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*Paper prepared for the
Fourth Euroacademia Global Conference
Europe Inside-Out: Europe and Europeaness Exposed to Plural Ob-
servers*

Athens, 23 – 24 May 2014

*This paper is a draft
Please do not cite*

Pipilotti Rist's *I Couldn't Agree With You More*: The Ethical Integrity of Being Swiss

This paper will discuss the relationship between Swiss-German contemporary video and installation artist Pipilotti Rist and the ethics of national identity in her work. In this paper I will argue that -- contrary to accepted notions of plurality as fractured identity -- Pipilotti Rist's *I Couldn't Agree With Your More* (1999) can be interpreted as evidence of an integrity of Rist's Swissness between her subjectivity and the codified Swiss objective identities. These Swiss identities are historically and traditionally delineated in the pluralities of the national, the regional and the cantonal levels. I will argue that Rist models an ethical valency as to what is identifiable as a Swiss identity of integrity despite the fractured codifications (national, regional, cantonal, village) of accepted Swissness. This integrity of plurality in Rist's work convinces that identity in plurality is experienced as an identifiable, processual interstice that is revisited, yet not as a fixed signifier, even as it refers to the codified signs of Swissness in an extended process of deferral.

In the 2009 documentary *The Color of Your Socks*, Rist compares the topology of her doppelgänger in her film *Pepperminta* to the topology of the Swiss Alps. Switzerland, of course, is an assemblage of German, Italian, French and Romansh nationalities with irredentist tendencies, made metaphysically one by the Genevoise elite in the late eighteenth century through a fixed program of stable icons such as the Alps, democracy, time, and agrarian cows that continues into the twenty-first century. Rist's experience reflects the greater problem of wholeness of function or an integrity of wholeness vis-à-vis Swissness given the strong regional identities which fragment further into cantonal identities, before allowing for individual subjectivity. Rist has interrogated subjectivity vis-a-vis objectivity from the inception of her oeuvre. Art historical scholarship has examined the quotidian, the feminine, the utopian, the psychological and the cinematic implications of Rist's oeuvre. Scholarship has also examined the role of institutions, the psychological, the political, the economic and the philosophical in the creation of national and individual identity.

This paper will define topology as the values embodied by a place in physical space. Integrity is defined as virtuous wholeness. Subjectivity is understood as the “notional determination (Žižek xi)” of an individual’s intellectual choice which is a “dialectical reanimation (Žižek x)” of the individual’s experience and the present moment. Objectivity is “a concrete shape in which one determination predominates, the others being present [in potentiality] only in blurred outline(Žižek x).” As the individual comes into being through the action of choice, ethics is understood as “moral virtue [resulting from] habit ... From this it is also plain that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature (Aristotle 33696-33698).”

This paper will define a mean as an object of excellence resulting from an integrity of choice. Form as identity is understood as a topological archetype. Form as identity is understood abstractly as noumena. *Jouissance* is defined as a pleasurable excess of being beyond topological subjectivity. Leibniz defines a monad as “a simple substance that enters into composites--simple, that is, without parts (Leibniz 5599)” with “some qualities, otherwise they would not even be beings ... they would be indiscernible from one another (Leibniz 5613).” Ethics of the psyche are understood as subjective choices leading to truth and reality. *Durée* is defined as the changes of subjectivity in the ever present with respect to its ceaseless intellectual and emotional movement in time in acknowledgment of its past histories. Further, “the truth is that we change without ceasing, and that the state itself is nothing but change (Bergson 114-115).” Ipseity is understood as personal identity and plurality is defined as the state of numerousness.

This paper investigates Rist’s *ethical* identity as an interpretation of Swissness through her 1999 work *I Couldn’t Agree with You More*, specifically through Aristotle’s excellence of ethics as a balanced interstice within dialectics. Aristotle, a student and peer of Plato’s who was appointed by Phillip of Macedon as tutor to Alexander the Great, embodies a sobriety of rationalism in contrast to the specifically pantheistic spiritual *aha erlebnis* of Socrates and Plato. Thus this paper considers the deliberate mean, or choice, of Rist’s Swiss national identity with Aristotelian change as an increase in form

(or, in this paper, identity) favored by virtuous actions, or choice. Rist's form of Swissness is complicated by Leibniz's pre-established harmony, where essence can be known independently of experience. Rist, a subject in her own subjective space, is constitutive of Leibniz's single monad reflecting an assembled, objective space of a plurality of monads. Kojève's reading of Hegelian negation impelling desire to achieve unity will focus the examination of Rist's Swissness as will Lacan's ethics of the psyche. This paper culminates in the impunity of Rist's cinematic vision with respect to Bergson's *durée*, a conception of time, space and processes occurring in intellectual tensions and deferrals, or Aristotelian means, for an integrity of Rist's subjective and Swiss wholeness in plurality. Rist's impunity is confirmed by Levinas' theory of the integrity of objective subjectivity in sacred discourse with the other.

