

# Art and Experience

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# QUESTIONES INFINITAE

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# Art and Experience

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To my late fathers  
and my two sons.

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“Not illustration of reality,  
but to create images which are concentration of reality  
and a short-hand of sensation.”

Francis Bacon

## Introduction

When art professionals—artists, museum managers, art historians—think about art works they primarily think about these in relation to their profession. However, when non-professionals think about art works, they primarily think about their experiences of art works—whether these are from the past, present or future. In this context we hold what Richard Wollheim has named: the principle of acquaintance. According to this principle we may not judge works of art unless we have experienced them for ourselves. We may not, for instance, judge the painting that our brother saw the other day and which he liked a lot—simply because we weren’t there. Testimony does not count in the aesthetic domain. This is of major significance because in almost all other domains of knowledge and experience testimony is one of the legitimate devices used to gain the right to claim things. We may, for instance, claim to know that a hurricane is sweeping across the Pacific merely because we have been told about it on television or in the papers. Before elaborating this let us first look at the principle of acquaintance from the perspective of a rather simplified sketch of the sciences. Normally, observations are valued for their descriptive outcome, the testimony of which is a legitimate device for conveying knowledge claims, especially so in the domain of the natural sciences. In the humanities in general, however, observations have different values, most importantly because here both the reader and the observer form part of the material under investigation.<sup>1</sup> Psychology in general provides an illustrative example of this situation. We can take psychology as a science which provides a body of knowledge and which properly has a strong faith in straightforward scientific methodological demands aiming at describing the observations derived from controlled experiments and statistic comparisons. On this—general—level precise observational data are provided from a third-person perspective, and these data

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Apel, *The Erklären-Verstehen Controversy in the Philosophy of the Natural and Human Sciences*, 1982.

## Art and Experience – Introduction to the Argument

are—in favourable circumstances—universally valid. They can legitimately be used testimonially. The observational perspective involves an emancipation from individual perspectives, but to achieve this emancipation psychologists first had to reduce their subject to make it available as a source of observations from a third-person perspective. So the seemingly more straightforwardly ‘scientific’ parts of psychology furnish descriptions from a third-person stance not because all events relevant for a person’s psychology are accessible from such a perspective, but because psychologists have chosen it as their reference point in the first place. And one reason why psychologists chose this instead of a first-person perspective seems to lie in their motivation to have the scientific status of their discipline recognized. Evidently dubious theoretical support for this third-person stance can be found in the myth of the inaccessibility of the first-person perspective, and in the latter’s consequential irrelevance for a science of the mind supposedly universally valid. Something else that goes against the theoretical relevance of first-person’s reports is their singular idiosyncrasy. But however that comes out, psychology thus conceived as a general, scientific discipline does not ask exactly what experiences a Mrs. Wiggins may have had on some specific occasion, but instead researches the quantifiable opinions and testimonies of as many persons as possible. Obviously, in itself this ought to produce important insights into people’s motivational considerations, but these insights are won at a cost. The questions asked are adjusted to realize the sought-for universality, or commensurability, of the individual answers given. Ultimately this approach may (and should) prove fertile for individual persons’ lives and beliefs. That is, only after some translation into one’s personal perspective can generalized conclusions of ‘scientific’ psychology be transformed into experientially relevant understanding. However, due to the original reduction of the subject matter to scientifically generalizable proportions, psychology contributes to a disdain of the individual, and experiential dimension of events. This is a true mark of science. Now I am not (foolishly) arguing against the legitimacy of this restrictive, scientific approach. Instead, I am arguing that if we may, alternatively, identify psychology’s ultimate aim as the betterment of people’s living processes, then the discipline of psychology is instrumental at best for its therapeutical sibling. It is the main concern of psychotherapy to understand and change an individual’s experiential perspective on his own life and the world at large, rather than to create universalizable truths. Psychology as a whole,

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then, illustrates what I call the paradox of participatory observation.<sup>2</sup> In everyday life, this paradox is quite common. For instance, if one tries to compare the car one has just bought with the car exchanged for it, one may be incapable of remembering exactly what the old car was like at the moment of experiencing the 'feel' of the new one. We cannot merely observe the differences between the two cars without driving them, but when doing so the obvious inaccessibility of the car that one is not driving springs to the fore. Memory and imagination are vital here, as they are for aesthetic matters in general. I shall not concern myself here with the technical, methodological and epistemological problems of the philosophy of science, but shall argue for the inescapability of this paradox with regard to the aesthetic domain.

Concerning art basing your judgement on testimony may prove to be an instance of elitism, of an attempt to impress those you find important. So testimony is taboo—but why? Is it as forbidden with regard to natural beauty as it is to artistic beauty? Are aesthetic values within and outside of art of the same nature? I used to think that (in the last analysis) they are—but now I am not so sure anymore. When I (more or less sincerely—let's rule out elitism) report having seen a beautiful painting at an exhibition of Max Ernst's oeuvre, I am practically inviting the person I am addressing to visit the exhibition and take a look at this painting. When, however, I report having heard a blackbird singing a beautiful song in my backyard this morning, and that it made me very cheerful, there is no sense in thinking that I am inviting people to visit my backyard and listen to the blackbird's song. For all I know the bird will be long gone. Perhaps in terms of aesthetic values there are important agreements between these two experiences—of the

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<sup>2</sup> We can find in anthropological field work ample examples of this paradox, which has it that in order to adequately observe a (foreign) practice one must stop being an outsider to it, but must instead take part in it. However, such participation is at odds with the scientific, observational, goals in that one cannot observe to the full when participating, as participation involves losing oneself in the practice. In cultural anthropology this paradox has led to serious methodological and philosophical problems. Cf. Trigg, *Understanding Social Science*, 1985 and Davidson, 'Radical Interpretation', 1984 (1973). In psychology, we can think of the issue of so-called recovered memories. Some allege that recovered memories are constructions induced by a therapist in the analysand, rather than being memories of real events. Psycho-therapists, on the other hand, may claim to be able to establish the personal truth of recovered memories, not necessarily also their truth to the facts. They use clues supplied by the individual's behaviour and reports that perhaps do not admit of quantification. I think this problem concerns what I call, in Chapter 7, tertiary qualities.

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Ernst painting and of the bird's song. However, from the point of view of the principle of acquaintance there is an obvious difference between the two events. Is this difference merely a consequence of the lack of an intentional creativity in nature—as has been argued in the past? Although I believe the artist's creativity has a role to play in our appreciation of a work of art, for now I see more importance in the specific characteristics of the subject and object of the two events. When I am in my backyard listening to the blackbird both I and the context are fully embodied. That is, we both address all my senses. I do so by moving about in my backyard and listening and watching intently, and the context does so by possessing qualities that are accessible to all my senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. As a consequence of this full embodiment change and movement are incorporated in the event, without any restrictions: in a moment the sun may disappear behind a cloud, an enormous van may park behind the hedge, spoiling my views; the blackbird may stop singing for whatever reason, or it may fly away, etc. An event of natural beauty is filled with its own transience. With the Ernst painting this situation is different altogether. First of all, we can go back and take another look at the painting; even if the exhibition is over the painting will still be on show somewhere. The second difference, however, is more important: a work of art—this Ernst painting—does not address all our senses. In fact, it addresses only one—vision—and all other sense modalities are kept on hold. Hearing, touching, smelling or tasting the painting does not increase our appreciation of it.

Normally, in everyday life, our perception is embodied. This means that perception principally presupposes that each one of our senses is addressed to some extent. In art, however, our fully embodied sensuousness is addressed in truncated ways: at least one of our senses is left unaddressed by some specific art form. This means two things. First, works of art are made for repeated perception; secondly, they possess an (internal) intentional structure that somehow seeks to make up for their diminished addressing of our embodied perception. I know of seemingly obvious counter-examples to this thesis and in the following I will treat some of them. But let us not be fooled by whatever is introduced as a work of art: there is an abundance of creative nonsense out there. That the effects of works of art should intentionally exceed the senses they address can be corroborated easily. When we listen to music we are not merely taking in sounds, but re-enacting emotional dynamics, and sometimes these are even visualized. When we look at a painting, our eyes and mind introduce movement, change, and what is altogether absent in the work: 'What happened before the 'snap-shot' was taken?', 'What happens outside the frame?' 'What kind of person is depicted

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here—and what is she going through?’ These are questions that we readily introduce while appreciating a work of art. It is our imagination which seeks their answers. Thus, I will argue, it is imagination which makes up for the reduced address of sense modalities by art. This implication of imagination explains why we should all go and see for ourselves—it is what explains the principle of acquaintance. The imagination brings in idiosyncrasies: it introduces into the work of art the transient, ever changing, fully embodied, narratively understood personality of the beholding subject.

This is a sketch of the theory I present in this study. First, though, allow me to elaborate my strategy. In Part I, I present a survey of the ‘cognitivist’ theses that predominate the analytical approach to art. In the first chapter I address Nelson Goodman’s extensionalist nominalist neglect of art’s experiential dimension, and argue where he went wrong in his accounts of representation, exemplification, and aesthetic difference. Actually, his account of aesthetic difference launches Chapter 2, which discusses the so-called aesthetic properties that aesthetic judgements may or may not be about. In Chapter 3, I will go into our ideas about art and address Dickie’s ‘institutional conception of art’. I propose an alternative characterization of art which puts the artist’s material and aesthetic choices at the core of the concept, and which understands the ‘institutional’ procedures as being on a general, contingent level only. The ‘institutional’ procedures adhere to the introduction of artistic techniques, not to that of individual works of art, and as such they should obey aesthetic considerations. This first, surveying part is then followed by a look at the history of modern aesthetics, and at those two aestheticians who have (Kant) or should have (Baumgarten) set the pace of subsequent aesthetic discussions. The return to Kant is motivated by his adherence to a subjectivism which explicitly honours the principle of acquaintance. The return to one of his immediate predecessors is motivated by puzzles pertaining to Kant’s theory of art. In particular, I find considerations in Baumgarten’s ‘science of the perfection of sense knowledge’ that explain art’s moral relevance in a way highly compatible with—if not instructive for—the point of view I have just outlined, of art trying to make up for its truncated address of embodied perception by animating the imagination. This historical interruption functions as the impetus for the last part where I introduce notions that are necessary to develop my intuitions into an adequate theory of art and its appreciation. These notions are ‘tertiary qualities’, ‘intimation’, and art’s ‘threefoldness’. Further explication of these terms is given in Chapters 7 and 8. I have added to the text a glossary of the main terms I use. This may come in handy, as I

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do not repeat my terminological specifications each time I employ a certain term.

In conclusion to this introduction I want to express a word of thanks to all those who contributed generously to my argument. Most notably, I want to thank Paul Crowther for commenting on all parts of the argument. Then there are those who have been with me from the very beginning: professor Willem van Reijen who provided me with all the philosophical latitude I could possibly wish for, and professors Maarten van Nierop, J.J.A. Mooy, K.J. Schuhmann, and John Neubauer, and dr. Anthony Savile, who provided comments on various parts of the study. I am also most grateful to those who commented on individual papers and chapters—Ruth Lorand, Malgosia Askanas, and professors Pat Matthews, Richard Wollheim, Eddy Zemach, and Graham McFee—and to those in the audience of the yearly conferences organized by Richard Woodfield, for the British Society of Aesthetics. Without exception the discussions during these conferences were very stimulating. I want to thank the department of philosophy of Utrecht University for providing me with a study room and the most advanced Macintosh computers—and those who made their use more pleasing, Freek Wiedijk, Karst Koymans, Arno Wouters and Han Baltussen. And, last but not least, my thanks go to the institution that made it all happen financially: the Foundation for Philosophy and Theology (SFT), which is subsidized by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).

## PART I

### COGNITIVIST ANALYTICAL AESTHETICS

#### Cognitivist Reductions—Introduction to Part I

Aesthetics has had a problem with its status as a discipline ever since it began. In 1750 the first philosopher to treat aesthetics as an autonomous discipline, Alexander Baumgarten, had to defend this approach elaborately.<sup>1</sup> And two hundred years later the situation has hardly changed for the better: in 1959, John Passmore in a paper named provocatively ‘The Dreariness of Aesthetics’ questioned exactly this scientific status of aesthetics as an autonomous discipline, arguing that it merely borrows its subject matter from other more important disciplines, such as epistemology.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent strategies by contemporary analytical aestheticians to provide aesthetics with the status of scientific autonomy circled most prominently around the argument that its subject matter ought never to depend upon evaluation, but should instead be descriptive, preferably in terms of linguistic analysis. The answer to the question which language is to be analyzed, has come in various guises. Typically, analysis has been directed on the one hand at what are taken to be core concepts with regard to art such as ‘representation’, ‘expression’, and ‘art’, and on the other, at the specific uses made of language in art criticism.<sup>3</sup> Although these approaches have been, and still are, highly insightful, the perspective chosen by linguistic analysts has almost without exception been a third-person, public, observatory perspective. This is

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<sup>1</sup> Esp. in: Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, 1750-1758

<sup>2</sup> Cf. also Kennick, ‘Does Traditional Aesthetics Rest on a Mistake?’, 1958; Gallie, ‘The function of Philosophical aesthetics’, 1959; Battin, ‘The Dreariness of Aesthetics (Continued), with a Remedy’, 1986; Wartofsky, ‘The Liveliness of Aesthetics’, 1987; and Margolis, ‘Exorcising the Dreariness of Aesthetics’, 1993. In an unpublished paper, Ruth Lorand (‘Ethics and Aesthetics are not One: Aesthetics as an Independent Philosophical Discipline’, 1994) proposes that we understand the fight for or against the disciplinary status of aesthetics as deriving from a misunderstanding of the exact nature of this discipline, which lacks a level of generally valid theories specifying artistic problems and their solutions.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. for the latter approach: Sibley, ‘Aesthetic Concepts’, 1959; Cohen, ‘Aesthetic/Non-aesthetic and the Concept of Taste: A Critique of Sibley’s Position’, 1973; Sibley, ‘Aesthetic Concepts: A Rejoinder’, 1963; Gaut, ‘Metaphor and the Understanding of Art’, 1994.

