

**Grace—Filth—Gravity.
Being Attentive to the In-Between**



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Sculpture is subject to gravity and revealed by light. Here is the primary condition.¹

Sculpture can be described in manifold ways—one might think of three-dimensional figures made from wood or stone, sacred or profane objects, the molding of plastics, ceramics, and vases. As a delimitation of what it is not, sculpture thus finds itself in an enduring rivalry with painting, dedicatedly contested since antiquity in the *paragone delle arti*, which were famously retraced by Leonardo in his *Trattato della Pittura*. Yet when assessing such genre demarcations in the recent past, sculpture and painting are not the two dominating poles of comparison. Art, in general, has been thoroughly recon-

1 William Tucker, “The Condition of Sculpture: A Selection of Recent Sculpture by Younger British and Foreign Artists,” in *Gravity and Grace: The Changing Condition of Sculpture 1965–1975*, exhibition catalog (London: Hayward Gallery (The South Bank Centre), 1993), 35–36.



sidered and marketed in terms like *conceptual*, *feminist*, *happening*, *land*, *minimalist*, *op*, or *pop*—especially since the 1960s and 1970s and predominantly in the USA and Europe. One of these categories was literally dubbed “poor art” by the late art critic and curator Germano Celant. This was not solely due to the use of ordinary, every day—so-called poor—materials, such as wood, stone, earth, iron, or rags. But it came primarily from the artists’ radical stance against established value systems: “...the concept of ‘impoverishing’ each person’s experience of the world.”² *Arte Povera* was conceived in Northern Italy and quickly became known internationally. It was an activating label, one not only of poverty but of plenty at the same time.³ Concerned with “contingency, events, ahistoricism, the present” and a “disregarding of all visual univocal and coherent discourse,”⁴ *Arte Povera* was dedicated to the exploration of the senses and of perception rather than the continuation of the dominance of vision; it tried to reach a unity between art and life, to transform the experience of the self as a public subject

2 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, “Survey,” in *Arte Povera*, ed. Carolyn Cristov-Bakargiev (London: Phaidon, 1999), 25.

3 Something that has been said about Love (Eros) as well, referring to Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium*, to her explication on the origin of the spirit of Love.

4 Germano Celant, “Arte Povera. Notes for a Guerilla War,” trans. Paul Blanchard, in *Arte Povera*, ed. Carolyn Cristov-Bakargiev (London: Phaidon, 1999), 194. Celant’s vision for *Arte Povera* was to be understood as a sort of guerilla tactic against the stereotypical usurpation of the artist figure in society. His artist-as-guerilla-warrior “prefers essential information,” an unmediated, direct way of being in the world a-systematically, stripped of expendable attributions of meaning. For a fresh take on Celant’s practice as a curator, see Lara Conte, “Germano Celant: Archive as Practice,” in *Critique d’art*, nr. 55 (2021): 205–221; <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/68157> (accessed December 14, 2021).

into the medium; and, most importantly, it refused one formally distinguishable style and singular authorship.⁵ In their intrinsic way of encompassing language as well as community, the natural and the artificial, the works of *Arte Povera* may be considered articulations of an in-between. Not only do they fulfill the primary condition of sculpture, i.e., being subject to gravity while being revealed by light, but they transcend from it gracefully. Let us first establish what this transcendence refers to.

“It was painting that had the monopoly of the supra-physical world of angels and gods,” writes Jon Thompson in his riposte to William Tucker’s proposition of conditioning sculpture (which we quote at the very beginning of our text). Both Thompson’s and Tucker’s essays were printed in an exhibition catalog about the condition of sculpture from 1965 to 1975. It was titled “Gravity and Grace” after Simone Weil’s influential, posthumously published anthology. In it, Thompson maintains that only painting, not sculpture, could incorporate “all the transcendental qualities” as well as “the material transformations of realism.”⁶ Sculpture remained earth-bound, materially confined to the limitations of gravitational space—until after the end of WWII.⁷ With *Arte Povera*, sculpture’s physical and conceptual bound-

5 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, “Survey,” in *Arte Povera*, ed. Carolyn Cristov-Bakargiev (London, Phaidon, 1999), 17–28 and 46.

