# *An Opening*

> [T]his painting, cut out of a household interior, direct[s] our attention beyond the balanced surfaces and volumes of geometry toward disturbing openings in these forms. It does so not only through the mouths of the ray, the fish, and the cat but also through the vessels standing at the right: one corked, one half-covered, and one fully open, with the systematic logic of a textbook diagram. Most notably, and centrally, the maw carved in the belly of the ray draws our attention to orifices. The composition is further structured, left to right, by a progress from vegetable to animal nature and from animality to an absent but implied, by its instruments, humanity – but what sort of humanity?
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> Daniel Cottom on Jean-Siméon Chardin's *The Ray* (ca. 1728)[1]

> Laughter is an opening in which a self unfolds.
>
> Anca Parvulescu[2]

[1] Daniel Cottom, *Cannibals and Philosophers: Bodies of Enlightenment* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 37.
[2] Anca Parvulescu, *Laughter: Notes on a Passion* (MIT Press, 2010), 5.

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