Rist's *I Couldn't Agree With You More* (1999) is fixed in the Swiss urban landscape with Rist as the central and only character. However the work equally juxtaposes the subjective realm of the home with the objective realm of Coop, a Swiss supermarket chain, illustrating quotidian space and time. The unifying elements in *I Couldn't Agree With You More* are Rist and her visible daydream in which a nude man, who is alternately free floating alone in space, then in Edenic foliage, and later in the piece, with other naked individuals. Rist here has a Lacanian *jouissance* as she indulges in the daydream as she meanders through the banality of everyday life. As an active choice on Rist's part, Aristotle asserts in his Nicomachean Ethics, "decision rests with perception (Aristotle 33924-33925)." In the Ethics, Aristotle explicates how the good is realized, particularly in government and morality. Aristotle claims that goodness is not natural yet choice is indeed part of the natural, a priori processes constituting individuals. Goodness is found by example in the external world which then becomes a internalized into a subjective choice to achieve exemplariness, which for the ancient Greeks was the cool reason of moderation in thought, interpretation and in action.

Hence Rist's insistence on her perception (the daydream) in self-reflexivity as she maintains, for the most part, direct eye contact with the camera. This constitutes an Aristotelian choice based on her desire for *jouissance* that is not codified according to

Swiss fracture yet integrating these plural realities of daily life: Rist as Swiss (hence the eponymous Coop locale and the International Modernist architecture of her apartment block), Rist as Swiss-German, Rist as a Grabs native, Rist as a now Zürich denizen, Rist as an Alps sojourner, and finally Rist as her own self apart from these declensions – “her favorite number is 54. Against taboos and stereotypes with emotion and humor (Hauser & Wirth, Pipilotti Rist).” Aristotle continues, “choice involves a rational principle and thought. Even the name seems to suggest that it is what is chosen before other things (Aristotle 34015-34016).” Aristotle’s ethics (or the quest for truth which is the ultimate good) are an articulated interstice in a dialectic which is also discursively understood as a perceptual process situated within a beginning cause and an end intended upon by discursive choice. Thus, Rist, in her seeming irrational self-indulgence as she all but ignores her fellow shoppers and the surrounding furniture of the world, is in deliberate *jouissance* outside of accepted Swissness yet the *jouissance* is possible because codified Swissness exists and it is reinterpreted by Rist’s *durée* of *jouissance*.

The visible liminal process of Rist’s imagination, her daydream and the work itself, relates to virtue: “virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success (Aristotle 33821-33823).” Through interstitial *jouissance*, which has a cause and eventually will come to an end, Rist finds virtue rather than an unqualified excess of her psyche. The effortless fading in from Rist’s apartment to Coop and back again in *I Couldn’t Agree With You More* is also a facticity of a more efficacious form as Rist’s identity is based on choices in fidelity to a Lacanian return of the Real in spaces and in time. Rist’s metaphysical bent is clear in the lack of common sense and practicality in the piece as she does not shop nor acknowledge her environs in any way. The camera focuses at times instead on the varied aesthetics of Coop products but not as utilitarian. Likewise, in her apartment, Rist seems to rise and peregrine in spite of the brilliance of the early afternoon sun. Aristotle continues, “virtue, then, is concerned with pleasures and pains, and that by the acts from which it arises it is both increased and, if they are done differently, destroyed, and that the acts from which it arose are those in which it

actualizes itself (Aristotle (Kindle Locations 33764-33765).” Aristotle here inflects the a priori process of the cogito that justify choice with the pleasure of *jouissance* and the pain of its excess. Rist enjoys impunity as “The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character (Aristotle 33774-33775).”