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demonstrated by, among other things, the relative neglect of aesthetic problems which are traditionally held important, such as, most notably, the role of experience in aesthetic evaluation. I call this neglect of aesthetic experience in favour of more accessible and describable aspects of art, 'cognitivism'. Cognitivism has its drawbacks. For a third-person approach of representation, for instance, the difference between representations which are aesthetically outstanding and those which are weak and bleak, is neutral to their respective representationality. Both excellent and poor representations are representations, so if linguistic analysis of 'representation' is what we are concerned with, both will do equally well. Indeed, this 'cognitivist' argument is quite convincing. It also refers to the fact that whatever idiosyncracies the relevant claims or insights are based upon, (aesthetic) evaluations will always need additional arguing in order to convince the public of the appropriateness of some specific evaluation. Cognitivism involves three major positions. First, aesthetic appreciative experience is equated with more normal cognitive activity, secondly, aesthetic judgement is equated with more normal description (having normal truth values), and thirdly, the work of art, the object most privileged in the aesthetic domain, is taken to be definable procedurally.

All three positions do without allusion to our aesthetic experiences. At first sight nothing seems wrong here. As an effort to improve the scientific status of the theoretical endeavours for aestheticians the cognitivist strategy may be the best strategy at hand. However, it is exactly in the aesthetic domain that such efforts towards scientification have their most severe drawbacks. For the sake of sound methodology one should not exclude beforehand—by limiting the field of investigation to third-person observations—the possibility that experiential access to and evaluational assessment of exemplary works might bring important philosophical insights to the fore, qualifying crucial cognitivist tenets, especially so in a field as value-oriented as the aesthetic domain. Put sketchily, and taking representation as our example: to start from a beautiful, instead of an ugly, representational painting, cannot be explanatory neutral to the representational powers involved.

I regret the one-sided approach predominant in analytical aesthetics and shall try to give the aesthetic experience and its role in artistic representation, and expression, and in aesthetic evaluation the recognition I think it deserves. In this I presuppose the correctness of the following remarks. The correct application of certain aesthetic values, such as 'beauty', 'sublime', or 'aesthetic excellence', is grounded in specific experiences which, however, we do not quite know how to describe. Nor are we certain about the grounding functionality of these experiences. This holds especially strongly if the

## Introduction

principle of acquaintance is a correct critical assessment of events in the aesthetic domain, as I take it to be. Third-person observations in effect tend to neglect this.

In the present chapter I shall argue against three typical instances of the 'analytical' attempt to keep aesthetic experience out of the philosophical argument. First, I shall criticize Nelson Goodman, who has made some highly interesting remarks on art, for his refusal to account for the experiential and evaluational 'effects of art'. I take his 'cognitivist' tenets to follow from vaguenesses rather than from compelling argument. The need for an account of representation of the experiential shall be argued for, which, unlike mere pictorial reproduction, will be conventional throughout. This account, I argue, can only be derived from an account of depiction in terms of on the one hand exemplification and anticipation, of the presence of the beholder, and thus of aesthetic experience on the other. The second instance of the analytical 'scientification' of aesthetics is the attempt—following a seminal paper by Frank Sibley—to treat aesthetic judgements as descriptions with a truth value.<sup>4</sup> This approach starts from the terms we use in explaining our evaluations of art works. It too evades the relevance of the experience with which we are supposed to perceive the properties answering to these terms by simply extending our perceptive faculties with yet another sense, taste. The third instance of analytical aestheticians' attempts to erase experience and evaluation from theory is the discussion about the definition of 'art' following another seminal paper, by Morris Weitz.<sup>5</sup> The presuppositions of this discussion seem almost inevitably to lead to the strictly procedural, and therefore empty, institutional definition of art proposed and elaborated by George Dickie in numerous publications. I will argue that, again, in this definition art's experiential dimension is neglected. I will propose a characterization of art which does not address head on the problem of defining art, but which should have its consequences for any serious attempt to such defining.

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<sup>4</sup> Sibley, 'Aesthetic Concepts', 1959.

<sup>5</sup> Weitz, 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', 1956.

# Chapter One

## Pictorial Representation

### 1. Extensionalist Nominalism

It is a challenge to try to argue against Nelson Goodman's philosophical semiotics because it is very provocative and, to a great degree, coherent. Goodman's semiotics explains certain ontological differences between the various arts—allographic and autographic arts—and it specifies why our experiences should be different when concerning different artistic 'means of reference'. Lastly, Goodman at first sight gives us ample reasons to forget about aesthetic specificity. The problem with Goodman's philosophy, however, is his categorical, extensionalist refusal to account for the idea that aesthetic evaluation presupposes some special kind of experience. Goodman's philosophy is further weakened by his scepticism regarding everyday common sense ideas. For example, Goodman argues for a conventionalist account of representation, while disregarding the fact that persons endowed with natural faculties and using their common sense hardly ever encounter problems with understanding an object as a depiction and recognizing what it is supposed to be a picture of. It is my philosophical attitude to treat common sense as the sediment of centuries-long considerations. There is logic in common sense reasoning and, therefore, it shouldn't be dismissed too rapidly.

Let us first sum up Goodman's epistemological, semantical, and metaphysical tenets, and show their evident parsimonious elegance. The semantics of extensionalist nominalism alleges that the meaning of a term is its extension class. Ontologically speaking there are only labels and compliant classes of individuals. There is no need to postulate intermediate meanings—meanings that are supposed to fix a term's referent. The advantage of extensionalism clearly stems from the questionable ontology of such invisible intensions. Instead, according to Goodman, our talk of properties and meanings is merely shorthand for what he takes to be the correct way of speaking in terms of labels and their extensions. Goodman is heir to the logical empiricist constructivist belief that systems which are appropriate as

## Chapter One – Representation and Expression

scientific instruments for describing the world should agree with the nominalistic principle that the building blocks of the world are individuals and their parts. He diverges from logical empiricism in that he thinks that the structures of our languages order the world instead of mirroring it. Cultural conventions produce different worlds. This conventionalism is irreconcilable with the empiricist idea that our knowledge ought to be founded in empirical evidence—such evidence is alleged to depend on cultural idiosyncracies. The conventional character of our knowledge is based also on its general nature as a consequence of which it is underdetermined by reality—since reality is particular. Lastly, extensionalist nominalism neglects, and expressly so, our everyday common sense discourse, and the intensionalism inherent in it.<sup>6</sup>

To me, the general dismissal of common sense discourse seems overhasty. Moreover, in the context of art evaluation we are never quite in a position to talk ‘properly’ in terms of extension classes. Apparently works of art are valued singularly for their unique contribution to art history and even though individuals are alleged to form the entire ontology of the extensionalist, it is unclear whether he can adequately account for their individuality. The particular is hidden by extensionalism, as one cannot introduce a particular with the help of general terms, and we cannot recognize terms with a singular meaning, if meaning is to be identified with classes of things.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, for some reason or other each individual should be in every extension class whatever.<sup>8</sup> Here, as in other contexts, Goodman appears to be plagued by his extensionalism.<sup>9</sup>

One of the more specific questions that arise from Goodman’s version of nominalism concerns our ascription of labels to things: why do we call a thing ‘red’ rather than ‘green’? Surely the answer must consist of an allusion

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<sup>6</sup> The meaning of ‘grue’ involves a paradox only when a common sense notion of time is involved. Without this notion the paradox evaporates. Now if this notion of time holds out against Goodman’s nominalist extensionalism, then why not our daily conceptions of the world in general as well? Cf. also Stalker, *Grue! The New Riddle of Induction*, 1994 for an analysis and extensive bibliography.

<sup>7</sup> Gosselin, *Nominalism and Contemporary Nominalism: Ontological and Epistemological Implications of the Work of W.V.O. Quine and of N. Goodman*, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Such a view of individuality reminds us of Leibniz’s monadology. Leibniz has made a point of arguing that an individual as such reflects the whole of the universe. I shall return to this point of view more elaborately in the sixth chapter. With the help of Kant’s aesthetic theory I will subsequently argue that a Baumgartian approach of phenomena in their perceptual individuality rests instead in their subjective awareness.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Morton and Foster, ‘Goodman, Forgery, and the Aesthetic’, 1991; Arrell, ‘What Goodman should Have Said About Representation’, 1987; Pearce, ‘Musical Expression: Some Remarks on Goodman’s Theory’, 1988.

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to the state of the thing instead of to the conventions we use to delimit the labels involved. The labels will find their criterion of application in aspects of the thing described. Now, Goodman might retort that all he is claiming is that it is our choice to talk about the colour of the thing in the first place, and once we have decided to talk about colour we are forced to use the schema involved which will command a choice between ‘red’ and ‘green’—no shade of colour can be both at the same time. The elegance of this answer, however, begs the question, since, again, we may wonder why this is so. Even if this schema has been established by convention, it still ought to relate to visible aspects of the things. Arguments such as these shall prove consequential for Goodman’s conception of exemplification. I shall turn to this in Section 5 below.

Goodman has given ample attention to core terms in aesthetics, most notably—for my concerns—to representation and expression. With his analyses he forced into the open many interesting considerations. He is certainly right about resemblance not being a sufficient condition for representation, but he befuddles his case by also denying its necessity, and by turning representation into some merely conventional type of reference, without, as has been remarked often enough, ever subscribing to some definition of ‘reference’. He has done another good job in giving exemplification a renewed status within aesthetics, even though his assessment of the exemplificatory functionality is highly problematic, especially in the light of his own extensionalism. Ultimately, my critique will turn to Goodman’s faulty assessment of the concepts of aesthetic merit, and of aesthetic difference, as I don’t think his extensionalist understanding of these concepts’ meanings and functionality amounts to much of interest, especially because the founding functionality of aesthetic experiences is theoretically neutral to semiotic meta-referentiality.<sup>10</sup> Goodman’s denial of the existence of aesthetic experiences and of their relevance to evaluation is not a conclusion following elaborate argumentation. It is but a stipulated dismissal.

### 2. Art, Symbols, and Pictorial Representation

Although the title of the book *Languages of Art* clearly suggests the existence of artistic languages, Goodman denies this from the outset. He proposes that we talk instead of symbol systems. Symbol systems are the genus of which discursive language is merely a species. Goodman is thus enabled to

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<sup>10</sup> I shall argue for this in Chapter 4 (Section 4) when elaborating the ambiguous nature of Kant’s aesthetic criterion of the ‘free play’.

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approach art semantically without having to specify something resembling an artistic grammar. Goodman's thesis is that art works are characters within symbol systems. In this section I will elaborate on the presupposition of art's existence within symbol systems with which we refer to the world, or, in Goodman's atypical language, with which we make worlds.

Nowhere does Goodman specify what reference relations are, and it seems to be part and parcel of nominalism that this is a question beyond our theoretical capabilities. However, if works of art possess referring properties, as Goodman alleges, then what might such properties look like, and what kind of account can an extensionalist nominalist hope to give of such properties? Goodman wards off a narrow conception of 'symbol', which defines a referential device as a symbol only if the conventional system providing it with its meaning is rigidly specific.<sup>11</sup> Instead, Goodman thinks something is a symbol 'whenever it refers' in one way or other. In addition to representation, 'style', the acts of citing other artists' specific uses of shades of colour, or of copying formal patterns, are forms of referring, and proof of the symbolic nature of art. Now in order for this argument—that such references deserve the predicate 'symbolic'—to stick, some sense must be made of the conventions that supposedly regulate their referring. What, however, can conventions be to the extensionalist, if not a mere shrug like: 'well, this is how far we can get and no further questioning will be fruitful.' Therefore, innocent though the thesis of the symbolic nature of art may seem at first sight, it does presuppose the existence of rule-governed syntactic and semantic regularities within the arts. Goodman, however, has not established such regularities beyond merely stipulating them.<sup>12</sup>

Goodman's conception of what it means to be symbolic is a far broader than the traditional one. If, for instance, we stipulate that the wall which now confronts us refers to Bolivia, we have settled some ad hoc reference relation but have learned nothing about the wall. Apparently the reference relation has not become a fixed part of the wall, but remains purely arbitrary. Now, Goodman is prepared to conclude that this is always the case, and that there is no essential difference between this wall's referring to Bolivia or a portrait's referring to the person depicted in it. However, this is plainly absurd. Portraits are meant to refer, if that is what they do, whereas walls only refer if we

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<sup>11</sup> Goodman, 'When is Art?', 1978, p. 58

<sup>12</sup> Instead, Goodman thinks that certain syntactic and semantic regularities must not be seen as properties of art works but as symptoms of the aesthetic. But we shall see how this way out has its own problems, especially so for the extensionalist who denies the relevance of aesthetic experiences. Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 1985—henceforth LA—p. 252 ff.; Goodman, 'When is Art?', 1978, p. 68

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artificially and once-only make them do so. To have the force with which the wall brings Bolivia to mind coincide with our intentions to regard portraits as referential objects is a case of conceptual inflation, which we do not have to agree with once we recognize that other conclusions can be drawn from this comparison. For the wall to be a symbol for Bolivia we need additional information, such as: which parts of elements of the wall are used to refer—its height, colour, brick structure, weight? Only then can we distinguish it from other ‘signs’ within the same ‘system’; establishing which these other ‘signs’ are shall also help in understanding how the wall ‘signifies’. Are only walls among them, or, instead, are pieces of furniture standing in front of walls, or the colours of these objects, et cetera? Once such syntactic relations are specified we must specify what elements of Bolivia the wall is supposed to refer to: is it its neighbouring Latin American countries, its industrial developments, its population, its lying in an earthquake region, or what? Obviously, these syntactic and semantic questions help us understanding the symbol system involved—if there is one. Only if we succeed can the referential functionality involved legitimately be named ‘symbolic’. These requirements are indeed specified when it comes to discursive language, but are they equally specifiable with regard to pictorial or sculptural representation, or to music, and architecture?

