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KANDINSKY ON COLORS AND THE VIRTUAL OBJECTLESS VIBRATIONS

Abstract. If we accept that Kandinsky developed a systematic theory of the fundamentals of painting, we must ask what is the central concept underlying this attempt. This paper argues for the thesis that objectless vibration plays a central role in the reconstruction proposed Kandinsky's first book, *On the Spiritual in Art*. This kind of vibration includes as a virtual field both shapes, sounds and colors. All these "fall" in an organized way from the virtual vibrations, and the purpose of abstract painting is to lift the mind beyond the specific distinctions of the visible world of objects to the abstract level of primordial vibrations. The article examines the origin, functions, and the effect this concept has on color theory.

Keywords: Colour, form, virtuality, vibration, Kandinsky, abstract painting

I. Art and metaphysics

Nietzsche believed that the only way for philosophy to survive in the age of the advancing sciences was by becoming art. The type of thinker that such proximity would produce in the future would be the "metaphysician-artist" (*Artistenmetaphysiker*). It is hard to say whether metaphysics has moved closer to art in the post-Nietzschean era, but artists have certainly taken a decisive step in the direction of metaphysics. If we look at the metaphysical complexity of artistic theories at the turn of the last century, it is the art world that seems to have brought Nietzsche's wish to fruition. Art and

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metaphysics are deeply intertwined in artist-thinkers such as Klee, Kandinsky, and Malevich, which is why understanding their work requires a combination of theory and affectivity, without which an encounter with the spiritual universe of these creators will remain partial. Artists like Kandinsky want to bring us face to face with the *totality* of our own being, with all the shapes, colors, and meanings it contains, without leaving out anything that makes up the richness of the sensible world. In other words, the metaphysics constructed from art has the specificity of not establishing hierarchies among realities. Color is as fundamental as form, sensation contains as much truth as abstract theory.

II. The premises of Kandinsky's "Spiritual in Art"

Conceived as early as 1901, but not published until 1911, the little work *On the Spiritual in Art* contains the first articulated version of Kandinsky's theoretical vision. Already the title of the work tells us something about the content: there is something spiritual within art. Such a statement seems to repeat the common idea that art has to do with the spiritual, not the material. Things are different if we take a closer look at what "spiritual" means for Kandinsky and why it lays at the foundation of painting. As Sixten Ringbom points out in his groundbreaking research, the meaning of the idea of the "spiritual" is to be found in theosophy, which in turn comes from the discovery of the great texts of Indian philosophy. The spiritual taken up by Kandinsky does not refer to a particular kind of vision, but rather to a sounding substance (Ringbom 1970).

This "spiritual" manifests itself along all hierarchies of reality, becoming more and more abstract. It must be stressed, however, that abstraction does not mean loss of content. On the contrary, in Kandinsky, the abstract is more "full" of content than the concrete. The concept of "abstract" also has multiple meanings for Kandinsky, one of which is that only auroral epochs can give meaning to abstraction. It is therefore no surprise that the artist begins his book with an analysis that is more akin to the philosophy of history. In order to show that the hour of abstract art is approaching, Kandinsky had to show that one epoch is coming to an end and another is about to be born.

II.1. The starting point: materialism and the death of God

In Kandinsky's view, the essence of late modernity was a "nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game" (Kandinsky 1946, 10). The scientific discoveries of the early 19th century induced the idea that everything could be explained by physicochemical causes, which led to the shaping of a worldview that asserted that the superior could be reduced to the inferior: the soul to the brain, emotion to physiology, history to economics, religion to psychology.

In Helmholtz's writings the soul was seen as a secretion of the brain and any thought or emotion could be explained by the anatomy and physiology of the brain. The biologist Ernst Haeckel believed that it was enough to understand the laws of matter to be able to explain human nature because of the gradual transition from dead to thinking matter. Karl Marx offered a materialist interpretation of history which he tried to explain through economic relations, and Charles Darwin reduced the whole mystery of life to the idea of adaptability. The French doctor Charles Bignet Sanglé reduced the whole mystery of the origin of the Christian religion to a neurophysiological derangement of Jesus.

It can be seen that the main consequence of materialism is the removal of all spirituality from the world. The faces of the materialist "nightmare" are technical progress and atheism, which lead man into the state of "unbelief, lack of purpose and ideals" (Kandinsky 1946, 10). This faith is not necessarily Christian, but belief in a greater order that is irreducible and inexplicable by the elements of the material world. Kandinsky thus refers to faith as a calling and receiving force of the *spiritual*.