Rist, as her own protagonist with identities interpolated by *jouissance*, literally embodies Leibniz’s monad, which in turn illustrates an assembled, objective space of a plurality of monads that are Rist’s constitution of Swissness in the metaphysical, national, regional, cantonal and subjective totality of topologies. As defined earlier, a monad is a single unit that has both latent and pronounced essences. As a mirror of the universe, it constitutes the DNA, if you will, of reality and its metaphysics. Thus Rist, as one thinking subject--one meta-monad comprised of many distinct monads that is unified by Rist’s intellect and intuition, or as Leibniz would state, soul: “Each soul knows the infinite – knows all – but confusedly. It is like walking on the seashore and hearing the great noise of the sea: I hear the particular noises of each wave, of which the whole noise is composed, but without distinguishing them (Leibniz 5554-5556).” – can comprise plurality. The cultural topology of her Swiss acculturation is accounted for. Leibniz tells us “diversity must involve a multitude in the unity or in the simple (Leibniz 5613).” In *I Couldn’t Agree With You More*, Rist is the actuality of the unity between her subjective (individual) and objective (public) topologies. What unifies these topologies is Rist herself. Her active, deliberate daydream is at ease in its coexistence with her quotidian surroundings. Rist’s evident bliss is evidence of her integrity of being. This is her unity of being with meta-Swissness, German-Swissness, cantonal identity and her individual subjectivity.

Leibniz continues, “For, since all natural change is produced by degrees, something changes and something remains. As a result, there must be a plurality of properties and relations in the simple substance, although it has no parts (Leibniz 5613).” Rist, as a meta-monad, as there can be no other Rist, signifies this multitude of qualities and

their relational reciprocity. Acculturation occurs over time and retains subjectivity as it modifies it. These modifications are possible because of the monad's proclivity of latent and active qualities. Rist's ethics of being occurs in the tensions in which relationships are articulated, as I will discuss further with respect to Levinas. As Rist's daydream spills from her forehead, into the negative spaces and onto objects in the carousel-like perspective in this piece, demonstrative of the a priori processual interstices of perception and apperception. While Rist knows exactly where she is physically located at every moment in the video (the camera looks over another shopper – from head to toe, the camera pans across the windows in the apartment), she defers this to the foregrounding of her introspective visions of a nude Adonis romping alternately in solipsistic space and in Edenic flora. The union, or relationship, between these visions of desire and Arcadia are in stark contrast to the detergents and gray architecture of both Coop and her apartment yet simultaneously congruous with the produce and with the sky blue replete with billowy clouds evident through her apartment windows and wryly paralleled on the bed linen.

Hegel continues the implication of the objective (universal) in the subjective (particular) and of the particular in the universal - the *Zeitgeist* - as elaborated by Leibniz's monads and Rist as a meta-monad. Kojève writes of Hegel's drive that renounces subjectivity in favor of its being constituted by the objective, or the universal. The dyad of the private and the public are unified in Rist's renunciation of the demarcation of subjectivity and objectivity in the private and the public made clear by her daydreaming in *I Couldn't Agree With You More*. Speaking of the nature of being in time, in space and thus in history, Kojève tells us, "Man overcomes himself as *Error* (or 'Subject' *opposed* to the Object) after creating the Truth of 'Science' (Kojève 160)." Kojève explicates Hegel's context as at history's apogee. Its teleology, for Hegel, realized a harmonious dialectic in the iconic Napoleon Bonaparte. Thus "Science," realized in Hegel's lifetime and explicated in Chapter VIII of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is the total accord, or integrity, of being existing in tension between the memorial, teleological past and the ever becoming on the basis of this memory and the resultant ethical choice of action which Napoleon

initially claimed for the people. Napoleon, like Augustus before him, claimed a Roman genius which Hegel interpreted as the *Zeitgeist*.

Thus Rist's subjectivity unifies the physical, cultural and psychical typologies evident in *I Couldn't Agree With You More*. Rist creates her Truth in subjectivity first and foremost including the objective, or everything and everyone representative to her introspection which pronounces relations between the monads of meta-Swissness, German-Swissness, cantonal and Rist's own ethics of subjectivity per the Aristotelian mean. By allowing the delectation of her instinctual Freudian Erotic drive, Rist renounces traditional fragmentations of being by bridging and articulating the gaps in traditional fragmentation.