It is of great importance to realize how depiction differs in at least one important respect from assertive description: pictures cannot state. They cannot assert knowledge regarding matters of fact, even though they are capable of showing certain perceptual aspects of them. A picture never asserts: “this is the case, and this, not that”: it would be conveying an uncountable number of facts. They underdetermine our factual assertions as much as reality itself does, as I shall further argue below.<sup>13</sup> Let me illustrate this with an example. If I were to ask three persons to describe a certain perceptible situation, the result would be three different descriptions. That is, descriptions such as these are underdetermined by the data supplied by our perception.<sup>14</sup> We might try to decide which of these descriptions is the true one by

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<sup>13</sup> Donald Davidson once put this rather clearly: “How many facts or propositions are conveyed by a photograph? ... Bad question. ... Words are the wrong currency to exchange for a picture.” Davidson, ‘What Metaphors Mean’, 1984 (1978), p. 263

<sup>14</sup> This notion has been elaborated most notably by Quine, who has used it to unmask ‘empiricist dogmas’. It cannot be decided which of two mutually contradicting theories sustained by the evidence is true and which one isn’t. I use the notion here in a different connection. I use it to compare (reproductive) depiction with discursive assertion regarding the measure of their respective assimilation of perceptual evidence.

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coming up with a photograph of the scene and comparing it with the descriptions. However, this could never function as a criterion, because the photograph merely reproduces certain visual aspects of the situation, and these underdetermine the descriptions, which brings us back to the problem at issue. Contrary to the descriptions, however, the photograph itself is not similarly underdetermined, but is instead fully determined by the situation it depicts—obviously within the mechanically based adjustments of the photographic procedure. The photographic image reproduces a specifiable, visual outlook on the depicted situation. Photographs are overdetermined almost as much as their real life subjects are, and the overdetermination inherent in our perceptual access to the world (either real or represented) is an effect of our perceiving things ‘under a description’. Since many descriptions are excluded in each perception, what is perceived can also be seen under other descriptions. Therefore, photographs provide no alternative to assertive descriptions. Indeed, assertion of factuality presupposes underdeterminacy (or: the kind of arbitrariness of symbols that we find in discursive language). Although there are important differences between photographs and other pictures, such as paintings and drawings, the fact that pictures in general provide no alternative to descriptive assertions is explained by two facts of pictorial logic. First, no picture can deny that something is the case. Pictures can of course provide evidence for such denials, but really only so inasmuch as they are based in reproduction rather than in intentional representation.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, there exist no pictorial analogues to discursive indexicals. No picture can refer token-reflexively by pictorial means. If to refer means to point, then referring is done typically by ordinary signs and ostensive gestures. Pointing happens of its essence within some spatio-temporal context and towards aspects, properties, or events that relate to that same context. (I will return to this in Section 7 below).

On the one hand, these salient features of depiction explain the distinctions between assertion and merely showing. On the other hand, they are explained by the more complex distinction between reproduction and representation, which I will return to in the next section. In this section I will deploy the reproductive aspect of depiction in order to distinguish depiction from description in terms of showing and asserting. Pictures show perceivable aspects of a situation. Because they do so by a reduction in dimensionality, conventions are needed to point out to us which of the properties visible in the picture are meant to reproduce which properties in the depicted

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<sup>15</sup> This distinction between pictorial reproduction and representation is elaborated by Roger Scruton, ‘Photography and Representation’, 1983.

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scene. However, this does not reduce pictorial representation to mere conventionality, it merely brings in a certain amount of conventionality. The way we understand depiction some parts of what we see in the picture can also literally be seen in the depicted scene, and, as being similarly structured in both instances. This relative measure of conventionality has important epistemological consequences, in that questions concerning the truth of the representation (taken generally as ‘signs that make present something absent’), which are appropriate for discursive assertions, are out of place in a pictorial context. The difference between the pictorial and the discursive relates to the measure of thoroughness of the conventions involved. I shall in a later section return to this difference. For now I want to argue that no picture states that ‘in this scene, X is the case rather than Y’, although we can use a picture to provide the material necessary to understand and verify a statement of such intent.<sup>16</sup> This is because pictures show something; they introduce something to the senses—and what is present to the senses cannot possibly be non-existent. We can arrange whatever is in a picture by introducing subtitles or interpretations, but this still does not change pictures into assertions. Moreover, I will argue that pictures do not of themselves denote what they show. So if one wants to uphold the Goodmanian thesis that pictures are symbols just as descriptions are, then one must at least distinguish the ways in which they are supposed to symbolize. However, Goodman isn’t merely talking about pictures in general—he is developing a thesis about art. Therefore, a better response to Goodman’s views would be not to make the symbolic character of works of art the core of aesthetic theory, but to honour what is present to the senses as being primary to whatever meaning there is in a work of art, that is, to honour the principle of acquaintance.

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<sup>16</sup> Kendal Walton explicitly objects to the alleged symbolic nature of art. According to him representations are not truth-valuational although they can be used as evidence for some statement of fact. He gives the following example to illustrate his point: “Consider a convention whereby when a goal is scored in a basket-ball game an ‘announcer’ indicates this fact by throwing a ball through a hoop himself and pointing to the player. His throwing the ball through the hoop is a predicate used to attribute a property to the player pointed to. But the similar action performed by the player, by which he scores a goal, is not a predicate. It is used not to express a proposition but to make one (literally) true, to give something a property rather than to attribute a property to it. The player’s action is not true of any goal or goals, nor does it symbolize, refer to, stand for, denote one; instead it brings one into existence. Representations, in their essential role, are comparable to an action of throwing a ball through a hoop whereby a goal is scored, not to one whereby a goal already scored is signalled.” Walton, ‘Are Representations Symbols?’, 1974, p. 253-54

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The most pressing problems for contemporary aesthetics, then, are: first, how can we account for the meanings of works of art without sacrificing their specific individuality to their referentiality? Some theorists analyze a successful work's individuality in terms of a single and singularly coherent and consistent system. However, a system which is strictly singular and applicable only once, cannot be legitimately viewed as a system lest that term becomes empty. The basic idea of a single, uniquely individual work of art, however, is shared by most traditional aestheticians, at least starting with Baumgarten. If then we were to talk of representations in terms of a symbol system, and define 'meaning' as some schematically regulated extension of signs or labels to individuals, then, honouring the principle of acquaintance it is opportune to ask where we can find these schema's in art, what it is that such a schema entails, and where we are to find the extension classes and realms related with singular symbols, such as art works allegedly are. We can of course alternatively sacrifice the idea of an art work's individuality, but I am not sure whether many aestheticians would find such a move appropriate. The second major problem is How can we account for art's 'symbolic' features without understanding aesthetic experiences as merely cognitive activities producing, and ending in, an interpretation of a work's meaning? Again, this is asking for support for the principle of acquaintance. Let us now look more specifically at how Goodman accounts for the 'symbolic' features of works of art.

### 3. Pictures and Resemblance

In a separate chapter—'Reality Remade'—Goodman argues that pictorial representation is an instance of denotation, and that a picture represents its extension class.<sup>17</sup> He alleges that the sole difference from discursive description, our only other species of denotation, is a difference in the means used to achieve the shared goal of extensional reference. Both depiction and description employ purely conventional means, but viewed from the syntactic point of view discursive language has disjoint characters that are finitely differentiated, whereas the depictive 'symbol system' is relatively replete (i.e. not only the form of pictorial elements but also their texture and colour are or can be significant) and dense (there are no disjoint, finitely differentiated, characters). Semantically, discourse is dense, and one wonders whether Goodman would allow pictorial representation to be semantically disjoint (as he should). Goodman, however, never specified the

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<sup>17</sup> LA, pp. 5, 21.

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semantic peculiarities of depiction. This indicates a considerable omission on his part, because apparently photography is rigidly, not merely finitely, differentiated semantically—though not syntactically—in that normally the referent to a photograph can unambiguously be established. Painting and drawing are sometimes semantically dense, when for example singular events are portrayed in an ‘iconized’ manner, or semantically differentiated, when specific events are rendered in detailed specific manner. Once depictions of all kinds are classified in the one singular class of ‘pictorial representations’, these distinctions become theoretically unavailable. However, at this stage of the argument this needn’t worry us. Goodman’s main argument to get to his conventionalist thesis is his elaborate devaluation of the traditional view that representation can and should be defined in terms of resemblance. According to Goodman this confidence in the explanatory powers of resemblance is ill-considered, and once clarified, will prove misplaced as well. Goodman’s ‘clarification’ of resemblance’s theoretical role is complex and hard to straighten out.

In the light of Goodman’s methodology that like relations stand in need of like logical treatment, the logical structure of ‘similarity’ is described briefly in apposite terminology: similarity entails a relation which is symmetrical and reflexive. That is, if A resembles B, then B also resembles A; and, of all things similar to A A resembles A best. Thirdly, many things are highly similar, such as the cars in the car park of an automobile factory. It is quite evident, Goodman argues, that representation in contrast is neither of these. It is not symmetrical: a painting may represent a dog, but the dog will not normally also represent the painting. Reflexivity is not a property of representation because a picture always is a picture of something other than itself. Thirdly, paintings resemble paintings more than they resemble their referents. So no natural relation of resemblance is sufficient for a thing to be a representation. Nor, for that matter, is any specific measure of resemblance necessary for representation, Goodman argues, because we can use anything whatsoever to represent any other thing, irrespective of the resemblances involved. Lastly, because every two things resemble one another in one or another aspect, resemblance is theoretically empty anyhow. Therefore, according to Goodman, representation is not based on similarity, but is thoroughly conventional. A thing then represents X not because it resembles X but because it is a symbol for X, because it denotes X. Beyond this thesis of the conventionality of representational denotation, Goodman confronts the problem of fictional representations. If representation is the denotation of real individuals, then how is one to understand pictures with null denotation, such as a picture of a unicorn, or one of Mr. Pickwick? Surely we do not

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think that these pictures mean one and the same thing even if they all denote the same extension class, the one with no entities in it. Goodman thinks we are beguiled by language here. Normally representation is a two-place predicate, 'X is a representation of Y'. Fictional representations, however, involve one-place predicates only—of the form 'X is a Y-representation'—and 'Y-represents' is a special kind of reference, to be distinguished from 'represents'. Fictional pictures are themselves the extension of such one-place predicates. Often we do not know for sure whether the denotation of a representation is multiple or fictive as with a picture of some yet unknown animal, for instance. We then resort to the description provided with the picture and take the picture as illustrating this description. Thus cases of indeterminate representation are treated like cases of null denotation.<sup>18</sup> This, however, does not solve all problems. Not only is our classification of cases where the denotation is indeterminate or empty problematic, but even more normal pictures tend to involve interpretation or sometimes even distortion of their 'referent'. Thus, the Dutch queen Beatrix can be depicted 'as' the person ruling over the Netherlands, as when she is depicted with the members of the Dutch parliament, or she can be depicted 'as' a sculptress, or 'as' the mother of her children, et cetera. Thus, according to Goodman, representations classify things in the world in the same manner as descriptions do.

If logical arguments such as those Goodman proposes force us to draw the counterintuitive conclusion of conventionalism then perhaps logicity is not the right instrument for understanding (pictorial) representation. And this, I think, is the case. Methodologically it certainly is appropriate to treat like things in like manner, but shouldn't we first establish the relevant similarities? In the case of Goodman's dismissal of resemblance as a condition for representation nothing of the kind has been done. In fact, I shall argue now, Goodman could not have succeeded even if he had tried. Moreover, and this is a general point consequential upon my objections, Goodman's neglect of any serious analysis of what reference in general is supposed to be or is supposed to do may partly be due to his failing to account for depiction. Not being able to distinguish sufficiently between arbitrary and non-arbitrary ways of making present the absent is no minor flaw for an aesthetic theory. However, first, in the case of pictorial similarity at least, the obviousness of the logical aspects of resemblance relations needs to be established. Goodman's assessment of some of the logical properties of representation may be correct, but his analysis of the logical properties of

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<sup>18</sup> LA, p. 26.

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resemblance isn't. My case here rests on normal language usage, which finds little trouble in recognizing a picture as a pictorial representation and in seeing of what it is a picture. Generally, if properties are understood nominalistically, i.e. as the denotata of labels, then resemblance between the properties of two things ought always to depend on the labels we choose instead of on the reasons we provide for choosing them. This, however, is counterintuitive. If it isn't for the resemblance among the relevant properties why would we think of certain labels as denoting similar denotata? Resemblance is of its essence a relation between phenomena, which induces us to use certain labels instead of it being an arbitrary effect of some sort of agreement among labels. To this general objection to nominalism I shall return when treating 'exemplification'. I shall now treat Goodman's neglect of the methodological need to establish the resemblance between the characteristics of the logical notion of 'similarity', and those of resemblance's role in an account of representation. Goodman has taken our everyday notion of similarity as a starting point only to lead us into thinking that its common-sensical meaning equals its allegedly core logical meaning. But similarity, and resemblance, are of their common sensical essence asymmetrical, and irreflexive, and the thesis that every two things resemble one another in one or other of their aspects deprives the term of all significance.

First, then, symmetry. Indeed, if we ascribe resemblance to a portrait, we mean the portrait represents the portraitee, and not the other way around. But the same single-directedness occurs whenever we remark upon the resemblance between one thing and another. Not coincidentally, English language speaks of this in terms of 'x takes after y'. When, for instance, we marvel about how much a boy takes after his grandfather, or when we remark that a certain tree resembles the dog that bit you the other day, symmetry is not implied, but sequence: the grandfather and the dog are primary: they set the 'standard' to which the boy and the tree conform. If we have a symmetrical resemblance in mind the language we use will make this clear to everyone, as for instance when we state that two twins resemble each other very much. The resemblance then seems one-place, not two-place as it normally is. With twins we do not say "x takes after y", nor "x resembles y", but "x and y resemble (one another)". (However, even in this latter case the symmetry holds biconditionally, i.e., regarding the twins we mean that x resembles y and that y resembles x, in the same instance: one-place, mutual, resemblance is a unison of two two-place, asymmetrical resemblance relations. This is as close as resemblance gets to being symmetrical. Symmetry is not a characteristic of paradigm cases of resemblance. The seeming

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symmetry involved in the one-place resemblance relation is not the normal use we make of the term. If a boy is said to take after his grandfather, the reverse is not only not intended, but may even be untrue, and possibly for other reasons than chronology. In short, resemblance involves a noticed recurrence of properties of some object in some other object and this recurrence cannot be reversed.