6 Jon Thompson, “New times, new thoughts, new sculpture,” in *Gravity and Grace: The Changing Condition of Sculpture 1965-1975*, 11.

7 Thompson starts his investigation by quoting Charles Baudelaire’s famous saying that sculpture “was something that you fell over when you stepped back to look at a painting.” This devaluation of sculpture compared to painting wouldn’t be fully cast off until the 1960s, when, in Thompson’s understanding, the writings of Umberto Eco about the openness of information allowed for a characterization of then-contemporary art as breaking with bounded, i.e., institutionalized or traditional patterns. See Thompson, *Gravity and Grace*, 24–34.

edness became a stasis from which grace could be, if not achieved, then at least cultivated. The work of art became “transparent... hiding nothing,” shifting the authority of interpretation from the artist themselves to the viewer, an active agent.⁸ Herein lies the bridge to Simone Weil and her writings in “Gravity and Grace.” How to find grace in poverty? Grace can only be approached, yet never truly grasped or acquired, by stripping oneself of all material possessions. “We must give up everything which is not grace and not even desire grace,”⁹ according to Weil, who argues for an indirect way to grace via compassion.¹⁰ Poverty, detachment, the acceptance of a void—whatever name we give this gesture—it is the key to understanding not only *Arte Povera* but many similar circumscriptions of attentiveness to an in-between.

What follows is an attempt to address the commensurability of bodies—bodies of thought as well as bodies in a material sense. It is not about their physical or metaphysical boundaries or their categorical differences but about entropic lines which manage to accommodate everything that is between two poles: the inside and the outside, as well as the concealed and the explicit. We want to propose an active attentiveness towards the invariances of these lines, in their flickering in between death and light, an oscillation process so radiant and all-encompassing that we cannot escape it. Radiance emerges from the gap, “that fundamental room between us and things which allows those things to appear,” as

8 Thompson, *Gravity and Grace*, 34.

9 Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (London-New York: Routledge, 1952), 13.

10 *Ibid.*, 117.

Lars Spuybroek has defined it.¹¹ The gap thus becomes an anchoring of sorts, an incalculable, irrational space of the in-between. Although submitted to gravity, it is in constant transformation, never still, always moving. And where there is movement, there is sweat. The in-between is messy, hard to pinpoint, filthy at times. We want to dig up the dirt and become attentive to the filth at its center.

Of Angels, Spirits, and Supernatural Love

Between designates precisely the space in which angels operate, the angels who create links between networks: between freeways and channels of sounds and image... goat paths and computed circuits... rich magi and shepherds... the balm of death, myrrh, perfumes the new-born child! As beings with a double nature, pedagogues, guides and cherubim enable us to see the differences between worlds, and in so doing they stitch together the unity of the new universe.¹²

Michel Serres's angels are messengers or bridge figures of an in-between state, linking different entities.¹³ They work within communication and operate therein as transmitters, "invisible—but ... capable of becoming visible. They appear and then disappear."¹⁴ And they must disappear so as to not bear too much importance

11 Lars Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity: Architectures of the Figure* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 139–140.

12 Michel Serres, *Angels: A Modern Myth*, trans. Francis Cowper (Paris-New York: Flammarion, 1995), 165–166.

13 Serres invented several bridge figures in his writings, ranging from Hermes to the Parasite, Thumbelina to Ulysses; all of them affirm certain identities by way of multiplication of their legal statuses, names, and movements.

14 Serres, *Angels*, 7.

of their own.¹⁵ Before engaging in thoughts about their being and working, let us focus for a moment on the space they claim.

Serres's angels are the inhabitants of the realm of the gap. They, at the same time, live in and constitute it, and we might therefore approach them indirectly through a liminal space, the philosophical concept of *metaxy* (Greek) or *interval* (Latin).¹⁶

The Greek term *to metaxu* can be translated as intermediary or mediator (as a subject or object) or middle ground (a space or place). It bears a notion of distance or separation within its translatability but, at the same time, holds aspects of connectedness.¹⁷ Grammatically, it conveys neutrality in gender; in music, it stands synonymous with the interval (*diastēma*).¹⁸ First appearing in Plato's "Symposium" in the form of *Love*, *metaxy* has since been modulated by different voices: Pier Vittorio Aureli talks of the *infra* space as "a constituent aspect

15 Ibid., 99. We should care about angles today, following Serres, "[b]ecause our universe is organized around message-bearing systems, and because, as message-bearers, they are more numerous, complex and sophisticated than Hermes, who was only one person, and a cheat and thief to boot. Each angel is a bearer of one or more relationships; today, they exist in myriad forms, and every day we invent billions of new ones." Ibid., 293.

