (Left Down). Cindy Sherman, 1978, *Untitled Film Still #10*¹⁶.
 Figure 17 (Right). Cindy Sherman, 1978, *Untitled Film Still #15*¹⁷.

¹⁵ Image source: MoMA, Accessed at 04.08.2019.
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/57196>

¹⁶ Image source MoMA, Accessed at 04.08.2019.
<https://www.moma.org/collection/works/56555>

¹⁷ Image source Guggenheim, Accessed at 04.08.2019.
<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/4380>

He gives the example of wondering at the existence of the world. Wittgenstein states that one can wonder such being the case only if one can imagine it not being the case. He gives some examples: an extraordinary big dog or a house still standing which is assumed to be already demolished can be objects of wonder. But one wonders at the existence of the world for *whatever* it is, not for it is incompatible with the imagined case. The experiences of absolute value or goodness, let us say aesthetical experiences, are real and there; but Wittgenstein declares their verbal expression as nonsense. An artwork might be appreciated and wondered at. The admiration does not stem from the viewer wondering the work of art, but because s/he has previously imagined to be otherwise.

Is it a mistake to make an artwork a material of a discourse? Or is limiting a work of art to an experience in a certain space-time unacceptable? Is an unnamed artwork more open to experience without directing attention through naming? Are the suggestions made through naming more limiting than being bounded in space and time from the perspective of the experiencer?

According to Wittgenstein, a sentence is how a thought finds expression which can be perceived through the senses (TLP 3.1). Although being meaningful, the sentence is a projection of the logical picture which is a thought and as a projection, it only relates to what is projected.

3.13 A proposition includes all that the projection includes, but not what is projected.
(Wittgenstein 1961: p.13)

Propositions or sentences are projections, and they introduce meaning through statements or descriptions. But the interaction between the name and the work of art is beyond a simple relation.

3.144 Situations can be described but not given names. (Names are like points; propositions like arrows—they have sense.)

Even if one may agree with the author of the *Tractatus* about remaining silent about what we cannot talk about, naming it is not forbidden unless we claim to describe it. Naming a work of art might be the only legitimate way (according to the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*) to talk about it, it is not mediation, it is the artwork itself:

3.203 A name means an object. The object is its meaning. (Wittgenstein 1961: p.15)

As mentioned in the section “Meaning of a Name”, the name of the artwork does not stand alone without a sense, it becomes one with the work of art, the artwork is the proposition in which the name gains the meaning. The work of art is expressed without any relative sentences, it is admitted to the world with a name of its own. Sentences and names are not just straight arrows and points. The work of art introduces itself with the name it bears, like a circular arrow pointed at its own beginning. Recalling Francis Picabia’s *UDNIE* can illustrate how naming can be done without any suggestion about perception. Gombrich (1980) refers some titles of the artworks as “mood setters”. The artist does not refuse to make use of the title but chooses one which has no implications. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein quotes what Socrates says in *Theaetetus* on primary elements and naming:

If I am not mistaken, I have heard some people say this: there is no explanation of the *primary elements*—so to speak—out of which we and everything else are composed; for everything that exists in and of itself can be *signified* only by names; no other determination is possible, either that it *is* or that it *is not*... But what exists in and of itself has to be...named without any other determination. In consequence, it is impossible to give an explanatory account of any primary element, since for it, there nothing other than mere naming; after all, its name is all it has. But just as what is composed of the primary elements is itself an interwoven structure, so the

correspondingly interwoven names become explanatory language; for the essence of the latter is the interweaving of names. (Wittgenstein 2006: p.25e)

In a way, a work of art is made an individual through naming. It is no longer collection of brush strokes, or a lump of metal and wood. It is solidified for good with the baptism of a name.

Still, a named work of art is in a sense a tamed creature. It has its share from humankind's great impulse of taxonomy. It is logically understandable, classifiable. Is the encounter with the named work of art less likely to be an aesthetical one then? Wittgenstein is clear that the effort to define an aesthetical experience is futile but does not expel language from ethical experiences. On the contrary, he greatly values poetry.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* §531 he states:

We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by any other (...)

In one case, the thought in the sentence is what is common to different sentences; in the other, something that is expressed only by these words in these positions. (Understanding a poem)

Is a labeled sculpture in a gallery more than a labelled fossil bird in a natural history museum? Wittgenstein opens up that possibility. If some sentences can be said differently but others lose the expression when the integrity is damaged, same can be true for the names. The bird fossil can be given another name without disrupting its integrity in the scientific jargon. On the other hand, changing the name of a work of art can cause immense loss in expression. That change is evident even in the descriptive titles.

Still, one can claim that the aesthetic experience without the participation of language at all is rawer and resonates deeper. Can the contemporary *Untitled* pieces be examples of this case?

In the beginning of former section “The Need of a Name” there was a discussion about the expectancy of a name. Even though it is not titled, it is not unusual to see the title space somewhere around the painting or the sculpture. The word “Untitled” is written there, declaring the lack of a title, knowing the onlooker will search for one. This is some kind of manifestation, rejection of title, yet still written. Like the name “postmodernism”, is defining itself through what it is not, or what it comes after. The long-lasting convention of naming is first acknowledged and then rejected. As if saying “Go and look back at the work of art. What you look for to understand is not here. In a way the artist is still making use of that title space, redirecting the spectators’ attention to the artwork itself. Making use of the title for directing the attention is still in progress with *Untitled* written name tags. But what about rejecting it altogether?