In remarking the resemblance between a portrait and the person portrayed in it we attribute a kind of representational efficacy to the picture, but nothing to the person. In exceptional cases, however, we do attribute the looks to be found in the picture to the person portrayed in it. For example, this is illustrated by the remark Picasso is supposed to have made concerning the alleged non-resemblance of his portrait of Gertrude Stein: “Just wait, one day it will resemble her” (or words to that effect). Picasso merely reverses the issue: he claims that perhaps the portrait doesn’t resemble the portraitee much, but that the person shall come to look like the portrait. This may have induced Goodman to think that pictures make the world. However, instead, it merely involves a critical assessment of the aesthetic excellence with which this picture represents the portraitee, and the fact that we haven’t come to recognize it yet. That a person should look like her picture does not define this picture’s representationality, and evidently it does not make the person represent the picture either. The complexity of this seeming reversal notwithstanding, this should not seduce us into thinking of representational resemblance as a symmetrical relation.

We must wonder, therefore, why a logical analysis of resemblance should stress the symmetry, and not the awkward fact that normally our use of the term is asymmetrical. Then we either claim, as Goodman does, that common sense language is obsolete and wrong, and instead analyze some philosophically ideal notion, or we give up the idea that there is a philosophically essential meaning to terms, and try to understand what people mean whenever there is talk of paintings, et cetera, resembling their subject. Evidently, I plan to adopt the second strategy, and I take it that the claim that pictorial representations necessarily resemble their subjects accommodates our everyday, asymmetrical usage.

My objections to the so-called reflexivity of resemblance are similar: this alleged logical characteristic of resemblance is again based on philosophical idealization, and on a deliberate departure from everyday usage. The idea of resemblance being self-reflexive is no deeper than the claim that a certain tree over there is equal exactly to that tree over there. And, evidently, I agree that such a claim is redundant, to say the least. However, I think that we cannot possibly make sense of a thing resembling itself, since there is no

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distinction between the thing which resembles (the ressembler) and the thing it resembles (the resemblee). Identity is not a species of resemblance—neither one-place nor two-place resemblance. Identity holds between indiscernibles, resemblance only between discernibles. That is, two things may resemble each other with respect to certain of their properties only if they are unlike in the rest of their properties. Thus resemblance is a matter of quantity. Identity, on the contrary, isn't, nor would self-reflective resemblance be, if it were amongst the theoretical or ontological possibilities. The case hardly differs in the event of one hundred cars of the same type standing outside the factory where they were produced: it would make no sense to say that they resemble one another. Such claims derive their significance only from relevant differences that in advance are perceived, or believed to exist. Goodman's reflexivity just isn't part of the relevant language game.<sup>19</sup>

My conclusions are, first, that no picture is a representation if it bears no resemblance to what it is supposed to depict. Resemblance with subject matter X is a necessary condition for an object to be a representation of X. Evidently I take resemblance to be asymmetrical: there is a sequence involved from the resemblee to the ressembler, and this sequence is triggered by the ressembler, the picture. This means also that the resemblance of a picture (to whatever it resembles) is at least an anticipated resemblance; at best—i.e. if one is already acquainted with the subject—it is a noticed one. Either way the beholder's act of recognition enters the definition of depiction. For this reason I will refer to the resemblance that I take to be a necessary condition for depiction as resemblance<sub>a</sub> (anticipated resemblance). Secondly, resemblance<sub>a</sub> is not reflexive, since if it were there would be nothing to anticipate. Thirdly, the resemblance between identical things, or amongst things between which there is no sequence of priority, is one-place, instead of two-place. Only the two-place variety is definitory for the resemblance<sub>a</sub>-relation involved in representation. I do agree, however, with Goodman's argument that resemblance is not a sufficient condition for representation, because if it were then everything resembling something else would for that reason alone represent it, which would clearly be an absurdity. Evidently, more must be said about the representationality of a picture, but for now, i.e.

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<sup>19</sup> As is too often the case with Goodman: at some point he explicitly appears to agree with this critique. In LA, p. 39 he alleges to have argued against the definitory role of resemblance "insofar as [it] is a constant and objective relation". In other words, Goodman here leaves open the possibility of a resemblance which is not a constant and objective relation. However, nowhere in the argument does he take the consequences of this avowal.

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as a counter-argument against Goodman's anti-resemblance argument for conventionalism, this will have to do.

### 4. Convention D (for Depiction)

However, can we do away with the idea of representation being conventional if resemblance is merely a necessary, not a sufficient condition for it? Surely, some conventionality must enter into it if a thing resembling something else is to be a representation thereof? I agree. However, I oppose the need for Goodman's absolute conventionalism. The conventionality which makes a thing into a representation is not a thorough convention, but merely of the rule type; it does nothing to help distinguish between the characteristics of two instantiations of this rule, singular pictures, although it does specify when and why they are instantiations.<sup>20</sup> Certain things are made fit to represent; we know what they look like before we know what it is they represent. We have recognized a thing as a painting, sketch, or photograph logically prior to knowing what it depicts (in practice such priority may be absent). This is because we use things like these, that is, flat, two-dimensional surfaces with lines and colour patches on them, to do things like representing and depicting. This is a point in philosophical grammar, in that we know that it is a thing's flat surface which represents instead of the height of, for example, the dots of paint (or the cutlery—in Julian Schnabel's 'canvases'). I am not denying the aesthetic relevance of these relief properties, on the contrary, but if they are to be functional pictorially a rather more complex argument is needed. For the sake of the present argument I defend the idea that we already know that some flat surface is supposed to represent before we grasp what it is that is being represented. We recognize the 'rule' of representation before we grasp its instantiation. Let us for the sake of convenience call this 'rule' of pictorial representation convention D (for depiction). This convention says something like this: 'Whenever you perceive a thing with such and such characteristics, start looking for resemblances with objects and events that you are used to perceiving in everyday life'. I am aware of the imprecise character of this definition, but it does make clear how in the event of knowing that one is confronted with a picture the recognition of the subject matter is no longer a matter of conventions, but of the fairly natural perceptual and imaginative faculties, that form part of our

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<sup>20</sup> We shall see how with regard to exemplification Goodman sees no trouble in accepting such a rule-related convention which does not regulate the exact token instantiations involved.

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anthropological make-up. Recognition of convention D also helps demonstrating how the resemblances involved in representation are anticipated before being—perhaps—established.

Only if similarities<sub>a</sub> with some object X are noted, and we know this object X exists (or has existed) are we entitled to take whatever we already take to be a representation as a case of denotation. Whether a picture denotes an existing object or event is to be settled after recognition of, first, the involvement of convention D, and secondly, the exact instantiation, i.e. of the picturing properties in the picture. Contrary to Goodman's point of view, then, denotative depictive reference is secondary, it is parasitic upon depiction as such. On the level of the visual symptoms of depiction the difference between fictional and denotational representation evaporates. Primarily, representations are fictional, in that they activate our anticipations of resemblances to what is not there to be seen; pictorial denotation is a derivative functionality. Fictionality is a problem of ontology, not of representation. External, sometimes even ostensive information will always be involved if we take some representation to be denotative. Part of the rationale of Goodman's taking representation to be a case of denotation lies in an argument related to the relevance (not: the irrelevance!) of resemblance: if a representation is to resemble its subject then, in order to compare the picture with this subject, this ought to exist. Such an approach to depiction is on the wrong footing. If we recognize an instance of convention D (a picture) we immediately anticipate finding properties and aspects that are supposed to be like other, absent, properties and aspects. We anticipate perceiving such properties as virtually resembling, even if our expectancy may never actually be substantiated. Again, even when some picture's denotational accomplishment is authenticated the resemblance of the picture to the real event remains merely anticipated, i.e. it starts from the point of view of our perception of the picture. Regarding photographs this thesis may have to be qualified in that, due to the strictly mechanical origins of photographic images the reality of the events depicted in them will of their essence precede the picture; however, this relates only to what Roger Scruton has called the ideal notion of photography, that is, to its strictly mechanical aspect, under the exclusion of the intentional interventions that are most of the time, if not always, implied in them.<sup>21</sup>

Goodman also proposes that we should distinguish between representation and representation-as. We can represent (i.e. denote) say, a person P, we can

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<sup>21</sup> Scruton, 'Photography ...'

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Q-represent a fictional entity Q, and we can represent P as a Q. In the latter case we shall have produced a Q-representation of P. Or in looser terms:

Being a matter of monadic classification, representation-as differs drastically from dyadic denotative representation. If a picture represents k as a (or the) soandso, then it denotes k and is a soandso picture.<sup>22</sup>

This analysis of representation-as is problematic. First, it seems impossible for an extensionalist to make sense of the distinction between representation and representation-as. What criteria can be applied to distinguish between the aspect of a picture of queen Beatrix that makes this picture denote her, and the aspect that makes it represent her 'as' a mother of three daughters (which is fictional enough), if not by first introducing some notion of resemblance, and secondly pointing out the lack of resemblance with what is taken to be really the case? Surely, we do not want to make the pictorial depend in each instance on the information to be provided by persons who know what is the case? Put more generally, If representation were thoroughly conventional, how then would we know which conventions apply in each and every singular situation? Evidently some translation from convention to instantiation must be made, but which criterion should we use? Secondly, with the thesis that representations classify things in the world in the same manner as descriptions do, Goodman disregards certain crucial aspects of representation. For instance, the word 'table' has a far broader semantical scope than any singular picture of a table can ever achieve. A picture of a table always is a picture of a specific table. Even a sketchy picture of some plane with four lines depending from it, excludes lots of objects which do fall within the extension of 'table'. Thus, if pictures classify things in the world, they certainly do it differently from words and much more must be made of the difference in conventionality than Goodman is prepared to make. Without the help of resemblance this project seems hopeless. (I will return to this in Section 7).

In the last sections of his chapter on representation, Goodman poses the question how we ought to understand the idea of representations being more or less 'realistic'. First, he dismisses the answer that a picture is realistic if it gives us the illusion of being confronted with the depicted object itself. According to Goodman some pictures are more realistic than others because "the system of representation employed in the picture" relates better to "the standard system".<sup>23</sup> And it is more realistic because the standard system is

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<sup>22</sup> LA, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> LA, p. 38.

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more accepted than other systems are.<sup>24</sup> ‘Inculcation’ then is what makes a picture realistic. Surely, though this answer may suffice as a general, sociological account, it does not explain what happens whenever we appreciate the realism of a specific picture. According to Goodman the ‘illusion’ option provides insufficient explanation of realism because the illusion is never absolute: we know pretty well that we are confronted with a picture instead of the real thing. However, as this illusion is never as absolute as Goodman’s formulation suggests, so again, perhaps, we must conclude that he has misconstrued the theory involved. Let us be more charitable, then, and ask: why would one want to propose the illusion of being confronted with an absent object as an assessment of a picture’s realism? My guesses are, firstly, that the claim that some picture is realistic is not a claim that it corresponds to a real thing. I agree with Goodman on this assessment. However, I disagree with the thesis that it is merely an effect of our being used to some system of representation, and think that, instead, the ‘realist’ claim regards one’s own experience at the moment of appreciation of the picture: a realistic picture appears to have the ability to make the observer anticipate an experience of the point of view regarding the object shown by the picture. In such occasioning of experiences, depiction indeed proceeds conventionally, but the means with which the experiential effect is achieved presuppose resemblance<sub>a</sub>, and, therefore, are naturalistic to a high degree.

Let us sum up the argument so far. The conventionality of representational functionality is rule-related (the ‘rule’ being convention D). The convention with which we can make a wall refer is more thorough: it is also instantiation related. The actual ‘referring’ by instantiations falling under the general convention D, which are pictures, must be understood naturalistically, instead of conventionally, and seems not to be a case of reference after all. A picture is supposed to ‘anticipatedly resemble’ its subject. Whether a work of art denotes or is fictional is an ontological question dependent upon the establishment of the referent’s reality, and not upon pictorial properties. Pictorial works of art do not denote by themselves and, therefore, do not possess truth values. Nor do pictures incorporate something similar to the logical laws of discursive inference: there is no pictorial law of non-contradiction. Therefore, Goodman’s presupposition that the arts are symbol systems is far less significant than may appear at first sight. In the last two chapters I will return to the consequences of accepting the rule-instantiation model of depiction. There I will consider art’s realism in terms of

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<sup>24</sup> What explanation can Goodman provide for the fact that cubism never made it as the standard system of representation, whereas central perspective did?

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experiential effects based on considerations that we heteronomously associate with what is perceptually there in a work.

### 5. Exemplification

Goodman's re-evaluation of exemplification as an aesthetic category is definitely important. However, due to stipulation based in Goodman's rigid allegiance to extensionalism, which only accepts labels and non-differentiated individuals, his analysis of exemplification needs qualification. Exemplification seems hardly compatible with the extensionalist perspective. According to Goodman, exemplification is the referential functionality encountered most clearly in samples. Samples refer to labels which denote their own 'properties' and those of the things the samples are supposed to be samples of. Evidently, not all of a sample's properties are exemplified. Take for instance a swatch of textile one uses for choosing curtains. The texture and colours of the swatch will be relevant, but its width or absolute weight will not be.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless we hardly ever doubt which of the sample's properties are relevant and which aren't, and this, Goodman rightly remarks, is due to some conventionality regulating the exemplificatory practice involved.

According to Goodman, then, "Exemplification is possession plus reference."<sup>26</sup> Which properties are exemplified by a sample depends on the symbol system in use. However, for an extensionalist to accept this definition of exemplification, this talk of properties must be qualified. 'Property' for an extensionalist is merely short for 'being denoted by some label', or 'belonging to some label's extension class'. Therefore, according to Goodman, a sample only exemplifies labels, not the properties that these labels denote. So Goodman proposes this redescription: "Suppose we construe 'exemplifies redness' as elliptical for 'exemplifies some label coextensive with 'red'".<sup>27</sup> Some sample may exemplify more than one label, and these may be partly coextensive. Here Goodman sees little trouble, because he thinks that normally the context involved will give ample hints as to which label is supposed to apply. To repeat, exemplification refers to labels only: "while anything may be denoted, only labels may be exemplified."<sup>28</sup> In order for my sweater to exemplify 'green', the meaning of the word 'green'

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<sup>25</sup> Goodman, 'When is Art?', 1978 offers some amusing examples.