Kojève tells us, "by negating a concept, one only manages to create another *concept* (Kojève 256)." Rist does not accept traditional demarcations of Swiss identity. Her phenomenology in *I Couldn't Agree With You More* formally and contextually, thus aesthetically and philosophically, negates separateness, or otherness, thus transforming established objects, or objectivities. This would nullify what Levinas terms the totality in favor of the plurality of the non-All. This is impelled by Rist's choice beyond the instinctual drive to completion of the self through the assimilation of the objective (Kojève 4). Rist chooses to remain Swiss, in integral wholeness, as opposed to fractured politicizations occurring culturally as signified in language (Swiss-German, High German, French, Italian and Romansch) by negation and creating a new form of objectivity, or identity of being (Kojève 25). Rist does not speak in *I Couldn't Agree With You More* and the ambient soundtrack is akin to a Zen hum or the mechanical hum of a priori processes.

Hegel's phenomenology via Kojève speaks to Lacan's ethics of the psyche (Lacan 34) as demonstrated in Rist's *I Couldn't Agree With You More*. Indeed, Kojève asserts:

For it is precisely that form that is its pure Being-for-itself; and, in that form, this Being-for-itself is constituted for it [the Consciousness] as truth [or as revealed, conscious, objective reality. The man who works recognizes his own product in the World that has actually been transformed by his work: he recognizes himself in it, he sees in it his own human reality,

in it he discovers and reveals to others the objective reality of his humanity, of the originally abstract and purely subjective idea he has of himself.] By this act of finding itself by itself, then the [working] Consciousness becomes *its own meaning-or-will* (Kojève 27).

Indeed, the soundtrack to Rist's work, discussed above as the omission of dialogue in favor of eidetic imagery, attests to an integrity of consciousness as its own will, or as its own choice. Rist's blissful, slightly somnambulist, quotidian peregrinations of mind and body are indicative of satisfaction, or an efficacy of being. Rist's chosen and compelled work (by established institutions and values) are these aesthetic choices that are transformative of the viewer and canonical art history, its praxis and its reception. Rist's doubt in the face of traditional fragmentation of identity is described by Lacan as "a sign of resistance" which leads to transcendence (Lacan 35) in keeping with the intra and extra psychical relational ideas of Leibniz, Hegel and Kojève. This Cartesian element in Lacan, that of primary Ur-thinking subjectivity, focuses on the interstice between the subjective and the objective, as neither is satisfactory in itself. Doubt provokes the subject to choose what is right, or ethical, for its being beginning with instinct and then continuing into its apperception.

Lacan explicates, the gap between unconscious, inherent a priori processes and apperception is unified in a satisfactory reconciliation of doubt with a truth ethical to the subject. As a basis of phenomenology, the discontinuity between the unconscious and the Ego "the essential form in which the unconscious first appears to us as a phenomenon--discontinuity, in which something is manifested as a vacillation" (Lacan 25). This vacillation, or relationship, between the unconscious and its myriad facets filtered through the Ego and SuperEgo, is evidence of being in plural modes, or in a plurality of monads that are unified into Rist's meta-monad of being Swiss.

Rist's work is transformative as she "invites the person to whom this picture is presented to lay down his gaze there as one lays down one's weapons. This is the pacifying, Apollonian effect of painting. (Lacan 101)." Indeed, Rist's video art comprises only a part of a larger installation that includes furniture and carpetry designed espe-

cially for her immersive experience. By lulling and abstracting her viewer's egoic ap-
 perception, or gaze, into her created world, Rist's work can transform. Rist dissolves
 the public space of the museum or gallery into a sure reminiscence of the *heimlich*. Thus
 Rist effects an integrity of being while the viewer is immersed in her installation piece,
 albeit temporarily, mirroring her own comfort in *I Couldn't Agree With You More*. Lacan
 thus writes of an ethics of the psyche (Lacan 34), in which the subject chooses the best
 truth for herself in order to achieve a reconciliation of and for the psyche (the Id, the
 Ego, the SuperEgo). The title of Rist's work, *I Couldn't Agree With You More*, clear signi-
 fies this as she references herself and implicates her audience into a discursive relation-
 ship to confirm her choice. This ethics of the psyche is precluded by Aristotle's mean
 between extreme states, Leibniz's ipseity of each monad's essentiality in harmony with
 the extant universe and Hegel's dialectics.

Although Rist's work is a video and is thus problematized by Bergson's antagon-
 ism toward fixity of time and space and form (the installation and the length of the vid-
 eo) in what he terms 'cinematic vision,' *I Couldn't Agree With You More* actually does
 demonstrate the Bergsonian *durée*, in which Rist exists in a constant process and thus
 tension between her foregrounded imagination and the banal background of her quoti-
 dian apartment and market. The apartment and the market however are equally fore-
 grounded as the backgrounds seamlessly meld from one space to the other without jar-
 ring the viewer. Rist's hypnotic and blissful gaze anchors the viewer, evidence of
 Bergson's emphasis on subjective process and interstice or Aristotelian mean over spe-
 cific forms such as identities that should be processual as illustrated in *I Couldn't Agree
 With You More*.