16 The Latin version of a similar concept is known as an interval (from *intervallum*), referring to the in-between space of two rows of fortifying walls in Roman military architecture. We will focus on the Greek term *metaxy* for now, as it is richer in its expression.

17 Peter Mahr derives both notions from prepositional and adverbial substantivations in the roots of the word's components. Peter Mahr, "Das Metaxy der Aisthesis: Aristoteles' 'De anima' als eine Ästhetik mit Bezug zu den Medien," in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 35, (2003): 25–58.

18 Alistair Ian Blyth, *The Seductiveness of the Interval*, 2009, <https://dialognaporoge.blogspot.com/2009/06/seductiveness-of-metaxy.html> (accessed November 11, 2021).

of the concept of form” which cannot be thought of by itself, but which materializes “as a space of confrontation between parts;”¹⁹ Gilles Clément develops the idea of a third landscape, an intermediate, unattended space overcoming the chasm between nature and culture;²⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari give their plateaus the role of the in-between, as to form or extend rhizomes;²¹ Jean-Luc Nancy describes metaxy as an interval which could bridge into a new form of *communitas*; Paul Virilio articulates a preference for light rather than space and time when reconsidering hyper-accelerated intervals; and Gernot Böhme follows the trajectory of Japanese philosophy and unfolds explications of atmosphere as one form of metaxy.²² Reaching back into antiquity, Aristotle in *De Anima* considered metaxy as a medium, standing in-between sense and the sensible. It is in the air when sound or smell are transported, connecting every sense and every experience. Dynamically moved and moving in its whole and in parts, it may be thought of not only as an angel spirit but maybe even as an artistic instrument.²³ Different as all those approaches may seem, they evolve around the same characteristics, according

19 Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge-London: MIT Press, 2011), 27.

20 Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage* (Paris: Éditions Sujet/Objet, 2004).

21 María del Carmen Molina Barea, *Rhizomatic Mnemosyne: Warburg, Serres, and the Atlas of Hermes*, 2018, <https://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=812> (accessed November 14, 2021).

22 Mahr, “Das Metaxy der Aisthesis,” 43.

23 Ibid., 43–46.

to which metaxy is neither a void nor a possibility, but an actuality, existing within the material, real world.²⁴

But what's *Love* got to do with it? As Diotima, the character of a knowledgeable woman in Plato's *Symposium*, who speaks through Socrates's recitation, explains: Love "is a great spirit (*daimon*), and like all spirits, he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal." She continues to explain that the spirit interprets

between gods and men [as in humans or mortals], conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods; he is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them, and therefore in him all is bound together, and through him the arts of the prophet and the priest, their sacrifices and mysteries and charms, and all, prophecy and incantation, find their way. For God mingles not with man; but through Love. [...] Now these spirits or intermediate powers are many and diverse, and one of them is Love.²⁵

Love is a bridge figure. It is nourished by the tempers of its father and mother alike, plenty (*Poros*) and poverty (*Penia*). *Penia*, the goddess of poverty, was feared and disliked by many yet taught the invaluable quality of humility. *Poros*, the god of plenty, was drunkenly se-

24 Ian Blyth quotes passages from Plutarch, who writes of the in-between in the Latin form of "interval" rather than the Greek notion of "metaxy": "Far from being void, this interval is filled with air (*aēr*, "lower air," as opposed to *aithēr*, the "upper air," "aether," or "heaven"), which, were it removed, would destroy the consociation (*koinōnia*) of the universe. The lower air is also the abode of the intermediate race of daemons (*daimonōn genos*), whose function is interpretative, hermeneutic, and without whom man would either be severed from the gods altogether or subject to the confusion of unmediated contact with them (*De defectu oraculorum*, 416e–f)." Ian Blyth, "The Seductiveness of the Interval."