<sup>26</sup> LA, p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> LA, p. 55.

<sup>28</sup> LA, p. 57, makes it sound as if exemplification has no business with resemblance either.

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must already be fixed beforehand. Even so, the labels exemplified do not always have to be discursive, they may also be non-verbal. Again, we must not overrate the distinction between the various kinds of reference, says Goodman, because we cannot in all cases be totally sure what a sample exemplifies. Moreover, the distinction between labels and samples gets thinner if the label is fictional and does not denote anything apart from the sample. This at once solves the riddle of fictional pictures. An x-representation instead of denoting can best be seen as exemplifying the labels which denote x-representations of the kind involved. A picture of a centaur, for example, exemplifies “being a centaur label”.<sup>29</sup>

Though it cannot be denied that the distinctions involved have been brought under extensionalist headings in a coherent manner, as an account of exemplification Goodman’s analysis hardly suffices. To be sure, I agree that exemplification is what samples do, and that there is an aspect in exemplification that is conventional: conventions decide which of the sample’s ‘properties’ supposedly exemplify: e.g., the texture and the colour, but not the width, or the absolute weight of the sample. I also agree with Goodman that exemplification is not like denoting. It does nothing to specify the non-exemplified properties of the things the sample exemplifies. As such a sample is unable to bring forth the description under which we are to perceive the resultant thing. Nor does it directly refer to things, primarily, because the thing a sample exemplifies often does not even exist yet. This doesn’t fictionalize the exemplified, because even though the curtain of which some swatch is a sample does not exist yet, it will soon enough. Lastly, I also agree that fictional representations can be understood as exemplifying types of representations. I disagree only with regard to the account we need of these relations. As argued above I take the depictive functionality of fictional representations to be paradigmatic, instead of its denotative kin. This is because I take the resemblance necessary for depiction to be anticipatory in nature. The resemblance involved in exemplification may also, due to the not-yet-existence of the exemplified be anticipatory in nature. In the next section I shall elaborate this analogy, which I think is very important for an adequate aesthetic account of depiction. However, first I will reassess Goodman’s account of exemplification to pave the way for that next section.

First, more needs to be said about the conventions involved in exemplification than Goodman does. For one, they are strictly formal, i.e. following the rule-instantiation model: they adhere to the rules, not to the instantiations. Exemplificatory conventions regulate which species of properties should be

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<sup>29</sup> LA, p.66.

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relevant, but do not regulate the exact token instance of these properties. Let us call this convention: E (for exemplification). Even though we will know that only texture and colour are significant, E does not tell us which colour or texture the sample exhibits. Manifesting a specific shade of colour clearly cannot be reduced to convention: the sample itself will have to exhibit the properties. If the extensionalist replies to this objection that it doesn't harm his position because he doesn't recognize species of properties, then the burden of proof is on his shoulders because he shall thus have thrown away his ability to make sense of exemplification, because surely, the exemplificatory convention does not demand that my curtain be green, only that it have the property species (colour) that the chosen sample exhibits. E starts from the idea that the sample is taken mechanically from the textile the curtain is going to be taken from as well, which implies that, when confronted with a sample I shall justifiably anticipate the resemblance—even recurrence—in the curtain of the very properties exemplified by the sample. To say as Goodman does, secondly, that talk of properties is merely short for talk of extensions of labels may be plausible with regard to more normal denotative activities; but it is not going to help explain exemplification, because the exemplificatory reference supposedly starts off with the sample, not with the labels denoting the sample's properties: it will be the properties of the sample which make one decide whether the sample is going to be of use to us. Thirdly, the elegance of Goodman's proposal is illusory. We can describe a sample's properties in many different ways, but we won't normally have the exact terms at our disposal, even though we know fairly well how to pick the right sample, and use it. Instead, then, of first referring to hard-to-find labels, it is exactly the function of the sample to make the use of descriptions obsolete. A sample rather is a conglomerate of secondary qualities, and that is exactly where we find its strength.<sup>30</sup> Put differently: all labels on offer for a description of a sample will be underdetermined, and this exactly is why exemplification is so different from denotation, because here at last there is a thing which possesses the very same properties that we want another thing, our curtain, to have. With regard to these properties no further explanation of our wants is required. Fourthly, Goodman introduces his account in terms of a reversed reference to labels, in order on the one hand to sustain his rejection of similarity as a necessary condition of exemplification, and on the other to sustain his rigid conventionalism. However, it is precisely because of the underdetermination of the labels which supposedly describe what is being shown by the sample, that the similarity of the sample to the

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<sup>30</sup> I'll return to the distinction between primary and secondary qualities in Chapter 2.

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curtain is going to be of the utmost importance, instead of this similarity being obsolete. Goodman is right in that the principles of exemplification will be relative to the context in which a sample is used, but he is wrong about attributing a conventionalism to singular cases of exemplification, which instead stands in need of a naturalistic account, which, by the way, he is unable to offer. Exemplification, then, is not a case of a reversed reference to a label.<sup>31</sup> A sample's functionality depends, instead, on a projected recurrence of properties: the properties in the sample are anticipated to be the same as (not merely: similar to) those of the curtain.

As a qualification of Goodman's conventionalism regarding representation, I argued in the previous section that there is a general convention, D, that regulates our view of depiction as meaningful but is of relevance only marginally for its singular instantiations, pictures. The analogy with convention E regulating exemplification is evident. Goodman has explained fictional representation in terms of exemplification: a picture of a centaur does not represent (read: denote) a centaur, simply because these creatures do not exist. Instead they exemplify being a centaur-label. Together with the connected thesis also argued for in the previous section, of fictional representation being primary over denotational representation, these considerations induce me to propose that we understand pictorial representation as a kind of exemplification. So let us now see where this gets us.

### 6. Depiction Based in Exemplification

Exemplification is based on an anticipation of the recurrence of specifiable properties which is based on the idea that the sample is causally linked to the object aimed at. Therefore, exemplification seems to have to play an important role in our understanding of the reproductive kind of depiction involved in photography, because in photography—much the same as in exemplification—we anticipate a recurrence of visual properties in some absent object. Theoretically, we may even seem unable to distinguish between a sample and a photograph, if it weren't for the technical differences between the mechanisms used to produce samples and photographs with. What happens after we recognize something as a sample or, respectively, photograph evidently points to a major difference, but one, I think, irrelevant for an adequate understanding of photographic representation. We use samples to make new things, whereas the photograph we merely use for its

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<sup>31</sup> For an extensionalist nominalist like Goodman such a reference-relation should be inconceivable in the first place, as follows from my second objection.

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ability to mechanically record its object. Because technically the means for producing a photograph (a camera, chemicals for the development of the film, printing procedures, and paper) are so very different from those of making a sample (scissors for cutting textiles, or applying some paint to a piece of paper) in general we use them for distinct purposes. Obviously we also use photographs in an exemplificatory function, for example, in commercial leaflets reproducing computers, clothes, et cetera, for no other reason than to provide a sample of the product to be purchased. However, in both cases our anticipations of property recurrence are retrospective, in that they are based on our knowledge of the mechanical production of the sample, and, respectively, the photograph. The difference between the two means of meaningfulness lies in the subsequent establishment of the relevant recurrence. The curtain can be compared scientifically to the sample (both can literally be held next to each other), whereas we must resort to semantics and interpretation to establish which facts a photograph has recorded, for the very reason that the photograph's subject matter standing in causal relation to it, no longer exists. Thus with photography the establishment of the relevant recurrence is a matter of photography's pictorial powers, not of its reproductive strength. Taken as a reproduction of the visual outlook of some event the photograph is as capable as a sample is supposed to be; taken as its depiction, however, the problems are as hard to sort out as those of painted pictures. Commercial leaflets make a rather restricted use of photography's capabilities. Their exemplificatory, reproductive, use of photographs is what Scruton has ascribed to the 'ideal photograph'.<sup>32</sup> Scruton's arguments are very illuminating for the distinctions I am proposing here between depiction, exemplification, reproduction and representation. Scruton thinks that "It is precisely when we have the communication of thoughts about a subject that

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<sup>32</sup> Scruton, 'Photography....' The framework of his argument is the question whether cinema represents because it is a photograph of a dramatic representation or because it is a photographic representation. I find his arguments against the notion of photographic representation compelling: ideally, a photograph reproduces its subject, instead of representing it. Scruton's remark that "the 'aesthetic' qualities of a photograph tend to derive directly from the qualities of what it 'represents'." (op.cit., p. 115) is rather poor though. Next to their subject certain photographs introduce their act of reproducing it as well. Moreover, the intentionality involved in such re-presenting the reproduced forms a far more crucial element in cinema than it does in photography. Cinema is more than mere photography. Cinema is representational in its own right, not merely because it reproduces photographically a dramatic representation. Cinema creates its own temporality by editing. In editing ellipsis, anticipation and memory play crucial roles. This, however, is an argument based on Scrutonian considerations, albeit one he himself does not present. I return to this in Chapter 7 (Section 3).

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the concept of representation becomes applicable.”<sup>33</sup> In contrast, an ideal photograph “...is recognized at once for what it is. ... In some sense, looking at a photograph is a substitute for looking at the thing itself.”<sup>34</sup> Because of its causal origins a photograph “is incapable of representing anything unreal.”<sup>35</sup> Evidently, this causal point differs from the general impossibility of denial in depiction, which is connected, first, to the implication of resemblance<sub>a</sub> relations (the absence of overall arbitrariness) in depiction in general whether of reproductive or of representational functionality, and, secondly, to the absence of pictorial analogues to discursive indexicals and semi-indexicals, verb tenses, et cetera. Using a terminology that Goodman evidently wouldn't approve of I take photography to be a form of exemplification supplemented with the bare semantics following upon taking a photograph as an instantiation of convention D, as a pictorial representation, instead of taking it merely as a sample causally reproducing its subject. Representation makes use of such exemplificatory reproduction at the level of the instantiation of D, but there is no limit to the degree to which it should. In non-causal media such as painting, exemplifying reproductive elements are presented by ‘elements’ such as style, suggestion, and ellipsis, i.e. elements which activate our associative capabilities. Elements such as these shall prove crucial for art's ability to represent the experiential. The elaboration of this point shall have to wait for Part III. For now, I want to bring to the attention an element in depiction singularly distinctive in comparison with discourse.

In analyses of human conduct it has often been remarked that in contradistinction with mere causal explanation an element of overdetermination occurs: if we want to understand why Peter kissed Mary many relevant considerations can be cited. For example, he may have kissed her because he wanted to say good-bye to her, or because his departure at last gave him the opportunity to express his affection for her, or because he wanted to make a point of not wanting to kiss Paula who was there when the kissing took place, et cetera. Although any of these reasons may have been sufficient to explain the kiss, it is possible that none formed the sole necessary cause for the act. As such the kiss was overdetermined by these considerations. I propose to introduce an analogue to this overdetermination on the level of our perceptual understanding of the world. I will return to this below but first wish to sketch

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<sup>33</sup> Op.cit., p. 105.

<sup>34</sup> Op.cit., p. 111. Cf. also Walton, ‘Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism’, 1984, and Friday who in ‘Transparency and the Photographic Image’, 1996 meticulously dismantles Walton's arguments.

<sup>35</sup> Op.cit., p. 112.

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a direct realist theory of embodied perception which understands perception as the compilation by our imagination of the diversely structured data of the various senses into an awareness of an ‘object’ under some description. There are several elements in this theory that need elaboration. I will provide this in Chapter 2, Section 3, and, especially, Chapter 8, Sections 2 and following. It is my thesis that all forms of art that we recognize as such, bar discursive language in general, can be characterized by a relative reduction of sense modalities (discursive language is characterized by its total disembodied reduction). Normal perception, being embodied, is polymodal in nature. Representation is not. For a person who possesses only the sense of vision—if we can conceive of such a person (which I am sure that we cannot)—pictures cannot possibly function as such. One must be able to recognize the relevant reduction of movement, touch, smell, and sound. I am further running ahead of things when I say that this reduction of modalities is made up for in the relevant forms of art—conventionally. These arguments will have to wait for the last part of this study. However, I have introduced them here because they are needed to make sense of the following—which explains why there should be pictorial overdetermination. A photograph of a photograph normally merely reproduces exactly what the original photograph reproduces. If the original photograph reproduces a house on a hill, then that shall be the sole subject matter of the photograph reproducing this photograph. A photograph can only reproduce the photo (instead of its subject matter) by depicting the pointers presupposed for recognizing a flat piece of paper as an instance of convention D in the first place, such as its white margins, the table the photograph is on, or the light reflected on it if such reflections follow the flat surface of the photograph instead of the contours of the objects depicted on it (such as the house’s windows). This means that a photograph depicting a photograph does not repeat this photograph, and a photograph repeating a photograph does not depict it but is an instance of it—irrespective of the way it came into being. This is not specific to photos only, but applies to all kinds of pictures—but not to description. The expression “These three words” describes, and repeats itself. As an effect of indexicals, language enables us to repeat and signify a single subject at the same instance. This argument sustains our trying to treat depiction in more naturalist ways than language. The arbitrary conventionality involved in language is too evident to ignore, unlike the conventionality of photography, or depiction in general. We can understand language’s arbitrariness by analyzing language as completely disembodied. Because pictures still retain a measure of reproductive exemplification they cannot represent themselves. We can put

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the same point in terms of the presence of indexicals in language and their absence from depiction—even from all art forms.