In 2016, in an exhibition at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, two teenagers decided to pull a “prank”: One of them laid his glasses on the floor, as if it was an object of exhibition, wondering what will happen next. The glasses were carefully watched by the visitors of the exhibition, some of them even took photos of it. Among other things, complete rejection of titling in the exhibition and the already blurred line between the work of art and mass-produced object made possible that such an event has occurred. Is an object an artwork now just by appearing in an exhibition place? Even Duchamp seemed to have the opinion about the work of art that it should bear a name, signature and year of production. Succeeding his avantgarde artworks, this performance intended as a prank brings the question forth: Is there absolutely no line

between an everyday object and an artwork anymore? Is it as simple as to be present in a gallery for one object to become a work of art? The gallery's response was not a bitter one though: "Do we have a Marcel Duchamp in our midst?" was the reaction they shared in social media from their official account. Let us turn back to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* for a better understanding of this case. In *PI*, as Wittgenstein questions the notion "game", he gives different examples (board games, card games, ball games and so on) and invites us to diagnose what is common in all of them. What we are to find is not something which is common to all, but similarities, and affinities. As mentioned in the previous sections, Wittgenstein names them as "family resemblances". That long thread of family resemblance brings art from Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* to Bruegel's *Fall of Icarus* then Duchamp's *Fountain* finds its place as a fiber in that long thread; so, years later we wonder if it is possible to attach that teenager's glasses to that thread. In §68 Wittgenstein poses the question "What still counts as a game and what no longer does?" His explanation afterwards might bear a clue how to read this situation:

What still counts as a game and what no longer does? Can you say where boundaries are? No. You can *draw* some, for there aren't any drawn yet. (But this never bothered you before when you used the word "game")
"But then the use of the word is unregulated - the 'game' we play with is unregulated."
– It is not everywhere bounded by rules; but no more are there any rules for how high one may throw the ball in tennis, or how hard, yet tennis is a game for all that, and has rules too.

Just like the boundary of the concept "game", the limits of art are not strict at all; in fact, it is constantly redrawn by pioneering works of art. Removal of the labels for the artworks which denote the name, year and the artist; brings work of art one step closer to everyday object. Only obvious distinction in-between is the space that artwork should be in, namely the gallery. Whether the glasses of the teenage prankster can be considered an avantgarde artwork is open for debate. Removing the word completely

from the image blurs the distinction even more. But the question it raised again like the former innovative works of art surely deserves attention: What still counts as an artwork and what no longer does?"

CHAPTER 4

NAME OF THE LOST WORKS OF ART [Name w/o the Artwork]

Wittgenstein mentions a sword named Nothung in an example. “Nothung has a sharp blade” he writes. Then he invites us to a thought experiment: If Nothung is the name of an object is the name meaningless if the bearer is destroyed? If the sentence “Nothung has a sharp blade” has no sense anymore because Nothung is already shattered and the name has no meaning anymore? Another example he gives focuses on a person: If Mr. N.N dies, the bearer of the name is dead. But there is still meaning otherwise the sentence “Mr. N.N. dies” would be nonsense (PI:29-44)

Similar examples can be found in plastic arts. For example, Colossus of Rhodes is one of the most famous artworks throughout the history, yet the original is completely lost. Today, we have no evidence of how it looks, except the written descriptions. Only through language, the existence of this artwork is preserved and continues to be a part of the modern culture. This situation which is the complete opposite of the unnamed artworks which can be experienced only in a certain time and space is important to acknowledge the importance of the linguistic existence of an artwork.

Another example to the linguistic existence of the plastic work from the twentieth century can be the *Secret Painting* by Mel Ramsden. At the time he created the *Secret Painting*, he was a member of a conceptual artists’ collaboration named Art & Language. As the name suggests, the group experimented with the tension between the

image and the word.¹⁸ The aforementioned piece by Ramsden consists of a painting and a sheet with a depiction on it. The depiction is as follows: “The content of this painting is invisible; the character and the dimension of the content are to be kept permanently secret, known only to the artist.” Here we face a black canvas, which artist claimed to have concealed a painting underneath. There is no description of how the image looked, but only an assertion by the artist that there was one and it is not visible now.

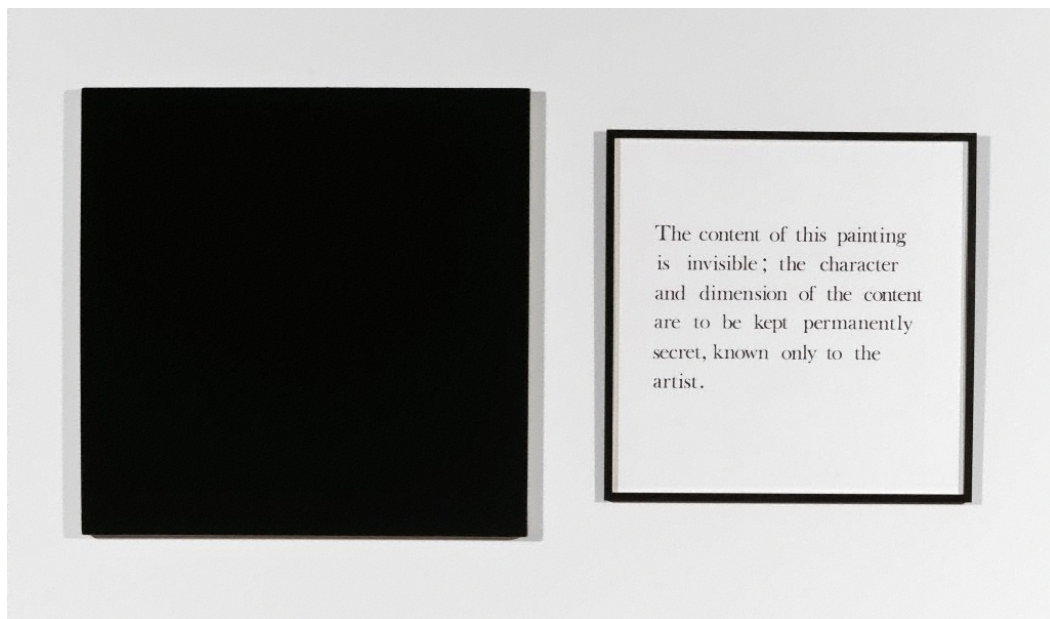


Figure 18. Mel Ramsden, 1967-8, *Secret Painting*¹⁹.