Bergson argues against cinematography, against the successive compilation of
 fixed images thus fixed ideas which is a metaphoric illusion of fixed ideologies and arc-
 hetypes:

It is true that if we had to do with photographs alone, however much we
 might look at them, we should never see them animated: with immobility set be-
 side immobility ... In order that the pictures may be animated, there must be
 movement somewhere ... it is in the apparatus. It is because the film of the cine-

matograph unrolls, bringing in turn the different photographs of the scene to continue each other, that each actor of the scene ... strings all his successive attitudes on the invisible movement of the film. The process then consists in extracting from all the movements peculiar to all the figures an impersonal movement abstract and simple, movement in general, so to speak: we put this into the apparatus, and we reconstitute the individuality of each particular movement by combining this nameless movement with the personal attitudes. Such is the contrivance of the cinematograph. And such is also that of our knowledge. Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. We take snapshots as it were, of the passing reality, and, as these are characteristic of the reality, we have only to string them on a becoming, abstract, uniform and invisible, situated at the back of the apparatus of knowledge, in order to imitate what there is that is characteristic in this becoming itself. Perception, intellection, language so proceed in general. Whether we would think becoming, or express it, or even perceive it, we hardly do anything else than set going a kind of cinematograph inside us. We may therefore sum up what we have been saying in the conclusion that the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind (Bergson. *Creative Evolution* (Kindle Locations 3485-3497)).

Bergson implicates Kant's a priori process of cognition by stating that we are at once responsible for and captive to a psyche that prefers to organize according to acculturation rather than allow free reign to that other a priori process of intuition in *durée*. It is a Lacanian ethics of the psyche requiring choice impelled by intellectualized intuition of the Hegelian world, as reflected in Rist as a meta-monad constituting the varieties of the world: "In order to advance with the moving reality, you must replace yourself within it. Install yourself within change, and you will grasp at once both change itself and the successive states in which it might at any instant be immobilized (Bergson 3514-3515)." As Bergson argues, "The Ideas or Forms are the whole of intelligible reality, that is to say, of truth, in that they represent, all together, the theoretical equilibrium of Being. As to sensible reality, it is a perpetual oscillation from one side to the other of this point of equilibrium (Bergson 3620-3621)."

The title of Rist's work, *I Couldn't Agree With You More*, can be interpreted as rhetorical, facetious and affirmative – whom is she engaging? I argue that Rist acknowledges Bergson's intertextual reality, the shifting pluralities of meaning that are ever in

danger of becoming static archetypes. Rist, as the focal point of her video demonstrates active a priori processes concertedly focused on the camera as opposed to her quotidian surroundings. Yet Rist is clearly navigating the aisles in Coop and the spaces in her apartment as well. Rist articulates awareness quite as Bergson behooves us to ever choose with awareness while simultaneously allowing that awareness to fall to the background to allow other perceptions to foreground themselves in continuity.

In the video, although Rist engages with the camera, the vantage point is just above Rist's visage. This is metaphoric of a reasoned ethics of the psyche in that Rist is acknowledging the background, the foreground, and their organizing processes that usually remain dominant in the SuperEgo when awareness is not fomented. The title of Rist's work embraces a Bakhtinian polyphony of subjectivity, a sensitivity to change, difference and *jouissance*. This polyphony of subjectivity can be experienced as interstitial in objective subjectivity, or the way in which we experience other subjects – through an recognizable set of processes.

The Color of Your Socks documents Rist's creation of *Pour Your Body Out*, an installation piece for the Atrium inaugurating MoMA's new flagship building on 53rd Street in Manhattan. In the documentary, Rist explicates to a MoMA curator the gist *Pour Your Body Out*. She demonstrates the yoga posture of *Uttanasana A*, when the divinity in the practitioner acknowledges the divinity of the other by bowing deeply and placing the hands by the feet in an act of humility in preparation for ethical service. Rist proposes that we empty our subjectivity to receive another's objective subjectivity beyond the immediate political dialectics of Rist's Swissness. Rist extends the discursiveness of identity as Rist chooses in awareness to interpolate the fissure between herself and another – thus her constant engagement with the camera and thus the viewer.