A photograph then is visually overdetermined much as its subject was, due to this element of reproductive exemplification. A painted picture may seem to make a difference in this context in that the painter will intentionally choose to stress certain elements in the perceptual field and neglect others. Moreover, style and genre specificities will be introduced in paintings. Nevertheless, even a painting is overdetermined, for two reasons. First, in painting too resemblance<sub>a</sub> plays a major role, as I have argued above, and resemblance<sub>a</sub> is based in, and is as overdetermined as, exemplificatory reproduction. Secondly, in intentionally picking the elements in the painting the artist will merely produce a new image with its own overdetermined coherence.<sup>36</sup> In contradistinction with photography this makes painting unsuitable to prove that this rather than that has been the case, that is, to verify statements of the real matters of facts that have entered the picture. More importantly here and now, this overdetermination of pictures means that for an explicit understanding of some image's signification many a descriptive utterance is going to be needed and the question as to exactly which of the interpretations proposed is going to be the right one is in essence, though perhaps not in practice, unanswerable. So depiction is overdetermined. I am proposing this term as an alternative to Goodman's attribution of syntactic density and relative repleteness to depiction.<sup>37</sup> To me at least, the advantage of doing so is obvious: in the concept of 'overdetermination' there are no claims of a syntactically regulated meaningfulness that is conventional throughout as there are in Goodman's discourse about syntactic properties. What a picture 'means' is 'regulated' on a semantical and contextual level instead; on a level which may be sustained by the elements of the picture but isn't lawfully based in these. Secondly, my comparison of depiction is with perception not language, and this is sustained by a comparison of the relevant sense modalities.

Let us now return briefly to the matter of pictorial 'reference'. Perhaps pictures symbolize, but only in so far as they are perceived by a restricted number of sense modalities—and because they try to make up for those modalities that are not addressed. However, they do not refer. Reference is an active pointing at (the object referred to). Signs in the strict sense, gestures, and language refer—signs and gestures do it by literally pointing towards the

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<sup>36</sup> I am not defending the 'intentional fallacy' that art works emanate from artists' intentions and that they can only be understood by retrieving these.

<sup>37</sup> LA, Chapter VI, Sections 1-2, among other places.

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referent that is in the same space, whereas language refers thanks to its indexicals. Depiction contains no equivalents to embodied pointing—because it is not in the same space as its subject—or linguistic indexicals—because it is not thoroughly arbitrary. Of course we may recognize a place depicted as such and such, but this place shall then be ‘pointed at’ uniquely and exclusively—not token-reflexively: the pointing is an effect of recurrence of visual properties and the recognition thereof. One who has never actually seen the depicted scene shall not be able to point it out.<sup>38</sup>

### 7. Depiction and Discourse

In the following comparison of representation to discourse the most important conclusion will be twofold: first, discourse is connected essentially to arbitrariness, depiction to resemblance<sub>a</sub>, secondly, depiction is always of things or events that are elsewhere, in a different place, whereas with discourse there is no such restriction. These conclusions sustain our basing representation for its merely visual part on an exemplificatory resemblance<sub>a</sub> relation.

To understand better the role of convention (D) in depiction we might best contrast depiction with discourse. Discursive language involves a thoroughly conventional semantics and a syntax of characters that can be differentiated in finite manner: letters, words, and sentences. The relation between a word and its object is arbitrary; it does not presuppose similarity or recurrence (at least, not normally; onomatopoeias are not paradigmatic, nor is the sequential agreement between the words and the events they describe, as in *veni, vidi, vici*). The reference works the way it does due to a semantics based exclusively on convention. We must distinguish between two levels of conventionality here: rules and instantiations. First, the rules of the discursive medium at large are conventional, amounting to something like ‘with things of these types (words, sentences) we can refer to things of those types (things, events, et cetera)’. Next there are the elaborate mixtures of specific conventions relating singular words and sentences to specific (kinds of) things and events. This explains why description and depiction should be based on such different ‘syntaxes’ as Goodman attributes to them. We know exactly when (and why) some sound or sign complies with the character ‘house’; but there is no end to the possibility of including or ex-

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<sup>38</sup> These remarks can be read as well as an objection to the example Goodman uses in ‘Seven Strictures on Similarity’, 1972, p. 437, of a page with two sentences on it, both reading: “the final seven words on this page”.

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cluding instances under the heading of ‘picture of house’. It is because discourse is conventional on both levels that it takes such great pains to learn a language: to understand the workings of the general rule is no big deal, but we must also learn what each single word stands for. And it is this thorough conventionality which generates the question of truth to the facts; which generates, in other words, discourse’s potency for stating matters of fact in ways underdetermined by the data.<sup>39</sup> Contrary to this pictorial representations presuppose regularities between themselves and what they stand for. Certain similarities between some surface parts of a picture and some surface parts of what is depicted in it create the possibility of the pictorial ‘reference’ relation. Pictorial conventions then relate to the medium as a whole only, they do not pertain to the token instances, singular pictures. This can be analyzed in terms of exemplification, which as we have seen is conventional only as a medium, not in its singular instantiations. Understanding depiction as based in exemplification helps explain why we have less trouble in learning to decipher pictorial representations than in learning to understand a new language: once we have grasped one picture, we apparently understand convention D, and will know how to grasp most others.<sup>40</sup> It is due also to this foundation in exemplification—as I have analyzed it above, in terms of an anticipation of property recurrence—that questions as to the truth of some picture are awkward and even inappropriate, and that we cannot make sense of a picture stating, or stating a matter of fact, or, most notably, denying a matter of fact.

It is no coincidence that there have been no deep epistemological discussions about truth theories regarding pictorial representations. The epistemological argument between foundationalism and coherentism that we have witnessed over the last centuries derives part of its rationale from the arbitrary nature of discourse; discourse is not founded in exemplification. With depiction the perceptual reciprocity with its subject is evident; seen epistemologically this reciprocity renders depiction powerless to produce ‘factual truths’. Think of examples from court, where photographs sometimes are submitted as mechanically obtained proof of someone’s committing some criminal deed. They are dismissed mostly for reason of scepticism concerning their authenticity, their ‘history of production’. But think also, for instance, of the Zapruder film made on the occasion of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas. The debate has not been about the veridical status of the film, but on how what can be seen in it, and what can be taken to be

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Scruton, ‘Public Text and Common Reader’, 1983, p. 107

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Schier, *Deeper into Pictures. An Essay on Pictorial Representation*, 1986.

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caused by the event ought to be interpreted: is the white spot in the bushes evidence of a second gun being fired, or is it not? If a photograph is to be evidence of events having taken place it must be embedded in a theoretical framework explaining how to interpret it as such. Such a theoretical framework, or set of (critical) remarks activates our imagination, and thus transgresses the reproductive exemplification involved in the picture. This, however, does not endow pictures with the ability to assert facts, because the activation of imagination is not achieved by any definite pictorial rules of syntax or semantics. Only if we are willing to locate the production of discursive meaning, in Hegelian—or, if one prefers, Derridean—manner in the ‘labour of concepts’, i.e. in between the words used, can we defend a comparison between description and depiction. However, this does not introduce truth into depiction, it merely excludes it from discourse as well. To repeat then, of itself no picture states a matter of fact. Truth has always depended on the arbitrariness of discourse and always will. This is one of the most important reasons why we should adopt an aesthetic rather than an epistemological approach when studying the philosophical aspects of pictorial representation.

The crucial difference between pictorial and discursive representations can be illuminated by reference to the imagination. If we perceive a real-life scene given to the senses we can keep scrutinizing it and thus find out more about it, perceive more and more of its details. If, however, three days later we wonder about certain properties of objects which were left unperceived at the time we shall not be able to derive these details from the ‘image’ that we have in our mind’s eye.<sup>41</sup> Sartre remarked that mental images provide us with no more information than was previously put into them.<sup>42</sup> And putting information into a mental image is done by consciously perceiving its real life origin, i.e. by consciously applying certain concepts to the world at the time of perception. In this, the mental products of imagination resemble descriptions; both are underdetermined by the data of the senses, albeit for slightly different reasons.<sup>43</sup> An objectified image, a picture, does not have this handicap. We can scrutinize it in as detailed a manner as we want. If we

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<sup>41</sup> It may also for this very reason not (wholly) be an image. Reversely, trying our best to remember some event may have us introduce faulty pictorial correlates to the description we have retained. Hence this epistemological problem: what facts are recorded by (recovered) memories?

<sup>42</sup> Sartre, *L’imagination*, 1936, and *L’imaginaire*. *Psychologie Phénoménologique de l’Imagination*, 1940.

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 8, Section 2 for an account of perception ‘under a description’ in terms of imaginative activity.

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try to remember exactly what kind of hairdo a person had the other day, we may not succeed, but if we can see her picture we merely have to look, as if we were confronted with her in real life again. There are only two restrictions, the first has to do with the fact that D, the convention of pictorial representation in general, is based in a reduction of sense modalities: of the aspects that normally are accessible to our embodied perception only frozen visuality will be in a picture. The second restriction is less specific and relates to the specific representation we are confronted with: only those visual aspects of the matter that have been put into the picture by its maker, intentionally or not, are visible. The crucial point is that the meaning of the picture is not regulated semantically and arbitrarily but pictorially, i.e. by making use of exemplificatory resemblance<sub>a</sub>. This is why pictorial representations are overdetermined in much the same manner as the perceptually accessible reality is, apart from its partly disembodied nature, whereas discourse is underdetermined by the data produced by perception due to its complete disembodiment, its arbitrariness.

Embodied perception of real-life events normally incorporates an experiential awareness of the mental life experienced by the persons one is confronted with. This is partly because these mental events are publicly accessible through facial and gestural expressions. Seen from a public, third-person point of view we can easily understand what emotion another person is going through. However, to empathize with such a person's mental life more is needed than mere third-person recognition. This is because the person having the experience has a privilege over all others who may understand what he is going through without themselves going through it. This claim to—what I call—an 'experiential privilege' should not be taken as the thesis of the hiddenness of the contents involved. Instead, it is an effect of the 'philosophical grammar' of the concepts we use to describe situations like this where one observes other people's mental states. The fact that the person experiencing a mental event is privileged experientially is fully compatible with the idea of there being nothing hidden in this mental event, nothing which cannot be detected by third-person observations, or, reversely, with the idea that there may be something hidden as much from bystanders as from the person having the experience. However much trouble we put into describing some person's mental states, he will always be the one to experience them. Ultimately, this may or may not lead us to a conclusion of a cognitive privilege as well, but such a cognitive privilege must be founded in his own third-person observational capacities, not in his first-person experiential privilegedness. So the conceptual distinction remains. I bring this up because everyday, embodied, polymodal perception seems

## Chapter One – Representation and Expression

automatically to imply an experiential empathetic awareness of other persons' experiences. It is my thesis that the first thing to fall victim to art's reduction of sense modalities is this empathetic awareness—it is this in essence that art must make up for. I will return to this in considerable more detail in Chapter 8 (Sections 2 and 3), but for now I will make a few remarks on Goodman's account of artistic expression to finish this critical assessment of his aesthetic theory.

Goodman's account of expression is semiotic. He does not relate artistic expression to real-life expression in human faces and gestures, but treats it as a specific reference relation, fitting into his scheme of art as comprising symbol systems. He bases his analysis of expression on exemplification instead of representation. Whereas representation somehow refers the work of art to some thing or event outside, a work's expression seems somehow to be a property of the work. Goodman, as a consequence, points to the analogy with exemplification: much like a sample having us deploy a specific set of labels to denote the sample, the expressive work has us denote the work with labels which more normally denote mental events, such as sadness, joy, et cetera. So when we take some work to be sad we think that it possesses sadness—we do not think, or so it seems, that the subject matter itself is sad. For example we can think of a landscape picture as being sad without wanting to imply that the depicted landscape itself is sad—even though, evidently, we know that no non-sentient being can be in such mental states as sadness. So we somehow think the picture itself is sad. As an extensionalist Goodman is not interested in why we would want to project such anthropocentric labels onto non-sentient entities such as works of art. There is no sense, he thinks, in asking 'deeper' ('intensionalist') questions. And he concludes that in relevant cases we merely take the label 'sad' to apply to the picture: the picture possesses sadness, much the same as it possesses a grey patch of paint, only now the possession is not literal, but metaphorical. Goodman then provides an account of metaphor, to which I will pay no attention here because I think resorting to metaphor will not suffice as an explanation of expression. We would do better to look at real-life expression, and view artistic expression as some kind of extension thereof. We can keep Goodman's idea that expression is a kind of exemplification, but—instead of proposing a metaphorical account of expression—should rather treat expression as a sibling to depiction. Both can be understood as based in exemplification. However, this comparison should start from a non-Goodmanian account of representation such as the one proposed in this chapter. For now I have been more interested in the pictorial representation of real-life expressive functionality (facial and gestural expressions) than in the artistic expression which is an aspect of the

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artist's style. I shall deal with style and artistic expression in Chapter 7, Section 4.

Now then, if depiction is based in exemplification, and if this implies that only a situation's visual aspects actually recur<sub>a</sub> in a picture, then this would dismiss the capacity of the pictorial to represent an event's experiential aspect. Mere depiction will be at odds with the gravity and moral depth of the experience involved. This is, first, because in real life we are being served with more clues, and, moreover, with embodied clues that are connected to the experience; secondly, because in real life we are less inclined to think that some singular 'image' will settle the question as to the exact nature of the experience involved, i.e. the causal and contextual complexities of the experience form part of our everyday, embodied recognitions. In representation, however, because of the absence of many of these complexities, style, ellipsis, narrative allusion, and discursive information will have to fill the gap. These devices, however, by definition (of D, etc.) are not pictorial, and for an understanding of just how they fill in the gap more is required than a keen semiotic analysis like Goodman's.

## Chapter Two

### What Aesthetic Judgements Are About

#### 1. Aesthetic Difference

One can view *Languages of Art* as an elaborate attempt at sorting out the aesthetic difference between a forgery and its original. However, it remains to be seen to what extent Goodman indeed explains what aesthetic difference is, and what distinguishes aesthetic from more normal perceptive properties. He does explain why there can be no fakes in certain species of classical music as there are in painting. He explains how the notationality of musical scores, by providing us with the means to univocally determine the identity of a musical work, has emancipated the musical work of art from the dangers of forgery. There is no pictorial analogue to this identificatory efficacy. The difference between these two art forms comes down to this: the relation between an original and its copies (performances of music, and, respectively, fakes of pictures) is semantic in the case of notated music, and strictly causal with depiction.