When the viewer observes the black canvas, the artist makes sure with his words that the viewer knows it is more than it seems now. As if the black canvas is a tombstone

¹⁸ The artworks created by that circle of artists deliberately put emphasis on language. Those creations would be great examples when the subject of this thesis is considered, but as the author I prefer to focus on the works of art one is least likely to encounter with language. The role of the word and questioning the relation between the image and the word is evident in Art & Language's creations, a throughout inspection seems unnecessary.

¹⁹ Image source: Art Gallery of NSW, Accessed at 04.08.2019.

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/30.2003.a-b/>

for the image he has concealed. It is not the image itself, just a memoir. As if it is an ode to all the lost paintings, which have never met the eye of an observer. The language adds layers to the image, so the image meets our understanding. The canvas is still there, the work of art is not physically completely lost as it was the case with Colossus of Rhodes, but this time we lack any depiction whatsoever. The words gain meaning with the concealed painting, and the painting gains meaning with the words. The creation of this artwork is reciprocal. Without the canvas, words would be just words. Without the words, it would just be a black canvas. The word and the image use each other as a proposition to gain a meaning.

“Something red can be destroyed, but red cannot be destroyed” says Wittgenstein (2006: p.32e). This argument claims that meaning of a name is freed from the condition of existence of the object. What if we forget what red is like? Only then red would be meaningless. Then it would not be possible to play a language game with that word. It is like we lost a paradigm which was an instrument of the language. These examples of currently non-referring names also create a serious challenge to the claim that names have no meaning beside pointing to the referred object. The language game we play with the name “Colossus of Rhodes” is still meaningful, despite the destruction of the object. And the reciprocal creation of meaning in *Secret Painting* depicts how strong the role of the word can be, powerful enough to make a lost image become a work of art.

Making a name has always been an important task for humankind. Like the case with the names of the lost works of art, the names of people continue to exist even long after their physical existence on earth is over. Through the name, the person still has a

meaningful existence after death. Naming the newly discovered objects or theories after its founder is seen frequently in social and natural sciences. If you haven't discovered a new element recently, do not worry. In many cultures, it is common to give the child its grandparents' name. Our names definitely have longer life spans than our mortal bodies. Naming habits in science and culture reveals that we do not only try to prolong the life spans of our bodies but also, we do the same for our names which can be considered as our linguistic existence. Recalling Wittgenstein's argument on destruction of red; red does not lose its meaning when something red is destroyed. Only when nobody remembers what red is, although things what once used to be called red keep existing, the word red will not bear any meaning. Thus, we do not want to be forgotten and become meaningless. The formulas we find, the museums we finance, even fountains we build for charity, we name after us. The little monuments we erect for the ones we have lost, the tombstones, always include the name. As long as the name is meaningful, the existence continues.

CHAPTER 5

ON NAMES AND HEIDEGGER'S "ORIGIN OF THE WORK OF ART"

In his essay "Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger discusses the "thing-being" and "work-being" of an artwork. His claim is that these two aspects are initial and important to explain what an artwork is and how people experience them. The linguistic or literary aspect can be interpreted as a part of work-being of the artwork. Every work of art has a name, some given by the artist, others simply to overcome the problem of how to refer to it. A word with relation to the work can change the aesthetic experience completely, as mentioned in the examples in the former sections.

Language is through which we make outside world intelligible and admit what is encountered into a discourse. Not only in art criticism but also in philosophy how language is used builds up the mechanics of understanding. In the *Being and Time*, Heidegger states: "In language, as a way things have been expressed or spoken out, there is hidden a way in which the understanding of Dasein has been interpreted" (Heidegger 2008: p.211).

The power of language aspect in perception rises as the artwork becomes more and more abstract. Sometimes name is the only guide for interpretation what the artists pictured. In 1920, the artist Paul Klee created the painting *Angelus Novus* using the oil

transfer method he invented. In 1940, Walter Benjamin writes about this painting in his essay “On the Concept of History”.



Figure 19. Paul Klee, 1920, *Angelus Novus*²⁰

²⁰ Image source: The Israel Museum, Accessed at 05.08.2019.
<https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/199799>

He starts his critique with this sentence: “There is a painting of Klee, whose name is *Angelus Novus*. An angel is portrayed, which seems like...” (Benjamin 1980: p.697). The whole evaluation of the painting bases on the “fact” that an angel is portrayed. What if Klee named this painting *Misguided Pigeon Boy*? Or what if he did not give any name to his creation at all? The discourse evolved around the works of art, takes the name of the artwork as the starting point. The literal aspect of the plastic artwork is an inseparable part of how the artwork opens itself to the world. Through the name *Angelus Novus* how an angel can be portrayed in 1920s opens up. With that name, it finds its place in the long line of tradition of picturing angels. It is not a plump, winged baby like how the angels have been pictured in Renaissance anymore. Still, wings and curly hair as the common feature of angels in tradition, helps us to consider Klee’s depiction also as an “angel”. The truth of angel, in Heideggerian sense, has surely evolved.

Heidegger argues that after the displacement of the work from its world, it is not what it was anymore. The self-sufficiency, attributed to the artworks, has deserted them. The work of art opens up as the truth through its genuine relations with the world (Heidegger 2002: p.20) One of the ways it relates to the world is language. Heidegger’s concept of the world is not to be understood simply as a place. It is a world of meaning. A sculpture from Renaissance period enables us to understand current aesthetical understanding of that time, which depended on their belief, economic conditions and other structures of society. Contemporary artworks are to be seen as language games of our times. Their relations to the world are complete, we live in the conditions they were created in. Older works of art become displaced, objects of conversation, some sort of “has-been” (Heidegger 2002: p.20). Wittgenstein claims that names gain their

meaning in propositions, Heidegger argues that the work of art opens up as truth only if it succeeds to connect genuinely with the world. Both arguments point to relation. The title bears a meaning because the thing-being of the artwork acts as a proposition. But it is only meaningful because of the world it relates to, for example the long tradition of titling renders writing *Untitled* meaningful or the resemblances in depictions of angels throughout the history makes the title *Angelus Novus* intelligible. Every time a work of art is baptized with a title, the language game is played in a wider world: the artworld.