25 Plato, *Symposium*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett, The Internet Classic Archive, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/symposium.html> (accessed July 24, 2023).

duced by Penia on the night of Aphrodite's birthday, both becoming parents to Eros, the god of love.²⁶ Michel Serres writes about it:

Who is Love? Look at him well. He is a relation; he is the intermediary, *metaxu*, he is the passage again, the pass; he is, what passes, quasi-object, quasi-subject, as I said before. ... Love is the third; it is third, between two. It is exactly the included third. Always between, between science and ignorance, neither indigent nor wealthy, neither dead nor immortal, it is placed without precision and with rigor in the laws of the logic of the fuzzy; it lives in the fuzzy area of the threshold, homeless and near the door.²⁷

In Serres's argument, we understand that *metaxy* refers to both subject/object and space/place. *Metaxy* stands in full power between the two, on a threshold that it itself constitutes. Let us, therefore, introduce the in-between in a three-fold manner: as an *agency or driving force*, as a *space or place*, and as that *form or figure*, performing as a subject/object.

The origin of *Love*, as we have reconstructed it above, resonates in this first manner with the concept of supernatural love in Simone Weil. As a type of love that can appear in every empty place that exists between the soul and God, supernatural love bears witness to complete detachment from idols—detachment as poverty, which we referred to earlier in this text, leading to grace. Supernatural love is perceived as a third dimension, and as such it is closely connected to Simone Weil's profound considerations on *metaxy*:

26 For a more detailed analysis of the characteristics of Love and its origin, see Jason M. Rhodes, "What is the *Metaxy*? Diotima and Voegelin," 2013, <http://www.lsu.edu/artsci/groups/voegelin/society/2003Papers/Rhodes.shtml> (accessed July 24, 2023).

27 Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore-London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 241–242; see also 246.

The essence of created things is to be intermediaries. They are intermediaries leading from one to the other and there is no end to this. They are intermediaries leading to God. We have to experience them as such. ... Only he who loves God with a supernatural love can look upon means simply as means. ... What is it a sacrilege to destroy? Not that which is base, for that is of no importance. Not that which is high, for, even should we want to, we cannot touch that. The *metaxu*. The *metaxu* form the region of good and evil. No human being should be deprived of his *metaxu*, that is to say of those relative and mixed blessings (home, country, traditions, culture, etc.) which warm and nourish the soul and without which, short of sainthood, a human life is not possible.²⁸

In-between good and evil, heaven and earth, grace and gravity, we receive nourishment from all *metaxu*—the personifications of in-between itself, its figures. The force of supernatural love gives a form to *metaxu* and relates as such to Michel Serres’s bridge figures. In Simone Weil, we encounter this love as an active agent that performs not in an abstract but in a natural way. It is encoded in and codes all “mixed blessings” in an attempt to balance and counterbalance their surrounding framework.²⁹ We can only embrace those figures through supernatural love, and in return, they sustain us with supernatural bread or “geistige Nahrung.”³⁰ The space

28 Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, 145–147. Important to note here is the value Weil ascribes to the necessity of a temporal, which needs to stay separate from a spiritual. The temporal can take the form of a bridge leading to the spiritual, making it a *metaxu*—which themselves are “true earthly blessings.”

29 *Counterbalance* is an essential part of Weil’s conception of society and politics to which she attributes the same function as the scales of justice, but it also relates to her understanding of time: Only when being locally rooted might one strive for the universal. This is a refusal of an absolute presence and a projected future but stays in conversation with the past.

30 In the New Testament, we find the untranslatable adjectival attribution “*epiousios*” when speaking of bread; the term was traditionally

to do so must again be found in metaxy itself, as it is “a space of tension between two static extremes, [and] it is only the existence of the metaxy that enables the possibility of ambi-directional movement, thereby creating a medium of communication.”³¹