Nietzsche similarly uses the term, when he has Zarathustra rebuke the same people of the 19th century by saying:

> "You are sterile: therefore, you lack beliefs. But whoever had to create also always had his prophetic dreams and astrological signs – and believed in believing!" (Nietzsche 2006, 94)

Kandinsky summarises the flight of the spiritual from the world by using Nietzsche's dictum "God is dead" (Kandinsky 1946, 21). In a world in which "the sky has emptied" our minds are constantly stalked by the

materialistic temptation, called by Kandinsky "the black circle", "the great black spot", "the invisible evil hand" (Kandinsky 1946, 17-18). This danger finds expression in the 1912 painting "Woman in Moscow". It clearly shows the cloud of darkness that hangs over the soul in an age devoid of any spiritual content. As Ringbom shows, the woman is surrounded by an aura that springs from the sun. This duality sums up Kandinsky's metaphysical vision of man as a "horseman" caught in the struggle between the forces of light and darkness (Ringbom 1970, 47). Kandinsky is therefore in search of ways to fight against this "spiritual darkness" (Kandinsky 1946, 18) caused by the spread of materialism.

The materialistic worldview is not the cause, but the symptom of Europe entering a period of twilight (Kandinsky 1946, 81). The Russian painter thus takes up a much-debated theme of the period, namely the inevitable end of Western civilization. Degeneration was a phenomenon with which philosophers and psychologists of the early 20th century were obsessed, identifying in their historical epoch the signs of inevitable decay. For Nietzsche, the theme of the decay of the Western spirit was a central one:

> "Tell me, my brothers: what do we regard as bad and worst? Is it not degeneration? And we always diagnose degeneration where the bestowing soul is absent." (Nietzsche 2006, 56)

In 1882 the psychologist Max Nordau tried to demonstrate in his work entitled *Degeneration* that Europe was undergoing an organic process of spiritual decay identifiable in all areas from art and philosophy to political and economic relations.

Kandinsly's attempt to rescue the spiritual cannot be understood in its full scope without entering into what he called an "agonizing atmosphere of desolate emptiness" (Kandinsky 1946, 27). The European ethos of the time was one of expectation of an inevitable end to the Western spirit in its previous form. Oswald Spengler in his work *The Decline of the West* gave a systematic form to this sentiment. Analyzing the emergence, evolution, and disappearance of all the great civilizations of the past, the German thinker concludes that civilizations, like plants, go through cycles of evolution and involution, of growth and decline,

cycles that pass through four stages: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Materialism is, according to Spengler, a symptom of winter, *i.e.* the decline of a civilization. Analyzing the forms of manifestation of the West in the 19th century, Spengler concludes that European civilization is in the last stage of its development and that nothing can save it from collapse. Interestingly, Spengler counts among the symptoms of decline the degradation of abstraction. While Spengler and other cultural pessimists were hopeless about the future of the European spirit, artists like Kandinsky and Malevich saw this gradual fading as a chance for a new beginning. Kandinsky outlines two ways in which the decline of the Western spirit, and thus the "great black stain" of materialism, can be overcome: the revival of the abstract and the recovery of the spiritual.

II.2. Recovering the Abstract

A major influence on Kandinsky's spiritual development was Wilhelm Worringer's 1907 book *Abstraction and Empathy*, in which the Viennese art historian, following in the footsteps of his master Alois Riegl, attempts to give new meaning to the idea of abstraction in art. The paradigmatic distinction by which Worringer will interpret the whole of art history is announced right from the title. There are two great structural forms that art can embody: the one that starts from the premise of empathy, an organic "sympathy" between man and the world, and the one whose initial impulse is an antagonistic attitude towards the world, its stake being an abstraction from the seen world with a view to eternization. The first paradigm leads to an empathic art, the second to an abstract one. The history of art, Worringer believes, can be seen as an alternation of these two great paradigms.