I am not sure about agreeing with Heidegger's view on work of art as the happening of truth at work, but I completely agree that the work of art is a being other than ready-to-hand or present-at-hand. These two are how we encounter with beings on a daily basis, but a work of art opens up another way of possible encounter. How the words which accompany the artwork relates to the object is different than how words relate to ready-to-hand or present-at-hand beings. Whether every encounter with a being other than ready-to-hand and present-at-hand should be considered as aesthetic experience, is another matter for sure.

Literature is the pure artistic form of language. Yet, language is present also in plastic arts. The historically contingent world, which we are thrown into, is intelligible through language. Use of written and spoken language is inseparable from the work of art's wholeness.

In "Origin of the Work of Art", Heidegger discusses equipmentality. He gives the example of a pair of peasant shoes as an everyday piece of equipment. The material,

shape and every other feature they have is submerged in equipmentality. The peasant woman, their owner, merely wears them; and if they serve right, she is rarely aware of them. The truth about the shoes, “the equipmental being of equipment” is discovered through art, Heidegger claims. Van Gogh’s painting of peasant shoes is given as example, which demonstrates what shoes in truth are. The disclosure is possible through the work of art. In daily life, language is also submerged in equipmentality. In our dealings, we use it without being aware of its true nature, disclosed. Even in literature, when words disappear in the story, they are equipmental. The more suitable the word is, the more submerged it is. (Heidegger 2002: p.24) But in poetry, as well as in naming of plastic arts, the material quality of the language is preserved: the rhythm and the shape is set forth, not submerged. Hence the truth of the word is disclosed.

An evaluation of Duchamp’s *Fountain* from *Origin of the Work of Art*’s perspective may be insightful at this point. We think we already know what it is, a urinal. Erecting it in the middle of clearing and calling it *Fountain*, rises another possibility. It was a ready-to-hand being, its meaning was its use. Now situated in the middle of a gallery, it seems like a misplaced urinal. But the artist claims it to be a *Fountain*. The ordinary daily being is stripped away from its use completely, the being-withs are changed, and besides all of that; the name which brought it to existence changed. There it stands, in its true being, in Heideggerian terms. An essential part of this specific artwork’s creation was name-giving. The intellectual work required to produce the work of art was done with words. This kind of opening up of truth, is historically contingent. Before the industrial revolution, it was not possible for a mass-produced common item to be admitted as a work of art. The world, the work of art opens up is the condition of its possibility.

On the example of *Fountain*, readiness for use turns into createdness of the work of art. The urinal is ready to disappear into usefulness. But deconceptualizing and giving it a name, it gains “createdness”. The work which turns it into a work of art from a ready-to-hand object is completely intellectual, or philosophical one might say. “We are capable, in general, of noticing of anything present that such a thing is; but as soon as this is noted it falls, just as quickly, into the oblivion of the commonplace. What, however, is more commonplace than that a being is? In the work, on the other hand, the fact that it is as such a thing, is what is unusual.” (Heidegger 2002: p.40) The usual connection stops, the work does not affect the observer causally. We observe the transformation of the work attentively. “The truth that opens itself in the work can never be verified or derived from what went before. In its exclusive reality, what went before is refuted by the work.” (Heidegger 2002: p.47)

The name of a work of art can stand as a reappropriation of a historically contingent concept, like the case with *Fall of Icarus*, or name-giving process can be the inseparable part in the creation of the artwork, like in the example of Duchamp’s work, *Fountain*. The “wordly” aspect of a work of art is surely worthy for evaluation and question, as an essential concept in art criticism and art philosophy.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The encounter with the plastic work of art is not limited to its spatial existence. All works of art regardless of medium have a literary aspect, with an obvious example being that they are named one way or another. The power to differentiate between universal and particular is only manifested in language. Taxonomy, as a way to create domination over the creatures derives its sheer force from naming things. Title or the absence of it holds a great power to shape our experience of art as a whole. This complex and tense interaction between the two can be seen as an important part of the artwork. The power is obvious when the language games that titles play become one with the work, like the example of *The Fountain*, but even the seemingly descriptive naming alternatives like *Portrait of an Old Woman*, *An Old Woman* or *The Old Woman* has different effects on the onlooker. The language makes the differentiation the image cannot: the differentiation of particular and universal. With the light of what Wittgenstein tells us in the *Tractatus*, works of art can be regarded as communicative sentences in which their titles gain meaning.

After 19th century, authorial titling became common but rebaptism of a work of art with another name can be seen in some cases. The wordly aspect of the artwork gets shaped and reshaped after its reception by the public and admittance into the realm of language. As in the example of *Colossus of Rhodes*, when the name of the artwork is admitted into our language, even after the loss of physical aspect of the artwork, the

name lives on meaningfully in our use of language. The word, which became attached to the plastic object of art can be seen as work-being of the artwork in Heideggerian sense. Heidegger states that the work of art opens up as truth through its genuine relations with the world. The one relation I would like to focus on what Heidegger refers as genuine is the language game through which the artworks bond with the world. Be it Duchamp's shock triggering titles, or Klee's "a-ha" titles as Gombrich (1980) calls them, or even the title *Untitled*, they all successfully relate to the artworld in which an aesthetic experience by the spectator is possible. How the works of art are admitted to the language is part of their work-being. Like names acquire their meaning in their use, the whole work of art acquires its meaning in the artworld. First part of the former sentence is based on Wittgenstein's arguments in the *Investigations*, second part refers to Heidegger's views. This parallelism between their arguments convinced me to evaluate their arguments as complementary when discussing the linguistic qualities of the plastic artworks. Another similarity between Wittgenstein and Heidegger's arguments is their shared despite of idle talk about art. The everydayness of language leads to a superficial evaluation when works of art are the case. Wittgenstein warns us against the misuse of language, he depicts this situation as language going on holiday (Wittgenstein 2009: p.23e). *Untitled* can be seen as an extreme manifestation of these views. The artists aim to free the image from the limits of language. The unnamed image is wild, it does not find a right place among mind's classifications, it is free from taxonomy's domination.