Goodman starts his discussion by introducing two perfectly identical paintings, one authentic, the other, evidently, a fake. He asks ...

Thus the critical question amounts finally to this: ... can anything that  $x$  does not discern by merely looking at the pictures constitute an aesthetic difference between them for  $x$  at  $t$ ?<sup>1</sup>

Goodman's own answer to the question is, yes: non-perceivable differences do make an aesthetic difference in that they induce us to scrutinize the paintings in new ways. Morton and Foster have recently objected to Goodman's slide here from a nominalistic change between ways of perceiving to a realistic change between what one perceives.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, to know that there must be differences between the two paintings does not amount to an

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<sup>1</sup> Goodman, *LA*, p. 102

<sup>2</sup> In effect, he has collapsed the distinction between what we see when we look at a painting and how we look at a painting. Morton and Foster, 'Goodman, Forgery, and the Aesthetic', 1991, p. 158

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ability to perceive them, nor to knowing how even to start looking for them in practice. And this is especially the case when the forgery is stipulated to be a perfect fake, in the sense of being perceptually absolutely equal to the original, i.e. the invisibility of the differences is an analytical necessity, not merely an empirical one. Suppose indeed that the difference between the two paintings can only be established beyond doubt with the help of sophisticated scientific instruments, or with the help of information which generally is external to the mere perception of the work. It follows then from the 'perfection' of the fake that these differences cannot be perceived and that, respecting the principle of acquaintance, they cannot be aesthetically relevant. However, if one were also prepared to agree with these differences' having a significant effect on our perceptual activities, then they may appear, as it were from the outside, to re-enter the aesthetic event. But there are two flaws to this argument. First, it puts no limitation on what is aesthetically relevant: everything may make us watch differently, and ought for that reason to be aesthetically relevant, which for lack of a notion of correctness is an absurdity which leads to a solipsist variety of relativism. Secondly, if one is ready to accept Goodman's argument, one must also be willing to accept the possibility of there being aesthetic differences between two instances of looking at a single picture: in between events the beholder will have received some kind of (cultural) education and will therefore look at the same picture in a different manner. This brings us to a deeper defect of Goodman's position. Goodman seems unable to make sense of a single painting remaining the same over time independent from obvious changes in the context or in the terms we are prepared to apply to it. He appears to be unable to conceive of individuals in their individuality. Now, events such as looking differently at a work after a good night's sleep occur more often than being confronted with an original hanging side by side with its perfect fake. Goodman's problem therefore, may be interesting ontologically, but from an aesthetic point of view it seems redundant, or better: worded wrongly. In effect, the question Goodman has analyzed is an economic, or art historical question, rather than an aesthetic one. Indeed, science nowadays provides ample ways to establish authenticity whenever we are in doubt. These scientific ways, needless to say, all are non-aesthetic in nature, even though conclusions made on their behalf may have aesthetic relevance at times, for instance, when the establishment of a work's inauthenticity leads us to depreciate it aesthetically. This specific problem of authenticity (and there are others) becomes relevant aesthetically no sooner than aesthetic experience and evaluation pop up.

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Let us now look at the adequacy of Goodman's argument concerning the relevance of knowing that there is a fake to the aesthetic difference between the fake and the original. If we find ourselves confronted with a self-portrait by Rembrandt, we shall try to establish its aesthetic value by looking at how it is made and at what it is 'telling' us by way of its style, representation, and expression. We will pay attention to its strokes of paint and shades of colour as well as what we take to be the meanings it exhibits, such as the expression on the face, and ask what it is expressive of, what it teaches us about a life, Rembrandt's, and what it teaches us about the mental life inherent in the mind of the depicted. We may perceive the double function of the paint: of showing its being manipulated by the artist, and of depicting the subject of the painting. Thus we come to appreciate, among other things, the experience which Rembrandt himself has depicted himself as going through. We are involved in finding meaning and significance in this painting, and the more care we profess the more morally deep the painting and our own experience of it may become. We take the work to be such as to merit such an appraisal. If during our appreciative activities a curator were to enter the room and put an exact copy of this painting alongside it then our attitude towards the painting would change fundamentally. We are all acquainted with the fact that painters do not usually paint a painting twice, let alone in an absolutely identical manner. Copying a painting is an activity entirely different from painting an original one, and we shall see below that the reasons why no painter ever sets himself to such copying are aesthetic ones, reasons, i.e. that are related to aesthetic evaluation. With the introduction by the curator of an identical second instance of our Rembrandt painting we realize at once that a fake is involved, but remain in the dark as to which of the two is the original and which the fake. This makes us wonder which is which. Indeed our perceptive activities change fundamentally. We shall start looking for differences between two seemingly identical objects, instead of searching for meanings and significance. These perceptive activities are fundamentally different. Whereas looking for differences may inform us about certain meanings, looking for meanings shall tell us nothing about the relevant differences. The differences between the two paintings are neutral as to their respective pictorial meanings, because if a fake would of itself present us with a different meaning it would most certainly not be the perfect fake the argument started out with. With the introduction of the fake then an aesthetic, appreciative activity changes into a cognitive investigation of secondary and primary qualities which aims at solving a puzzle irrelevant to the pictorial and artistic meaning of the painting. The strokes of paint and shades of colour become relevant now not for their role in the artistic

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'semantics' or style of the painting but as an instrument merely to locate tiny material differences. Yes, our perceptive activities do change here, but not aesthetically: they merely stop being aesthetic. Thus the demonstration of a work's status as a forgery does not of itself make an aesthetic difference at all. Now suppose next that after having studied the two works to no avail the curator re-enters the room and puts two signs under the paintings identifying the left one as the original and the right one as the fake. Again our perceptive activities change, only this time we are forced to treat one painting as authoritatively exemplifying authentic properties with which we supposedly can then spot the faked properties in the other one. This opens up the possibility of an aesthetic appraisal of the left painting, in that perhaps we shall now try to view it as successful in occasioning some aesthetic experience. Evidently, we shall take the right one as ineligible. However, the chances are great that our appreciation will remain cognitive throughout and that we do not stop looking for a solution to the 'which is which' puzzle. By the juxtaposition of the two works our aesthetic perceptions are ruined phenomenologically. Little more than accepting Goodman's thesis that the signs make an aesthetic difference suffices for introducing the legitimacy of testimony in aesthetic matters, and for giving up altogether on the specificity of the aesthetic domain, and on the principle of acquaintance. I know Goodman wouldn't mind about giving up the aesthetic domain's specificity; it's what he wants. However, not answering the principle of acquaintance implies leaving out an essential moment in our experience of art and aesthetic values.

I have just argued that to know that a forgery exists alongside an original is aesthetically neutral; to know which of the two works is the original and which is the fake can make an aesthetic difference but only insofar as it may induce us to look better at the alleged original. But again the problem of authenticity hardly touches on such a change of attitude. If we do not succeed in perceiving the differences, however, such aesthetic difference ought to remain inconsequential. Therefore, if a difference which is not perceived at time  $t$  leads to relevantly different aesthetic assessments than this difference between assessments shall be due to non-aesthetic, illegitimate considerations. Normally also we have far less aesthetic reasons to judge a forgery differently from its original, than we have for judging differently a singular work under different circumstances, notwithstanding the fact that it can easily be proven scientifically that in reality only one work is involved. So, yes, different attitudes lead to different perceptions, and to perception of different properties, but this is hardly provocative. The correlate thesis that such differences are of an aesthetic nature needs

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sophisticated arguments apparently unavailable to Goodman's extensionalism. The question arising now is what makes a property of a work of art aesthetic, or, better, what makes a property of relevance for aesthetic evaluation? I shall now turn to this question.

### 2. Aesthetic Properties

Starting our examination of aesthetic properties with the utterances with which we express them—aesthetic evaluations—the following ensues. Disagreement and argument about aesthetic values are quite common and a philosophical tale that has been told for two hundred years or more assumes that aesthetic judgements are typically expressed with grand terms like 'beautiful', 'sublime', or 'excellent' at the predicate place.<sup>3</sup> However, we hardly ever argue about aesthetic judgements like "this is beautiful". Indeed, these terms do nothing to specify the 'this' at the grammatical subject place of the proposition, but rather express a specific, aesthetic type of experience of judgement.<sup>4</sup> They inform us about the speaker's claim of having based his or her judgement upon such an experience and of, therefore, being justified to judge. Anthony Savile argues in a recent book that we shouldn't treat aesthetic judgements as propositions in the first place.<sup>5</sup> He ascribes a truth value to aesthetic propositions, but not to the judgement connected with these. Resisting plain objectivism he suggests we distinguish between such propositions' truth which can be ascertained by normal procedures, and the legitimacy of the judgement underlying them, which derives from the experience upon which the judgement is based. Aesthetic argument, he concedes, concerns the truth of the proposition, not the grounds of the judgement. Epistemologically speaking, Savile thinks these two aspects of the aesthetic judgement—the propositions we use to express its content and its experiential foundation—are mutually independent. In what follows I shall challenge the intelligibility of this mutual independence. We agree that the grand categories do not inform us: they do not specify the state or states of mind that supposedly legitimize our judgement, nor do they even attract our attention to them, and although we sometimes think that they attract

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Cohen, 'An Emendation in Kant's Theory of Taste', 1990.

<sup>4</sup> I.e. in more specifically Kantian terms: aesthetic judgement expresses a subjective, pleasant awareness of a free play of the cognitive faculties with regard to the esteemed object, of which we nevertheless claim that it be valid for everyone suitably equipped. I shall return to this in Chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Savile, *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued*, 1993, One. 'Taste, Perception and Experience'. pp. 1-17.

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attention to the object and its details, in reality they do nothing of the kind. Saying of a Rembrandt self-portrait that it is excellent may situate the portrait (logically speaking) within a comparative horizon of other paintings, or it may merely invite people to look at it more intently. Either way, such an evaluation does not specify what to look for. This suggests the relative unimportance of these grand aesthetic terms. They do not inform us about the object, or about the judging subject. Returning for the moment to the object, an analogous problem arises: we cannot infer the aesthetic value of an object from its 'objective' properties, due to a lack of rules or theories that link specific (combinations of) objective properties with aesthetic values. As a consequence the grand aesthetic terms may possibly occasion disagreement, but they will be of little help—if any—in subsequent aesthetic arguments. It is for reasons like this that we use a different terminology to argue matters aesthetic: a terminology that is devoid of highbrow pretensions. These terms primarily are descriptive. However, this is not unproblematic either. It is not evident how these descriptive terms should be relevant for the aesthetic judgement they are supposed to help explain.

The existence of these two sets of terms whose mutual relevance is the common goal of our arguments rather than their solution confronts us with a dilemma: either we give up the grand categories and their normative claim to experiential legitimacy, and consequently restrict the analysis of aesthetic discourse to allegedly descriptive, critical remarks; or we honour the grand categories and their experiential implications, but will be helpless in specifying these categories' relevance for our aesthetic discussions. Kant took the latter strategy; the former, defending the relevance of critical language stems from a more recent date, from the analytical approach to linguistics.<sup>6</sup> What is needed here are, first, disputable categories to describe the aesthetic object with. These categories must, secondly, be so deeply involved in the aesthetic experience that is alleged to justify our judgements, that they at once clarify how they can form the reasons for our seemingly incorrigible grand claims. Starting in the present chapter with the first demand of descriptive relevance, I shall provide arguments for the necessity to expand our ontology, elaborating first on Locke's position on primary and secondary qualities, and secondly on Frank Sibley's seminal position. This strategy is to serve the achievement of the 'tertiary' mixture of seemingly incompatible strategies

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<sup>6</sup> I will, in the end, propose to dissolve the dilemma by expanding our ontology with tertiary qualities. Although these properties are attributable to aesthetic objects they depend for their discernment on specific mental activities that are central for our aesthetic experience as well. This, however, shall have to wait until we reach the third part.

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that I shall be proposing in the third part when returning to the second demand of experiential embeddedness.

Kant argued that the grand terms are aesthetic if and only if their application is not ruled by understanding, but by taste, and we shall see below that Kant has analyzed this in terms of the free play of the cognitive faculties. Kant links the 'aesthetic' with taste. According to Sibley aesthetic difference depends upon aesthetic properties, which are the referents of aesthetic descriptive terms.<sup>7</sup> He proposed a rather more elaborate set of terms than Kant did in his analysis of beauty and the sublime, but did not change the linkage of 'aesthetic' with taste. According to Sibley we describe an aesthetic object as 'tender', 'tense', or 'harmonious', or we call it 'frightening', or 'appalling'—without meaning these terms to be literally applicable; or 'dainty', 'graceful', and 'elegant', used in more straightforward ways.<sup>8</sup> The propositions tagged 'aesthetic' by Sibley derive their aestheticness from the fact that their 'correct' assessment is alleged to be an exclusive matter of taste, which supposedly supplements our more normal perceptive activities. I think Sibley was right in sustaining the taste-'aesthetic' link, but I will argue that he was wrong in thinking that terms other than the Kantian 'grand' ones deserve to be tagged 'aesthetic'. This much shall follow from my argument. According to Sibley there are (and can be) no necessary or sufficient conditions for the application of these aesthetic terms, but they do describe the object. They provide the information we would need to convince other people of the correctness of our aesthetic assessment. Aesthetic descriptive terms can be compared with more normal objective terms denoting an object's natural properties in that their criteria of application lie in the object.

Evidently, the terms we are looking for must inform us of the whereabouts of the object, but it is an open question whether some object or event described correctly with whatever terms apart from the grand ones is thereby judged aesthetically, or, as we have it, with taste. One can deny that this is an open question by arguing that calling something 'elegant' means judging it aesthetically, because this descriptive term's aesthetic implications supposedly form an analytical part of its meaning. But can we not think of things that are elegant yet ugly—perhaps for different reasons? And how do we make the necessary distinctions? The answers to such questions may depend not on the meaning of the terms involved but rather on the objects we want

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<sup>7</sup> Sibley, 'Aesthetic Concepts', 1959

<sup>8</sup> I am using the examples put forward in Sibley, 'Aesthetic Concepts: A Rejoinder', 1963; and, 'Aesthetic Concepts', 1959. I do not take it as my task to distinguish between literal and metaphorical uses of language, nor to explain or defend such a distinction. Clarification on this count does not seem to touch upon the problem at issue.