The empathic paradigm finds its clearest expression in Theodor Lipps' aesthetics (Lipps 1903). According to the German philosopher, an aesthetic *Erleben* must also be an *Erleben* of one's own self in an object other than the self. Being confronted with a work of art there are two possibilities: to find myself and affirm an aesthetic *Yes* or to not find myself and express my rejection through an aesthetic *No.* The feeling of pleasure is, according to Lipps, a free reflection on the self, one in which the

work I encounter is enveloped in an aesthetic form that springs from my own sensibility. For this to happen, there needs to be a smooth continuity between the contemplating subject and the work, an empathy that expresses itself through an enhanced sense of life. Life is the common field in which both the contemplator and the work manifest themselves:

> "What I feel is life in general. Life is strength, internal activity, longing, and fulfillment. Life is, in a word, activity. It is the desire or will set in motion." (Worringer 1907, 4)

The "sensible" passage of the work into my self, the fact that I find myself in the beauty that is in front of me, is because everything happens within life. Both I and the work are two atoms of life, the act of aesthetic contemplation having the effect of increasing the vital activity within me. In other words, I find myself vitally enriched. Here Lipps develops Kant's thesis from the *Critique of the Faculty of Judgement* that in the aesthetic state the representation "is referred wholly to the subject, and what is more to its feeling of life—under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (Kant 2007, 36). It is the empathic structure of the work that makes it possible for it to pass into my subjectivity where it will be used as an instrument to enhance my own vitality.

Worringer believes that unquestioning acceptance of the aesthetic point of view will block our access to eras of art history that are based on profoundly different psychological and spiritual forms. We must let art tell us something about the spiritual form it mirrors, not silence it by imposing our own psychic form on it. If we pay attention to how art has evolved we will see that every great age has had as its foundation a certain impulse towards form, a will to artistic form, as Alois Riegl calls it. The transformations that art has undergone throughout history cannot be explained neither by the aesthetic paradigm, which reduces everything to the binary reaction *I like/don't like*, nor by changing technique:

> "Our research has shown that technique never creates a style, but where we talk about art, a certain sense of form is paramount." (Worringer 1907, 9)

The German art historian concludes that "the stylistic specificities of past eras are not to be explained by the idea of low artistic power, but by the multiple directions that the will to form can take" (Worringer 1907, 9). The history of art becomes in Worringer's eyes a history of the sentiment of the world as a whole. Every style is a vision of the form of the world; this is for Worringer the foundation of any objective analysis of art. The will to form, in which the feeling of the world as a whole is mirrored, can take many shapes, but all will move between two extremes: between the form that unites man and the world in an empathic unity and the form by which man wants to detach the world from its present state by projecting it into eternity. This latter sense of form manifests itself as a *tendency towards abstraction* (Worringer 1907, 14).

While the tendency to empathize with the beauty of the world is based on a pantheistic understanding of the Divine, the drive towards abstraction springs from a deep unease that man feels in the face of existence. This anguish results in a strong *reluctance towards space* (Worringer 1907, 15). In cultures in which man feels great anxiety about the perishability of the world, in which man wants to raise himself and the world to eternity, art is predominantly abstract. The paradigmatic example is Egyptian culture, whose *forma mentis* was entirely oriented towards life after death:

> "The Egyptian, who is said to have thought of death from his mother's womb, was in a constant state of evacuation of his horizon. The greatest available energies of the state are put into the service of death; the capital problem of the ruler is – the building of a tomb. The everyday shrine of all: the cult of the dead. Egyptian medicine works wonders, but only in preserving the dead. The Egyptians, people of pronounced participation, cold technicians, and calculated housekeepers, become lyrical only in the face of the ultimate mystery. It is hard to say to what extent Heidegger's definition of human existence as 'existence towards death' fits our existence in general. The definition, however, does a good job of rendering the existence of Egyptian man." (Blaga 2011, 115)

This essential throwing of the Egyptian spirit beyond life led to an *abstract sense of the world*, from which sprang the uncontrollable urge to save the cosmos by abstracting it in order to achieve an eternal form. Egyptian art wants to give shape to this flight from the endless becoming of the world towards an eternal rest. The element through which the Egyptian hopes to achieve this escape is the straight line.

The line is not dependent on the becoming of life, being an absolute form that can only be reached by abstraction from the fluidity of life and the inconsistency of the world. If the world is always shown to us as full of arbitrariness, as dominated by chance, the line is pure law and necessity. And most importantly, the line is not created after the pattern of nature, it "falls" from eternity still bearing its seal. The line mirrors the immutability of eternity (Worringer 1907, 20). The eternalization of the world must take place through its "linearization". Three-dimensional space is what makes things stand side by side in a transient world. Three-dimensionality is, in other words, an image of the relativity of the perishable world. Therefore, says Worringer, the Egyptians rejected perspective not out of ignorance but because it had a negative value for them, being too closely tied to the seen world. Egyptian art wants to save objects in order to project them to an immobile *Beyond*.