Nevertheless, my claim is naming can be the only just way of talking about the artwork, it can serve for disclosure of its truth. It is not a description or a statement about its value. It is the language game that admits the work of art into the realm of

language. This linguistic existence is meaningful even after the destruction of the thing-being of the work of art. As the language game is played by the spectators, the connection of the artwork to its world evolves, even if the thing-being stays exactly the same. Discourse on art must be handled pretty carefully, if we question its absolute value, it turns to be nonsense. A philosophical investigation of what Gombrich calls “the tension” between the image and the word was sought throughout this study.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Heykel, resim veya enstalasyon gibi plastik sanat eserlerinin dilsel bir yanı da vardır: Adları. Kimi sanatçı tarafından verilmiştir bu adların, kimi alım satım yapanlar tarafından kimi ise hedeflediği kitle tarafından verilmiştir. Bu adlar iş ile birleşirler ve sonrasında sanat deneyiminin bir parçası haline gelirler. Bazı sanatçılar eserlerini dilsellikten kurtarmak istemişlerdir, peki bu gerçekten mümkün müdür? Eserleri adlandırmak artık bir yere ait olmaktan ziyade eserlerin dolaşımında olması sonucu doğmuş bir gerekliliktir, fakat günümüzde nasıl bir anlam taşıyor? Wittgenstein, felsefi sorunsalları çözmek için dili soruşturmayı esas yöntem kabul etmiş bir filozoftu. Belki onun bu içgörüsü ışığında plastik eserlerin dilsel boyutunu inceleyerek sanat eleştirisinde farklı bir kavrayış yakalanabilir.

Wittgenstein'in argümanları doğrultusunda mümkün olabilecek bir sanat eleştirisi arayışı için *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* iyi bir başlangıç olabilir. Wittenstein *Tractatus*'u meşhur 7. argümanı ile bitirir: "Üzerinde konuşulamayan konusunda susmalı." Üzerinde konuşulamayandan kastın ne olduğu çok açık olmamakla birlikte, *Etik Üzerine Bir Ders* makalesinde bahsettiği mutlak değer kavramı ile paralel okunabilir. Görece iyi ve görece güzel üzerine konuşmak mantık ve dil içerisinde mümkün iken, mutlak değerden (*absolute value*) söz etmeye çalıştığımızda içi boş cümleler kurmaya başlarız. Mutlak değer, bizim felsefe yapmak için kullandığımız sözcüklerle ifade edilemez veya değerlendirilemez. Sanatsal değer üzerine felsefi bir

tartışma yürütmek boş laftan öteye geçmeyebilir. Bu durumdan kaçınmak için hiç konuşmamalı mı? Yoksa bir plastik sanat eserinin sadece maddi niteliklerinden, renginden, şeklinden, büyüklüğünden bahsetmekle yetinmeli mi? Bu kısıtlı tartışmalar veya tartışmamalar bizi yetkin bir sanat eleştirisinden uzaklaştırır mı? Eserin kendinden menkul değeri ve aşkınlığına dair yorumlar yapmak veya maddi nitelikleri üzerinden değer biçmek yerine, dilsellikleri üzerinden konuşmak belki de en insanca yorumla yöntemlerinden biri olacaktır. Plastik bir sanat eseri ile karşılaşıldığında eserin kendini ilk açacak dilsel niteliği adı veya adsızlığıdır.

Ad

Dilsel eserler olan şiirlerin, hikayelerin, kitapların aksine, resimlerde ad için ayrılmış bir yer yoktur. Adlar, edebi eserlerde adı oldukları metinlerin ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır, fakat plastik sanat eserlerde ad eserle aynı mecrayı paylaşmaz, eserin dışındadır. İsmi resmin çerçevesinde yazdığı durumlarda bile, ismi okumak ve resmi deneyimlemek farklı süreçlerdir.

Varsayımsal bir örnekle bahsedilen kavramları somutlaştırmak gerekirse, kırmızı rengin ağırlıkta olduğu soyut bir tablo karşısında olduğumuzu düşünelim. Tablonun altında isminin ve tamamlandığı yılın yazdığı küçük etikete gözümüz kayar ve orada “Keder” kelimesini görürüz. Gözümüz tekrar tabloyla buluştuğunda, kırmızılardan arasındaki figürün ifadesinde keder görmeye başlarız. Peki ya etikette “Tutku” yazsaydı? Resme dönen gözler bu sefer aynı figürde farklı bir ifade mi arayacaktı? Bir diğer senaryoda ise tutkuyu tuvale aktarmaya çalışan sanatçının isimsiz bıraktığı eserin deneyimleyenler tarafından “Boğulan Kadın” veya “Kırmızı Portre” diye işaret

edildiği düşünülebilir. Tüm bu farklı olasılıklar, bir resmin dilsel boyutu olan adı veya adsızlığı üzerine açığa çıkar.

Bir Dil Oyunu olarak Adlandırma

Wittgenstein, isimlendirmeyi bir dil oyunu olarak görmez. Onun için isimlendirme oyunun ön koşuludur. Kendi örneği ile, taşları satranç tahtasına dizmektir isimlendirme, satranç oyununun kendisi ise taşları oyuncular hareket ettirince başlar. *Tractatus*'a göre ise isim, önerme içerisinde bir objenin temsilidir (TLP:3.22). Sanat eserlerinin adlandırılmasında da durum bundan mı ibarettir peki? Söz ile plastik sanat eseri arasında kurulan bir ilginç bağ sonrasında sözün o objenin adı haline gelmesi, salt bu bağın kuruluşu dil oyunu olarak anılmaya değmez midir? Zira tam da bu bağın kuruluş biçimi ile uzay-zamanda yer kaplayan eser dilsel boyuta da uzanmaktadır.