Mechanics of Dis/Appearance. The Figurate

After we have gained sensibility towards their existence, how do we recognize all these forms of spirits and bridge figures? How might their appearance and disappearance in the realm of the in-between work? They seem elevated, pure, naïve even, yet we must take their workings at face level to encounter necessary and important noise and filth. The turning point or fulcrum in our endeavor to attend to the in-between lies within itself. We have seen up until now that we cannot attend to it directly, but we must employ vicarious figures, emerging between two poles from which we can operate. The manifestation of the in-between’s appearances can take manifold forms, but what they all share as a common can be described as a *figurate*. Via the figurate, we may grasp a mechanics to identify its workings, to understand the

adopted to mean “daily,” yet there is another version that tries to link it etymologically to mean “supersubstantial” (cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epiusios>; accessed February 2, 2024). I propose that this is close to Weil’s supernatural bread, a nourishment that goes beyond substance and may be described as a material transubstantiation of light—realizing oneself through exhausting oneself, similar to photosynthesis in plants.

31 Ian Blyth, “The Seductiveness of the Interval.” For a further discussion of the notion of “media” connected to the metaxy discourse, see Emmanuel Alloa, “Metaxy oder: Warum es keine immateriellen Medien gibt,” in *Imaginäre Medialität—Immaterielle Medien*, ed. Gertrud Koch, Kirsten Maar, Fiona McGovern (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2019), 13–34.

perpetual movement of the in-between as a double, reciprocal one, which does not long for closure, resolution, or a telos. All it “does” is eternal appearing and disappearing, ambi-directionally and elusively, detached from progress but rooted in circularity.

The figurate is a concept developed within a “phenotechnology of spirit,” as per Lars Spuybroek, accommodating both mimesis and physis in an adjectival relationship that is contrapuntal.

In *Grace and Gravity*—yet another book by the same title in a clear reference to Weil, although invertedly so—Spuybroek outlines the *phenotechnical*³² as the conscious capability to enable figures to appear in a material sense via radiance. Phenotechnically charged and exposed by radiance, figures (deliberately confused with things in Spuybroek) appear for themselves. They are in constant movement, one of absorption, leakage, percolation, twisting, and turning. Spuybroek considers these “gymnastics” a self-othering, as “just enough otherness to enable the Self” is a condition for grace to manifest.³³ *Absorptive mimesis* is the term used for this process, an acknowledgment of the other by absorbing it into the self.³⁴ While Weil develops her considerations on gravity and grace around the notion of a double descent of grace—simultaneously “a sensorial descent and a spiritual rising,” as grace ascends from gravity to descend

32 *Pheno-* from to the root **bha-*, in Sanskrit *bhati* “shines, glitters;” Greek *phainein* “bring to light, make appear.” https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=*bha- (accessed July 24, 2023).

33 “Are we moving them or are they [appearances] moving us? ... Grace works exactly there where that question cannot be answered anymore, because between the Self, Other, and spirit a gift cycle starts to get going that makes the figure simultaneously an interior and an exterior appearance.” Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 157f.

34 Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 123.

by a second degree³⁵—we find it further differentiated in Spuybroek. His riposte is constructed from the etymological base of gravity's root, *-gwere*, which besides meaning "heavy," can also mean "to favor," connecting it strongly to grace.³⁶ His ambition is to develop Weil's purely vertical stances of descent and ascent further by introducing a horizontal movement, thereby creating a mechanics of the contrapuntal. We remember that there needs to be a gap, a disconnected point, providing space for the appearance and disappearance of all figures. Within it, we find a lever which is the contrapuntal, a fulcrum of entropic lines. Rather than in *contrapposto*, the balanced axial-angularity in classical sculpture, the contrapuntal is a soft spot, a weakness rather than an elegance.³⁷ Spuybroek constructs his "grace machine" around this softness: the two fundamental poles of the machine are *habit* on the one side and *inhabitation* on the other. Habit is a temporal wheel, whereas inhabitation embodies a spatial structure; the two can only be bridged by grace, appearing in the gap. The appearance occurs due to "two zones of influence, with (a) on one side, the input of rhythm" and "(b) ... the vertical axis of gravity."³⁸ The machine works "backwards in time toward memory" and has "a fundamental question mark at its heart."³⁹ Twisting and turning in perpetual movement, the workings of the machine are complex and manifold.

35 Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, 150.

36 Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 375.

37 Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 15. "How does the human body stand gracefully? ... 'By standing weakly.' We stand contrapuntally, i.e., in *contrapposto*, i.e. in *counterpoise*, with the *what* and *how* of standing in direct contrast."