Things and beings are thus abstracted from their worldly context employing straight lines and bidimensionality. Egyptian art is essentially abstract, and the tendency towards abstraction has a soteriological value: it wants to save the world by projecting things and the soul into the territory of the unchanging. In other words, abstraction spiritualizes. Worringer thus comes to postulate an *essential connection between the abstract and the spiritual.* The Viennese scholar goes on to show that the essence of all art is abstraction. In an outline of the history of Greek art, he sketches a dialectical evolution from the protogeometric to the classical style. The whole development of Greek art can be understood, Worringer believes, as a self-transformation of the straight line, which gradually acquires organic characters observable in the ornament of the Ionic style. Woringer calls this process *the self-transformation of the geometric into the organic*. Four ideas set out by Worringer would profoundly influence Kandinsky's artistic and intellectual development:

a) The idea that abstract art is a permanence, an archetype of art history.
b) The idea that behind the tendency towards abstraction lies a hunger for eternity, a soteriological impulse to save the world from rolling towards nothingness.
c) The idea that abstract art is always the sign of a new beginning, of a new artistic era. With this thesis of Worringer's, Kandinsky found the perfect answer to those who believed that European art was going through an unprecedented phase of degeneration. Already, with Cézanne, Kandinsky believed, the first seeds of a new artistic era had been sown.
d) Line self-determination. It can be said that Worringer's description of the transformation of the line from geometric to organic self directly influenced Kandinsky's vision developed in his lectures published under the title *From Point, Line to Surface*. In this course the Russian artist speaks about the tension inherent in every geometric form, its internal drama that makes it tend towards other forms of expression, transforming itself.

But the most important idea that can be drawn from Worringer's thesis is the *intimate connection between abstraction and the spiritual*. Far from being a loss of being, as in logic where the concept of the dog is poorer than the real dog, abstraction in art is a recovery of the spiritual. Abstract art will become in Kandinsky's mind a repositioning of things in the spiritual from which they have fallen. The artist abstracts from the seen world only to redesign it in the higher spheres from which it has fallen. This suite of ideas forms the premises we must always bear in mind when interpreting the *Spiritual in art.*

However, the concept of "abstract" changes Kandinsky's theory. Whereas for Worringer the abstract was static, the Russian painter sees it more from a dynamic perspective. Analyzing the great transformations in the culture of the early 20th century, Kandinsky concludes that all disciplines are undergoing an abstract revolution, the main feature of which is the tendency to detach from the world of objects. This detachment from concrete things is understood as a return to those original horizons from which objects spring. All disciplines leave the

world of objects and turn the mind towards what Kandinsky calls *vibration without object*, that is a vibration that functions like a virtual field that precedes the object and makes it possible. Poetry breaks the word from the object and directs it towards the abstract virtual vibration from which it comes, music breaks the sound from its objective meaning and moves it into the inner vibration from which it springs, physics unravels matter to find a non-material vibratory tension. In fact, beyond all their differences, all these disciplines point to the same abstract archetypal virtual universe. Kandinsky believes that it is the turn of art to carry out the process of spiritualization through abstraction. The vibration that precedes all objects will become the guiding concept in reconfiguring the basic elements of painting: colors and shapes.

III. Colours, shapes and vibrations

Kandinsky rethinks colors and shapes based on the idea of a spiritual abstraction that precedes objects. Thus, the question that serves as a starting point concerns the dissolution of the concrete into the abstract:

> "Must we then utterly abandon the object, pluck it out of our artistic storehouse, and throw it to the winds so as fully to reveal the purely abstract." (Kandinsky 1946, 52)

The abstraction from objects must be total, but it must not lead to the disappearance of forms or colors, only to their transformation. The triangle, the circle, or the square are geometric objects; how can we think of shapes in the absence of their object dimension? Similarly, yellow, blue, or green are objects in the world; how can we think of them without appealing to things? To be able to sketch the answer to these questions we must bring up a distinction that operates implicitly in *The Spiritual in Art* and that Kandinsky puts at the basis of his 1927 research *From Point and Line to Plane*:

> "Every phenomenon can be experienced in two ways. These two ways are not arbitrary, but are bound up with the phenomenon –

> developing out of its nature and characteristics: externally or inwardly." (Kandinsky 1979, 14)

Every phenomenon therefore exists in two dimensions: the external one, of the visible world populated by objects, and the internal one, of the invisible world structured by abstract vibrations. Although Kandinsky does not make this distinction explicit in his first work, it is clear that it functions as a starting point for the whole approach. Thus, the Russian artist speaks of "the two aspects of form" and of "the innermost content of the form" or the "inner voice of color" (Kandinsky 1946, 47). There is, therefore, an external and internal color, an internal and an external form.