Başta bahsettiğim varsayımsal kırmızı tablo örneğini hatırlayalım. Gerçek eserler üzerinden irdelendiğinde ise durum daha da ilgi çekicidir. 19.yy. resimlerinin isimlendirilmesi çoğunlukla tanımlayıcı niteliktedir. Birden fazla sanatçının aynı isimde tablosuna rastlama olasılığımız yüksektir. Botticelli, Barry ve Cabanel'in her birinin *Venüs'ün Doğuşu* diye adlandırılmış tabloları vardır. Tarzları farklı da olsa, aynı sahneyi anlatırlar. Şüphesiz bu adlar, temsil kaygısıyla verilmiş adlardır. Bir diğer mitolojik tema olan *İkaros'un Düşüşü* de yine tarih boyunca farklı artistler tarafınca tasvir edilmiştir. Yine tabloların çoğunda isim tanımlayıcıdır, ama Brügel'in *İkaros'u* tablonun alt sağ köşesinde köpüren sular arasındadır ve zor seçilir. Dedalus ise sadece gökyüzüne bakan çoban tarafından ima edilmiştir. Adını bilmeden tabloya bakan birisi bu huzurlu manzara resminde mitolojik karakterler aramaya çalışmayacaktır. İsmi öğrendikten sonra tabloya dönen izleyici, ilk karşılaşmasında kolaylıkla gözden kaçan

İkaros'un su üzerinde kalan bacaklarını fark edebilir. Bu örnekte isim, artık eserin deneyimlenişinin ayrılmaz bir parçası halindedir. Sadece işaret edebilmek veya temsil edebilmek adına verilmiş değildir, adın kendisi deneyimlerken dahil olduğumuz bir dil oyunudur.

Yeazell *Resim Adları* kitabında MoMA'nın sanat yönetmeninin Pollock'un *Pasiphae* tablosu üzerine yaptığı yorumlardan bahseder. Bu isim aslen mitolojik bir karaktere aittir, Pasiphae, kocası kral Minos'u aldatıp bir boğa ile birlikte olmuştur ve yarı insan yarı boğa olan Minator'u dünyaya getirmiştir. Sanat yönetmeni tablo üzerine yorum yaparken “enerjik hareketler”, “cinsel terkediş” ve “hayvani tutku” gibi sözler kullanır. Hatta daha da ileri götürerek tablonun mitolojik bir havası olduğunu söyler. Hikayenin şaşırtıcı kısmı sonra gelir: *Pasiphae* tabloya sanatçının verdiği isim değildir. Pollock'ın eser için düşündüğü isim *Moby Dick*'tir. Fakat bu ad işvereni olan Peggy Gugenheim'in hoşuna gitmez ve orada olan MoMA'nın eski sanat yönetmenlerinden biri şu an bilinen adını önerir. Pollock'un bu isme ilk tepkisi “Pasiphae de kim?” şeklinde olsa da, eser bu isimle dil alanına girmiştir. Kabul gören bu ad, belki de izleyicisini ressamın renk tercihlerinden bile fazla etkilemektedir. Eserin ona adını veren sanat yönetmeninde uyandırdığı etki, adı ile birlikte diğer izleyicilerin algılayışını şekillendirmektedir. Pollock'un eseri hiçbir zaman sadece görsel, uzamsal veya eylemsel olmamıştır; adlandırıldığı andan itibaren artık dilseldir de. *İkaros'un Düşüşü* gibi tabloların tamamlandıktan sonra ilk izleyicilerinin tepkileri üzerinden adlandırıldığını hayal etmek zordur, muhtemelen adlandırılıştaki bu dil oyunu, ilk eskizlerinden itibaren oluşumunun içindedir. *Pasiphae* örneğinde ise dil oyunu sanatçının üretimi olmasa bile artık eserin ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır. Eserin bir adı olduğu sürece -bu ister *Pasiphae* ister *Moby Dick* olsun- bakanlar tablodaki formlarda bir boğa

veya balina benzerliđi bulacaktır. Kasıtlı veya deđil, sanat eseri dilsel alanda bir varlık kazanır ve toplumun algılayışında bu varlık önemli bir rol oynar.

Wittgenstein aynı adı verdiđimiz olguları soruştururken bize aile benzerliđi kavramını tanıtır. *Etik Üzerine bir Ders (A Lecture on Ethics)* ismiyle yayınlanan ve Cambridge’de verdiđi bir derste anlattıklarından alınan notlarda, Wittgenstein’in bu kavramı oluştururken Sir Francis Galton’un fotoğraflarından etkilendiđi görülür. Galton, Viktorya döneminde yaşamış çok yönlü bir bilim insanıdır; genetik, psikoloji, coğrafya gibi bugün yolu kesişmez görünen farklı disiplinler altında değerlendirilebilecek çalışmalar yapmıştır. Bunlardan biri de kompozit portre çalışmalarıdır. Aynı aileye mensup bireylerin fotoğraflarını aynı plaka üzerine çekmiş ve ailenin ortak özelliklerinin vurgulandiđı bir portre oluşturmak istemiştir. Ortaya çıkan portre, tüm aile fertlerini andırmakta, ama tümünden daha “güzel” görünmektedir. Üst üste binen tekil fotoğraflarda küçük kusurlar yok olmakta, hatlar daha belirgin hale gelmektedir. Galton, adeta yüzün altındaki genetiğın fotoğrafını çekmeye niyetlenmiştir. Benzer bir biçimde Wittgenstein’in buradan ilham alarak geliştirdiđi aile benzerliđi kavramı da keskin sınırları ve net tanımlamaları bir kenara bırakmayı gerektirir, dil felsefesine organik ve dinamik denilebilecek bir açıdan bakar. Anlamın işaret edilen belirli bir yerden gelmek yerine bir örüntü ile oluşması ve plastik eserin bu örüntüye dahil olarak, anlamlı dil dünyamıza girişı dikkate değerdir.