38 *Ibid.*, 16, 20.

39 *Ibid.*, 32–33.

Thus, let us consider the metaphor of the puppet and the puppeteer or, in reference to Aristotle, *tōn thaumatōn tautomata* to address the circular looping of the grace machine in a more approachable manner.

The phrase *tōn thaumatōn tautomata* has several possible translations, ranging from “coincidences of nature” to “self-moving puppets” or “self-moving wonders.” The two terms *automata* and *thaumata* were already connected in Hesiod and Homer, yet were further developed in Aristotle, who refers back to Plato. The latter made use of *thaumata* when speaking of the shadows cast in the wall of the cave in his *Republic*; the former formulates the above phrase in his *Metaphysics*, meaning self-moving marvels.⁴⁰ When the celestial marvels turn to earthly puppets by the elasticity of etymology, we become spectators of a special performance. Dynamically moved and moving in its whole and in parts, puppets or marionettes, as well as their puppeteers, are both “simultaneously active and passive, or sending and receiving,” joining into the round of absorptive mimesis together. A reciprocal engagement of stillness and movement, hanging and standing, lightness and heaviness elevates and grounds them in loops of self-othering. Going from movement to stillness, we may encounter grace; in the other direction, from stillness to movement, we find beauty. The grace machine works in such a way precisely to “make appearances appear.”⁴¹

But those appearances lack the role of the in-between—in them, we do not encounter bridge figures, spirits, angels, or love. Although birthed and deceased

40 For a distinction of the usage of *thaumata* in Plato and Aristotle and the latter’s concept of the “Unmoved Mover,” see Goeff S. Bowe, “Thaumata in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* A,” *Acta Classica* 60 (2017): 50–72.

41 Spuybroek, *Grace and Gravity*, 215–221.

within the grace machine, Spuybroek's figures are faux statues; they are not proper bridge figures, but mannered ones, as they do not connect to a material world but appear out of a void. Their "realness" is lined and fed by an infinite number of images pouring down through the metaphorical portal of "anachronical correspondences." In this sense, they are automated, self-moving puppets, played by their puppeteer but never truly, consciously aware. They are sterile, as the void from which they rise and into which they descend is, by definition, devoid of matter and, therefore, of filth; the gap is empty rather than full.⁴² Spuybroek's *phenotechnical figurate* works outside of communication and is only sustained by external forces. Without noise, remnants, or invariances to tarnish the setting, we keep turning to perfection, abstracted from the poorness; we need to accommodate an active attentiveness towards the in-between.

Coda: *Nous* and Noise

Let us turn to Plato and Aristotle one last time. As Ian Blyth summarizes poignantly,

Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, 987b) reports that his teacher [Plato] admitted an "in-between" (*metaxu*) class of things, in the interval between things perceptible to the senses (*ta aisthēta*) and the Forms, or Ideas (*ta eidē*), knowable by the mind; these are the

42 Grace creates a void, while at the same time it needs one to be present; but leading to it there must be matter. To speak again with Weil: "Like a gas, the soul tends to fill the entire space which is given it. A gas which contracted leaving a vacuum—this would be contrary to the law of entropy. It is not so with the God of the Christians. He is a *supernatural* God, whereas Jehovah is a natural God. Not to exercise all the power at one's disposal is to endure the void. This is contrary to all the laws of nature. Grace alone can do it. Grace fills empty spaces but it can only enter where there is a void to receive it, and it is grace itself which makes this void." Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, 10.

objects of mathematics, eternal and immutable like the Forms, but unlike them multiple. The interval is therefore necessarily a space of multiplicity, participating in both the immutability of the eternal and the plurality of the temporal.⁴³

We experience, and we process those experiences—our attentiveness is, therefore, entangled with the in-between of the senses and *nous*. *Nous*, as the intuitive faculty of thought, is a divine entity in Plato; it stands in opposition to *dianoia*, its analytical counterpart. Plato refers to the latter as an “Abbild” of *nous*, operating on the level of discourse, in-between ratio and opinion.⁴⁴ Self-othering, as we encountered in Spuybroek, is at play here too; Eric Voegelin put it quite aptly in this analysis of Plato’s metaxy:

Once the truth of man’s existence had been understood as the In-Between reality of noetic consciousness, the truth of the process as a whole could be restated as the existence of *all things in the In-Between of the One and the Apeiron*.⁴⁵

We would suggest that *dianoia*, the discursive materialization of ideas and forms, is in our setup a bridge figure, i.e., the in-between as a subject/object, while *nous* would take the role of supernatural love, i.e., the in-between as an agency. Where they meet (i.e., the in-between as a place or space), we become aware of the true mixing and mingling of matter, a process of multiplication. Being many, the in-between cannot be of a pure essence then, such as the one that Anaxagoras ascribes to his concept of *nous*.⁴⁶ It must be filthy, holding

43 Alistair Ian Blyth, “The Seductiveness of the Interval.”

44 Lloyd P. Gerson, “What are the Objects of *Dianoia*?” *Plato Journal* 18, (2018): 45–53. https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_18_4 (accessed July 24, 2023).

45 Jason M. Rhodes, “What is the Metaxy?”

46 Anaxagoras believed that the world in its origin and workings were deployed by a universal mind, which he referred to as *nous*. “All

invariances and remnants of past, present, and future multiplications. In this sense, we approach what Michel Serres has defined as noise and the parasite—a constant interruption of communication via interference:

Noise destroys an order, the order of discourse; it also announces another order. Disorder is the end of order and sometimes its beginning. Noise turns around, like a revolving door. The beginning or the end of a system for the former; an entrance or exit for the latter. Exclusion, inclusion. The logic of the parasite, on the side of the noise, remains coherent with the logic of the door by which enter the parasites who are going to drink or who have already drunk.⁴⁷

Noise is the fulcrum at the center of all communication and the in-between. It is circular, continuously excluding and including the figures it creates, allowing them to appear in a space that is inherent to them. Identities, places, forms, and figures meet and mix in the in-between. With our newly found attentiveness towards it, we can come back to where we started: the sculptures of *Arte Povera*. Being stripped of superfluous matter and therefore referencing the minimalistic quality of “poverty,” these works of art foreground the value of plenty. They are anchored in gravity while simultaneously transcending its physical limitations towards grace. They move us and are moved by us in a reciprocal manner. And at last, their appearance makes us aware of the subtle noises of grace, gravity, light, space, spirits, angels, and love.

other things are mixed together: Nous alone is unrestricted and pure and self-ruling. ... Nous is the most tenuous of all things and the purest: it has universal knowledge and the greatest strength, having power over all living things, great and small.” Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, *The Fabric of the Heavens: The Development of Astronomy and Dynamics* (New York, Harper & Row, 1961), 69.

47 Serres, *The Parasite*, 244.

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abandoning life itself since it entails death, entropy, filth and crimes?

— Michel Serres, *The Incandescent* (2003)

Prophecies.—In Egypt.

Pugio Fidei, Talmud. 'It is a tradition among us, that, when the Messiah shall come, the house of God, destined for the dispensation of His Word, shall be full of filth and impurity; and that the wisdom of the scribes shall be corrupt and rotten. Those who shall be afraid to sin, shall be rejected by the people, and treated as senseless fools'.

— Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* (1670)

At the very height of England's industrial squalor, when the houses for the working classes were frequently built beside open sewers and when rows of them were being built back to back—at that very moment complacent scholar writing in middle-class libraries could dwell upon the 'filth' and 'dirt' and

'ignorance' of the Middle Ages, as compared with the enlightenment and cleanliness of their own.

— Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilisation* (1934)

We can take for one illustration the death ritual of the Nyakyusa, who live north of Lake Nyasa. They explicitly associate dirt with madness; those who are mad eat filth. There are two kinds of madness, one is sent by God and the other comes from neglect of ritual. Thus they explicitly see ritual as the source of discrimination and of knowledge. Whatever the cause of madness, the symptoms are the same.

The madman eats filth and throws off his clothes. Filth is listed as meaning excreta, mud, frogs: 'the eating of filth by madmen is like the filth of death, those faeces are the corpse'.

— Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (1966)

Yes, so much the worse, he knows it is a voice, how