We can easily see that colors and shapes are profoundly different from an external point of view. The triangle seems to have no connection with the color "yellow" or the circle with "blue". Internally, however, things should be different, because the internal refers to that abstract realm of pre-objective vibration. The first step is to look for correspondences between colors and shapes which then point us towards a common essence:

> "The value of certain colors are emphasized by certain forms and dulled by others. In any event, sharp colors sound stronger in sharp forms (for example, yellow in a triangle). Those inclined to be deep are intensified by round forms (for example blue in a circle)." (Kandinsky 1946, 46)

Shapes and colors show a clear difference in their outward appearance, but Kandinsky states that the deep correspondences between them, which can be observed with the naked eye, point towards a concordance of depth. What do the triangle and the yellow have in common? Externally, nothing. Internally they share the same *sharp vibration*; they *sound* the same. Therefore they "come down" from the same vibration.

The conclusion is that homogeneous elements such as colors or shapes can participate in an identical tonality despite their completely different external appearance. As Michel Henry shows, a single tonality can be obtained more easily by reconciling two heterogeneous elements (shape and color) than by reconciling two homogeneous elements (two colors or two shapes) (Henry 2009, 83). The French philosopher brings

out the inherently phenomenological dimension of Kandinsky's attempt. Here, the Russian painter is outlining a *reduction* of heterogeneous objects to a single essence. In other words, object diversity is reduced to the unity of vibration, just as in Husserl the plurality of phenomena is reduced to the unity of essence. Note the musical emphasis of the Kandinsky reduction, the common field to which colors and sounds are reduced being a sonorous one. For this reason, Kandinsky urges the painter to turn to music and to build his own art on its model (Kandinsky 1946, 35). This is not, of course, an outward application of music to the other arts, but an exhortation to artists to seek the musicality of their art:

> "The comparison of various means with which every single art expresses itself, by learning from each other, can only be successful and conclusive if the lesson is not only superficial but truly fundamental. Thus, one art must learn from another how to use its common principle and how to apply it to the fundamentals of its medium. Borrowing these methods, the artist must not forget that all mediums contain within themselves unique characteristics, and it is up to him to discover the proper application." (Kandinsky 1946, 35)

We must not forget that the music Kandinsky refers to is non-acoustic. Shapes and colors provoke through their internal vibrations "an inner sound" (Kandinsky 1946, 40). These inner sounds manifest themselves in the realm of *the spiritual*.

We can conclude that dynamic abstraction understood as vibration without object implies a reduction applied to shapes and colors. The correspondences between shapes and colors point to a deep field in which they coincide. In order to perceive them in their coincidence, we need an interweaving of the senses similar to the phenomena of synaesthesia. In addition to the triangularity of the yellow color, we can also perceive a certain taste of it. People capable of raising their minds to this territory of great interpenetrations show a unique capacity for the interplay of the senses.

> "This would be, so to speak, an echo or reverberation such as occurs when musical instruments, which are not being played, often resound to instruments which are being played." (Kandinsky 1946, 42)

As we move into the spiritual realm and leave the world of objects, our senses intertwine and tend to unify into a single intuition. Therefore, the demonstration that form and color are one has as a logical consequence the idea that sight, hearing, and taste are also one. Kandinsky's art aims to produce in our affectivity a transfiguration of the senses that lifts us towards such a synaesthetic intuition. All we need is for our minds to be able to listen to the vibrations of colors and shapes.

IV. The Internal dynamics of colors

At the beginning of his analysis of shapes and colors, Kandinsky mentions Goethe, whose theory of color is considered "a prophetic formulation" (Kandinsky 1946, 45).