Bu sefer 20.yy. dan, Duchamp’ın “R.Mutt” ismiyle imzalayıp 1917 tarihini attıđı *Çeşme (Fountain)* isimli heykelini ele alalım. Porselen bir seri üretim nesnesi olan bu pisuar, bir sanatçı ismi ve yapım yılı atanarak Duchamp tarafından eserleştirilmiş ve *Çeşme* adını almıştır. O kadar ki *Çeşme (Fountain)* ismi, artık benzerleri ile birlikte

akla bu eseri de getirmekte, eser bizzat kelimenin anlamını oluşturmaktadır. Dijital platformlarda *Çeşme (Fountain)* şeklinde yapılacak görsel bir aramada, Roma'daki Trevi çeşmesinin hemen altında Duchamp'ın çeşmesini görmek hayli olasıdır. Duchamp'ın çeşmesi, sıradan bir çeşme tasviri olmasa da seramikten yapılmış olması, su ile ilişkisi bakımından çeşme kavramıyla ilintisi algılanmaktadır. İlk bakışta bu benzerlikler dile getirilir bir şekilde fark edilmese bile hissedilir.

Bu örnekte dramatik bir şekilde görülen seri üretim ürünü plastik nesnesinin tamamen entelektüel bir işçilik ve dilsellik yoluyla eserleşmesi, Wittgenstein'in dil oyunu kavramı ve dil felsefesi üzerine yazdıklarıyla daha anlamlı hale gelmektedir. Sadece tanımlayıcı adlandırmanın ötesinde, bir “dil oyunu” söz konusu olan eser adlandırmalarında dilsel boyutunu incelemek eserin plastik kalitesini incelemek kadar önemli olabilir.

Felsefi Soruşturmalar kitabında Wittgenstein dil oyunu kavramını açıklamadan önce oyun nedir sorusuna odaklanır. Tekil örnekleri ve kavramın kendisi ile olan ilişkiyi betimlemek için aile benzerliği kuramını geliştirir ve bunu açıklamak için sicim benzetmesini kullanır. Bir sicimin oluşması için birbirine dolanan lifler vardır. Bu liflerin hiçbir ipliğin bütünü boyunca devam etmez, fakat sicim boyunca lifler birbiri üstüne biner. Çeşme kavramı da bu örnekle açıklanabilir, Roma'daki Trevi Çeşmesi de Duchamp'ın *Çeşme*'si de bu kavramı oluşturan bireysel örneklerdir ve çeşme adını almış bu eser, ilk görücüye çıktığında zihinlerde örülmüş çeşme kavramından beslenmiş olsa da artık bu kavramın sicimindeki onu oluşturan liflerden biridir.

Wittgenstein'ın *Tractatus*'ta ortaya koyduğu dil teorisi, resim kuramı olarak da bilinir. Bu konuşmada incelenmeye çalışılan plastik sanatların dil felsefesi açısından yaklaşılmasının adeta ters simetriği bir durum söz konusudur, dil felsefesi kuramlarının açıklanmasında plastik sanata başvurulmuştur. Yine resim örneği üzerinden gidilecek olursa, Wittgenstein felsefi soruşturmalar kitabında aile benzerliği kavramını felsefesine katarak, iki boyutlu denilebilecek resim kuramına Galton'un arayışında olduğu gibi farklı bir boyut kazandırmıştır. Wittgenstein, *Felsefi Soruşturmalar* kitabının önsözünde plastik sanatlara net bir atıfta bulunur: “Bu kitapta yer alan felsefi görüşler uzun ve dolambaçlı yollarda yapılan seyahatler esnasında yapılmış bir takım manzara eskizleridir” der. Net çizgilerle felsefenin sınırlarını belirten mantıkçı değil, düşüncelerini belli bir şemaya oturmaya zorlamak yerine doğal akışında olduğu gibi aktaran, sınırlara farklı yönlerden yaklaşan, araştıran, resimleri katmanlandıran bir felsefeci vardır artık karşımızda. Manzara hakkında okura bir fikir verebilme çabasıdır ve okura kendi tabiriyle çoğu zayıf bir işçilikten ötürü kusurlu olan eskizlerinden bir albüm olan bu kitabı sunar.

Bazen bir sanatçının aynı adı taşıyan birden fazla eseri vardır. Pablo Picasso bu duruma örnek olarak verilebilir. *Ağlayan Kadın* diye adlandırdığı birden fazla eser üretmiştir. Bu ad, tek bir esere işaret etmek yerine adeta bu eserlerde ortak olan şeye işaret eder. Bu resimler bir aile oluşturur, her biri ağlayan kadın kavramının soruşturulduğu bir çalışmadır. Eserler, Galton'un fotoğrafları gibi deneyimleyenin zihninde sanki birleşir ve tek bir resimde ifade edilenden daha fazlası olmayı başarır. Picasso yüksek olasılıkla Wittgenstein kadar alçak gönüllü olup tasvirlerinin zayıf bir işçilikle resmedildiğini söylemezdi, ama yaklaşımlarındaki benzerlik kesinlikle dikkat çekicidir.

Adsız

Plastik sanat eserinin sadece imgesel bir düşüncenin ürünü olması, dilsel bir boyut ile kısıtlanmaması -veya indirgenmemesi- gerektiğini savunmak da kuşkusuz olanaklıdır. Wittgenstein *Felsefi Soruşturmalar*'da ad ve adlandırılan arasındaki ilişkiyi incelerken “bu” kelimesinden söz açar. “Bu” sözcüğü, işaret ettiği şeyi yerini tutmaya çalışmadan gösterir. Ad diye nitelendirdiğimiz sözcükler net olmayan yaklaşık anlamlar taşıırken, “bu” derken kastedilen sadece nesnedir, bir dolaylama yoktur.