Emanuel Levinas, a phenomenologist who was interred in a World War II concentration camp, is salient to reframing subjectivity as a constitutive positivism in which the self is renounced to realize the depoliticized, or defragmented, integrity of the other.

For Levinas, “the order of meaning, which seems to me primary, is precisely what comes to us from inter human relationship, so that the Face, with all its meaningfulness as brought out by analysis, is the beginning of intelligibility ... the encounter with the Other is my responsibility for him (Levinas 103).” Thus for Levinas being is a modality (Levinas 209) or process of being in time and space that goes beyond the political as horrifically experienced as a persecuted political identity during the Shoah. As the focal point of Levinas’ identity beyond being a man, a European and a Lithuanian, among others, was that of being Jewish (a religious and an ethnic identity), Levinas invokes the spiritual in recognition of the Other in the process of a fully realized person making an ethical choice of the psyche to sublimate her subjectivity to experience another’s polyphonic discourse. By this means, the other’s pluralities are experienced as further interpolations in awareness of the subject’s own *durée*.

As Levinas is also a Talmudic scholar, he acknowledges historicities interpolated by the ever becoming of the present, as the plural realities of Bergson’s *durée* revoke Fascist concrescence: “Consciousness makes and remakes *presence* – it is the *life* of presence. Consciousness which already allows itself to be forgotten for the benefit of *present entities*: it withdraws itself from appearing to make room for them (Levinas 67).” Thus Rist’s *I Couldn’t Agree With You More* addresses the viewer as *thou*, in acknowledgement of the sacredness of the other that takes on variance, that uses the modality (polyphonic nature) of language used by the Judeo-Christian God to address His human creation (Levinas 58), most evidently inscribed in the Ten Commandments. Rist’s approach to the other, to her viewer, is also that of a benign religion, which indicates to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Levinas asks us to renounce the second part of this phrase, as an ethics of integrity does not depend on expectation of recognition by the other, but as an ethics of the psyche for its existential integrity. This is important as it creates subjects of everyone, regardless of the topology, thus advocating for the other, any other, once one’s subjectivity is reframed in conscious awareness in Bergsonian *durée*, in confirmation of Leibniz’s kaleidoscopic monad. Rist’s

visions in *I Couldn't Agree With You More* consciously interpolates existential being, which is everything and nothing until a choice is made.

This paper focuses on a philosophical critique of archetypal nationalism. While taking into consideration art historical writings, theory and criticism, this paper extends the work of installation artist Pipilotti Rist into the functioning noumena of subjectivity and objectivity as the intellect operates not only rationally but creatively and thus the discursiveness of intellect and intuition. This paper addresses Rist as a subject first and foremost, without interrogating the Feminist, Marxist, political or institutional considerations that her work also merits. Thus this paper is not traditional art history, but in the tradition of philosophical discourse of which the artist is the philosopher *par excellence* with her visual elocutions of particularities of the *Zeitgeist*.

Counterpoint to this paper's interrogation of Rist's *I Couldn't Agree With You More* is Switzerland is still accepted as predominantly three separate regions – German, French and Italian – by the Swiss as by foreigners. Thus problematizing Rist as conscientiously modeling an identity with integrity in its process rather than in archetypal and readily communicable demarcation (the Census). Additionally, the language of each region insures the insularity of its specific cultural interpretation of meta-Swissness. As theoretical and critical methodologies nuancing both art history and philosophy, cultural language can indeed be acutely self-reflexive in its reassertion of its archetypes. While these are valid points on the surface, the artist as an interpreter of herself in extenuating circumstances belies the complexity of being. This extends to this paper's consideration of Rist as an individual, and not specifically as a feminine individual.

To conclude, this paper insists upon Rist's *jouissance* allowing for an integrity of identity without subverting established systems of Swiss identity. It is by virtue of codified Swissness that Rist is able to reframe Swissness in the interpretative process of Lacanian *jouissance* with notional determination as her fulcrum. Processual identity stands in contradistinction to European nationalist narratives codified during the Enlightenment which persist as a corrupted, organizing system for different European

ethnicities and cultures. It is in the interstice, the gaps of interpretation, interpolated by a choice from awareness in Bergsonian *durée* that the Aristotelian legacy of excellence between extremes, as reflected in the monad, succeeds in a qualitatively sublime unity between the self and the other – the basis of all political strife.

Illustration

[Pipilotti Rist, I Couldn't Agree With You More, 1999](#)

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