Goethe urges us to look around and see that there is a polarity older than any other: that between light and dark. Though they are always in battle, each element exists through its opposite: there can be no darkness without light or light without darkness, the colors being nothing but the frozen conflicts of this great war. Darkness soaked in a little light and stretched across the vagueness of empty space gives blue, and light soaked in darkness and stretched across empty space gives yellow. Beyond the combinatorics by which Goethe deduces all colors, what must be remembered is that no color is something fixed, for it illustrates a becoming (Goethe 1970, §217), being a particular face of the original *polemos.* One needs to exercise one's gaze in order to see the movement in color (*die Beweglichkeit der Farbe*) (Goethe 1970, §710), which makes colors "facts of light, facts and sins". In other words, every color is a stage in the process of metamorphosis of the polarity of light and dark. Colors grow from this polarity just as stems, leaves, and fruit grow from seed.

After tracing the metamorphosis of colors into aesthetic, moral, and philosophical elements, Goethe finally reaches the symbolic-mystical stage. Each color is, in a way, a symbol of the coincidence of opposites, a

higher resolution of a contradiction. Thus, the green of the vegetation symbolises the quiet struggle between the blue that comes from the darkness of outer space and the yellow that springs from the sun. In the grass you step on you can get a mysterious intuition of the frozen war between sky and sun.

Kandinsky aims to outline a grammar of painting based not on the laws of physics, but on those of inner necessity, which can also be called laws of the soul. The starting point is to probe the inner dimension of colors and to delineate the spiritual movements that take place in the essence of chromaticism. Starting from the warmth and coolness of the color tone and its lightness or darkness, Kandinsky introduces the first great chromatic contrast, that between yellow and blue.

IV.1. The first contrast: Yellow and Blue

As we have already seen, yellow implies a "sharp", "stinging" movement, *i.e.* an aggressive advance towards the viewer. One only has to stand in front of a crop of rapeseed to feel the centrifugal movement in the essence of yellow. The kinetic essence of yellow is called eccentric by Kandinsky. In opposition, blue encloses within itself a centripetal movement that takes the gaze and pulls it towards unsuspected depths. The first great inner contrast of colors is summarised by Kandinsky as follows:

> "The second movement of yellow and blue, which forms part of the first great antithesis, is its eccentric and concentric movement. If two circles of the same size are drawn and painted respectively yellow and blue, a brief concentration on these circles will reveal in the yellow a spreading movement outwards from the center which almost markedly approaches the spectator. The blue, on the other hand, develops a concentric movement (like a snail hiding in its shell) and moves away from the spectator. The eye is impressed by the first circle, while it is caught by the second." (Kandinsky 1946, 61-62)

From a purely spiritual point of view, the internal vibrations of the two colors are associated with opposed states of mind: yellow contains violence

akin to fits of rage or madness, while blue sings a call to infinity, awakening a longing for "purity and transcendence". Yellow is the typical worldly color and blue is the typical heavenly color. *The first opposition therefore mirrors a struggle between heaven and earth.* The union of the two gives rise to green, *i.e.* living nature. Being the result of a stillness, green is the expression of immobility, acting as a paralyzing force with a calming effect on our minds. It is easy to see that the Goethean scheme is the foundation of Kandinsky's theory.

Green as a stiff movement will be contrasted with red seen as an autonomous movement towards itself. This contrast as well as the next one, between orange and purple, does not add much to the idea of chromatic grammar, so I will omit them here to move on to the last opposition.

IV.2. The two types of nothingness: black and white

In his book on anthropological theosophy, Charles Leadbeater placed the higher spheres of the spirit under the empire of the white charged with latencies from which all the chromatic layers of existence spring. Something similar happens in Kandinsky's theory, where white is seen as a "vast silence" full of meaning, like the moment of silence at the end of a symphony. White is a "silence full of latencies", in it speaks a "nothingness before the beginning", and from the point of view of nature, white mirrors, the sound of the earth "during the white period of the Ice Age" (Kandisnky 1946, 68). Within it, white hides a vibration of making.

Black is also a nothingness, but a desertified one, devoid of potential. From it emanates an "eternal silence, without future or hope", a mournful extinction of any vital movement. Because of this lack of sonority, black makes any color set against its background resonate more strongly. So, we have two kinds of nothingness: white nothingness – dynamic as original openness, an explosion of possibilities of being, and black nothingness – static as perfect closure, extinction of all latencies.

It is worth noting that for Kandinsky there are two types of infinity from a chromatic point of view: the infinity of blue as a distance into immensity and the infinity of white as a field of endless possibilities awaiting its realization.

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