Cindy Sherman, toplum eleştiren işleriyle bilinen Amerikalı bir fotoğrafçı. Genelde işlerine isim vermiyor ve işlerinden Adsız diye söz ediliyor ve bir sayı ekleniyor; “Adsız #60” gibi. Bu eserlerin deneyimlenmesinde aracılık eden veya yönlendiren bir isim yok; fakat bu deneyim sadece o ana ait. Eser, o yerde kendini temsil etmektedir. Ona bakan kişiye geri bakar. Wittgenstein *Etik üzerine bir Ders*'te etik ve din üzerine konuşmanın kafesimizin duvarlarına çarpmak olduğunu söyler, çünkü bu konularda konuşmak mutlak değer üzerine konuşmaktır; mutlak iyilik üzerine konuşmaktır. Bu sözleri üzerine düşünürken Wittgenstein'in etik ve estetiği bir tuttuğunu unutmamak gerekir. “Dünyanın varlığına şaşmak” veya “kendini tamamen güvende hissetmek” gibi hisleri örnek verir, bunlar yaşadığımız duygulardır, ne var ki bu şekilde ifade etmek aslında dili yanlış kullanmaktır. Dil bu deneyimler ne kadar gerçek ve anlamlı olsa da bunları ifade etmekte yetersiz kalmakta ve sadece saçma cümleler kurabilmemize izin vermektedir. Eserine ad vermeyi reddeden modern sanatçı da deneyimi dil ile sınırlandırmak istemez belki. Dünyanın varlığına şaşan bir kişi, günlük hayatta beklentisinden daha farklı bir şeyle karşılaştığından ötürü şaşırmamaktadır,

oluşun ta kendisinedir bu şaşma durumu. Belki bir sanat eserine de şaşılabilir, hayran olunabilir. Beklentiler farklı olduğundan değil, sadece olduğu gibi olduğundan dolayı. Bu doğrultuda sormak gerekir: Sherman'ın eserlerine ad verdiğini varsaysak, eseri takdir edişimiz değişir miydi?

Bunun daha gerçek bir sanat deneyimi olacağı düşünülebilir; ne var ki bu eserin deneyimlenme olasılığını sadece belirli bir zaman ve mekâna sınırlar. Eserle aynı uzayda iken işaret edilerek hakkında fikir alışverişinde bulunulabilse bile, mekânın dışında üzerinde yapılabilecek tartışmalarda esere hitap sorunu için bir yaklaşım gelişecektir. Sanatçının üzerine tartışma geliştirilmesini önlemek için isim vermeme yolunu izlediği düşünülebilir, ne de olsa sanat üzerine yapılan tartışmaların boş konuşmaya dönüşmesi Heidegger'in *Sanat Eserinin Kökeni* denemesinde bizleri uyardığı bir konudur. Adsız eserlerde özgün işin yitmesi durumunda eserin varlığının tamamen yitmesi olasıdır.

Modern sanat müzelerinde veya galerilerde eserin yanındaki beyaz etikette “Adsız” sözcüğünü görmenin aslında olayların normal seyrinde esere bir ad vermek gerekliliğini varsaydığımızın bir göstergesi olarak alıyor Yeazel “*Adı Olmayan Sanat*” isimli yazısında. Bir ipucu vermenin, eserle ilgili bir dil oyunu yapmanın reddedilmesinde bile, dikkati esere tekrar yönelten bir deneyim kurgusu bulunmakta. Ve bu adsızlık oyunu, 18.yy öncesindeki genellikle altına isim yazılmayan ama onu tanımlayan adlar verilen eserler, sonrasında sanatçının tanımlayıcılık dışına çıktığı Brügel'in *İkarus'un Düşüşü* gibi eserleri ve sonrasında Duchamp'ın iyice ileriye giderek seri üretim bir objeye bir sanatçı imzası ve isim vererek sanat objesi üretimi sürecini izleyen bir oyundur. Sanatçı, tüm bu sürecin bir devamı olarak plastiklikten

dilselliğe kayan eserin deneyimleniş sürecini tekrar plastiğe çekmek ister gibidir. Ama bu çabasında da öncesindeki adlandırma oyununu izleyen bir adsız bırakma oyunu oynuyor, alttaki küçük etikete “Adsız” yazmak da en az bir ad vermek kadar dil oyunu haline geliyor.

Plastik eserler ile etkileşim sadece uzama sınırlı değildir. Eserlerin yapıldığı malzemeden bağımsız olarak bir dilsel boyutu da vardır, bunun en açık ifadesi isimlendirilişleridir. Tekil ve evrensel arasındaki ayrım, imgede değil sadece dilde olan bir ayrımdır. Sınıflandırma (taksonomi), nesneleri isimlendirerek üzerlerinde tahakküm kurmamızı sağlamanın bir yoludur. Eserin adı veya adsız bırakılmışlığı onun bütünü deneyimleyişimizi etkileyen önemli bir unsurdur. Adlar anlamlarını kullanımda kazanırlar. Bir cümle içerisinde anlamlı olan bir ad gibi, eserin adı da o eser bağlamında anlamlı olur. Eser adlarının kullanıldığı dil oyunları zaman içerisinde değiştikçe, söz ve imgenin bağı da değişmekte, nesne olarak aynı kalsa bile eser dönüşmektedir. Wittgenstein ve Heidegger’in bize öğüdü boş konuşmaktan kaçınmak gerekliliğidir. Wittgenstein *Tractatus*’da dilin gündelikliğinin sanat veya ahlak üzerinde anlamlı konuşmalara imkân vermediğini savunur. Heidegger ise boş konuşmanın (*idle talk*) gerçekliğin üzerini örttüğü görüşündedir. *Adsız* eserler bu görüşlerin bir dışavurumu olarak görülebilir. Ayrıca adlandırılmamış eser, sınıflandırmanın tahakkümü altına girmekten kaçmıştır. Ad asında eserlerle benzerlik veya tanımlama ilişkisi kurmamaktadır. Adlandırma, hem esere hem ada anlam katan bir süreç olduğundan esere dair edilebilecek boş olmayan tek söz onun adıdır. İmgesi kaybolmuş plastik sanat eserlerini hala eser olarak addetmemiz ve üzerinde konuşabilmemiz, onların dilsel boyutta anlamlı olmayı sürdüren adları aracılığıyla. Eserin ismi bir dil oyununda anlam kazandığı sürece eserin varlığı devam etmektedir.

Bu tezde Gombrich'in imge ve kelime arasındaki gerilim diye tasvir ettiđi iliřkinin felsefi bir soruřturması amalanmıřtır.

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