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them to describe. So that, once we accede to the idea of there being more than one distinguishable grand category it is indeed an open question whether by applying any of the ‘descriptive’ terms to an object we also judge this object aesthetically.

Let us accept for the moment the existence of aesthetic categories referring to objects more or less like more normal object-terms such as ‘telephone’, ‘hard’, or ‘brown’ do. As far as their respective rules of application are concerned it seems much easier to correctly apply the word ‘telephone’ to the relevant entity than to establish an object’s ‘triteness’—unless of course this trite object is a story told too often and we are merely bored with hearing it. However, in such a case a merely subjective response is attributed and the triteness does not pertain to the story itself, but is projected onto it in a rather contingent manner. In general, the exact applicability of the term ‘trite’ may always be subject to some feeling we have towards the object, but to warrant the correctness we need something else on top: some disposition in the object to cause this feeling. Put differently, aesthetic terms describe aesthetic properties, but these are not lawfully connected to non-aesthetic properties. How then are they related?

To explain to someone how to apply the word ‘brown’ we merely have to point at things with a brown surface or show a brown sample and point at it, presupposing of course that one already has a concept of ‘colour’. If subsequently one proves that one knows how and when to point to brown things one will have grasped the meaning of ‘brown’. We could try to follow a similar procedure in explaining the meaning of an aesthetic concept, but evidently, this will prove much harder, and, what’s more, we cannot possibly in the process show a sample of the property involved. We might try empirically to find delicate things of all kinds and point out which of their properties make out their delicacy—for instance, their tiny movements, the smallness of their surface changes, et cetera. Perhaps aesthetic terms can be defined in terms of their relation to non-aesthetic terms.<sup>9</sup> Such definition might then to a satisfactory degree play the role of the sample-sheet we use with colours. However, sheer enumeration of objective properties shall do little if anything to explain why we find an object beautiful. We do not point at the ‘lively’ Kandinsky painting and say “Look, it is square, three inches high, it has a red patch over there, and a yellow stripe beneath it, and, there, from left to right this blue diagonal daub of paint” in defence of its liveli-

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<sup>9</sup> This thesis certainly was defended by Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1958 (1757)

## Chapter Two – What Aesthetic Judgements are About

ness.<sup>10</sup> Recognition of the painting's liveliness presupposes that we project certain psychological and behavioural considerations onto the plane of paint; considerations, for example, like the ones attributed to a lively boy's wild movements and frivolous yellings. Aesthetic properties involve this subjective projection instead of a more or less passive taking in.<sup>11</sup> Before specifying the nature of such projection let us first look at the qualities that admit of being taken in more or less passively.

### 3. Primary, Secondary, and Aesthetic Qualities

Eighteenth-century empiricism suggested that there exist two kinds of perceptive properties, primary and secondary qualities, neither of which, I will argue, sufficiently explains the subjectivist projection characteristic of aesthetic properties. Locke used three arguments.<sup>12</sup> An epistemological argument in terms of the role of our mental faculties; an ontological one in terms of what does and does not belong to the object in itself; and a third in terms of whether or not the ideas we have of these qualities resemble them. In what follows I shall not go into the third argument, as I don't think it is intelligible. First, because my idea of a red patch is not itself 'red', and my idea of a table is of neither the same form nor the same matter as the relevant table; secondly, because trying to conceive of a criterion to compare the idea with the property would lead us into an infinite regress.<sup>13</sup> Locke's epistemological argument runs as follows:<sup>14</sup> Primary qualities such as mobility, solidity, number, and figure are perceived by more than one of the senses—they are polymodally accessible; in particular they can be sensed by touch and sight alike.<sup>15</sup> Secondary qualities, such as colours, tone, taste, and smell, on the contrary, are revealed (unimodally) to one of the senses only, and it is impossible for a person missing the appropriate sense to ever form the right idea of such a property. (One cannot possibly explain a tone or, for that matter, the concept of 'tone', to a person born deaf.) In his second, ontological, argument Locke argues that primary qualities, such as figure, are

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<sup>10</sup> I took this example from Berys Gaut, 'Metaphor and the Understanding of Art', 1994, who used it to argue for the necessarily metaphorical nature of critical language.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Wollheim, 'Art and Evaluation', 1980.

<sup>12</sup> That is in: Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690, Book II, Chapter VIII 'Some further considerations concerning our Simple Ideas of Sensation'.

<sup>13</sup> We need a criterion to establish the fitness of the criterion et cetera. McDowell, 'Values and Secondary Qualities', 1985, p. 113 too has argued against this use of resemblance.

<sup>14</sup> Locke, *op.cit.*, Chapter III 'Of Simple Ideas of Sense', 1.

<sup>15</sup> Locke, *op.cit.*, Chapter V 'Of Simple Ideas of Divers Senses'.

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inseparable from the bodies they adhere to: splitting a grain of wheat still leaves us with extended, solid bodies that are mobile or at rest, and which have a certain number. Secondary qualities, on the contrary, are said to be nothing in the object but dispositions to produce, by way of the primary qualities of the object, some specific sensation in a subject suitably equipped.<sup>16</sup>

If it weren't sustained by the epistemological argument, however, this ontological argument would not hold, for several reasons. First, if secondary qualities are identified by the impressions they produce in us, then there is hardly a reason to posit in the object such ontological oddities as 'dispositions to produce them'. How would we know that secondary qualities are to be identified by such powers in the object, if not by our perceiving these powers. But either we perceive them by perceiving the secondary qualities they cause in us, or we have an independent access to them which would reduce them in the end to purely primary qualities. In neither case do they explain what they are supposed to explain. Eddy Zemach has suggested to me that we know a secondary quality's being based in some 'primary' disposition, analogously to seeing the magnetic power of a metal bar not by perceiving the (dispositional) power itself, but by perceiving its effects.<sup>17</sup> I agree that this is how we might perceive magnetism, but disagree that this example teaches us how to understand the dispositional basis of secondary qualities in primary qualities, because we can see the metal bar without seeing its magnetic effects, but there is no sense to seeing a thing that is disposed to look red without seeing its redness. Perceiving it with a distinct sense (e.g. touch) evidently does not help either in perceiving the disposition apart from its effects.<sup>18</sup> I agree with the Lockean assumption that a changed object will still have a figure—even though it be different from its original figure—and also some or other extension—even though it be different from its original extension—but in the same vein a changed object shall also have some or other colour, taste or tactile quality. The related argument that only primary qualities are causally effective is oversimplifying: secondary qualities are causally effective as well, as the hot sunshine on the black roof attests.<sup>19</sup> Finally, we may all agree that specific sense modalities are needed to develop general concepts of secondary quality kinds, such as 'colour', or

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<sup>16</sup> Locke, *op.cit.*, Chapter VIII, 10.

<sup>17</sup> In a private communication, November, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> This relates also to the translation problem of polymodality that I will go into shortly.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hacker, *Appearance and Reality: A Philosophical Investigation into Perception and Perceptual Qualities*, 1987 for an extended critique of this and other arguments for and against the distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

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‘tone’. But no sense modality on its own suffices for the perception of a red rather than blue, shade of colour. For singular perceptions of secondary qualities real objects are presupposed, not mere dispositions: actualities.<sup>20</sup> (Hallucination forms no objection to this thesis—we have intersubjectively-available means of establishing with objective certainty whether some attribution of colour is true or not, i.e. whether it does or does not pertain to the object.) So out goes the idea that secondary qualities are illusory and that only the primary ones really adhere to the object. My point is, in short, that the ontological argument cannot be sustained independently from the epistemological argument.

The epistemological argument—that secondary qualities are perceived by only one of the senses whereas primary qualities are perceived by several—is incapable of proving the point it is designed to bring home: that there is an ontological distinction between primary and secondary qualities. The argument serves two theses, and this leads to confusion if not conflict. The first thesis relates polymodal perceivability to ontological provability; the second relates it to knowledge of the nature of the perceived. As an existential proof polymodality—if elaborated sufficiently—seems to form a convincing criterion,<sup>21</sup> but as a source of establishing the exact nature of properties—what they are like—it is rather weak. These theses do not put secondary qualities on a different footing from primary ones. First of all: secondary qualities are as real as primary ones. We have produced artificial means of polymodal efficacy that suffice to establish the existence of secondary qualities. Even though we must have seen a red patch to understand what ‘red’ means, once we are in the possession of the relevant faculty (colour vision) we can prove just what colour is there in the object by referring to sample sheets, or by intellectually interpreting some scientific diagram or number. Through samples, scientific measurement, and possibly yet other operationalizable procedures we can accurately establish the existence of secondary qualities even though such means as these do absolutely nothing to further our

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<sup>20</sup> In response to yet another objection by Eddy Zemach: Upon my report “the house was all green” someone might ask “what shade of green?” and I might show her a sample set from the paint shop, and point out the relevant green sample. Thus I am showing the house’s phenomenal quality without proving it to be like this—without proving the reality of the house’s green appearance. Indeed, in the absence of the house we can thus convey its colour. The epistemological legitimacy of my pointing at the sample, however, is based not on the specific phenomenal nature of this shade but on the fact that a sample such as this might also be used to prove this colour’s pertinence to the house. This is why one would want to believe my testimony of the house’s greenness.

<sup>21</sup> In this I adhere to the experimental realism defended by Hacking, *Representing and Intervening: Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science*, 1983

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insights into the exact nature of the properties involved. The conditions under which secondary qualities shall be correctly perceived can be operationalized as convincingly as we claim they can with primary qualities. We may conclude that our perception is equally efficient regarding secondary qualities as it is regarding primary ones. Therefore, the existence of both kinds of qualities can be proven by polymodal means. Secondly, if primary qualities are such that they are perceivable by more than one of our senses, then it is presupposed that they be perceivable, and that notwithstanding their ‘primacy’ they resemble secondary qualities in being dispositions of objects that cause perceptions in us. Thus, the exact nature of species of both kinds of properties is response-dependent, as our contemporaries would call it, and, consequently, this nature cannot be assessed objectively.<sup>22</sup> This goes for primary as well as secondary qualities.

This creates a problem of translation for the polymodality-thesis. It is evident that no light-wave numbers can explain what a red patch should look like, but we hardly fare better with the primary qualities. If ‘figure’ is supposed to be perceivable through two senses, sight and touch, we are still confronted with the task of specifying exactly how the data from touch are to be translated into those of sight, or the other way around.<sup>23</sup> Tactile data are processed by causal connections between one’s body and its objects, whereas visual and audible data stem from rather distinct kinds of distasteful processing. Let me give an example: when I watch my son brush his teeth, I hear the sound of the brush and see it going up and down, and common sense tells me that this indeed is how brushing one’s teeth should look and sound. However, I also see the tiles on the wall glistening from being polished, I see the colour of my son’s face and clothes, none of which do I also hear; instead, I hear the ticking of the clock in the adjacent room, a car passing by outside, and none of these things I see. What I see is in this room, and much of it remains inaudible, whereas what I hear is inside and outside this room, and is only partially visible. Now if these two senses structure the world in so incomparably different ways, on which grounds do we come to think of the sight and sound of teeth brushing as hanging together, and as forming the phenomenal appearance of a singular event?<sup>24</sup> Seen from this angle the distinction between primary and secondary qualities appears to

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Johnston, ‘Dispositional Theories of Value’, 1989; Pettit, ‘Realism and Response-Dependence’, 1991; Lewis, ‘Dispositional Theories of Value’, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> It is no insignificant matter what direction of fit this translation is supposed to obey.

<sup>24</sup> Arguments such as these lead me to direct realism concerning (embodied) perception—cf. Chapter 8, Sect. 2.

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arise from a misunderstanding of the logical incompatibility of data produced by the various senses. We may conclude that polymodality is of no help once we try to explain the phenomenal nature of the relevant qualities. Therefore, for an assessment of their nature primary qualities are as dependent upon perceptual states as secondary qualities are supposed to be. Regarding both types of qualities then existence can be proven once some sort of operationalizable polymodality is installed, but with or without such polymodality no explanation of their specific nature is forthcoming. If there were properties confronting us with a reduced polymodal accessibility, however, we would most certainly have to be antirealists regarding their ontology, since we would be incapable of proving their existence. It would be this ontological peculiarity that would mark them off from primary and secondary qualities. Well, aesthetic properties are like that.

Sibley has chosen a different strategy to account for our application of aesthetic terms, and so he should, because of his allegiance to the thesis that these terms in their own right describe the object. In order to describe we must be willing to assert what is the case, and for an assertion we must have some epistemological access to the world. According to Sibley for the application of more normal 'objective' terms all we need is perception, whereas for the application of aesthetic terms we also need taste. With this thesis—that taste provides the criteria for a successful assertive description of an object as delicate, or trite, et cetera—Sibley, however, begs the question. Taste either functions cognitively, in that it merely determines the kind of object we are confronted with, just as perception does; however, if that were the case, why would we want to introduce this supplementary faculty, taste? Or taste does not function determiningly, but otherwise. But now the specifications of taste's miraculous functionality, I am quite confident, will bring in the very problems the faculty was designed to solve. Sibley does not specify the functionality of taste, so that we really do not know where taste finds its criteria, if indeed it has any.

Taste is the faculty with which we discern whether an object does or does not have aesthetic value. Possibly only a person with taste can experience aesthetically a Bach Cantate, or a Warne Marsh ballad. Taste decides whether we find the cantate or ballad beautiful or not; however, it does not imply clear-cut perceptual or conceptual criteria, so that, if one takes taste to be decisive for our aesthetic descriptions one is still only half way there. Reversely, aesthetic descriptive terms have only a limited relevance. To describe a ballad as trite merely provides other people with a hint as to how they might listen to it, but does not automatically cause one to experience it accordingly. Sibley's is just one more cognitivist answer to the threat of

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subjectivist relativism. Jerrold Levinson, among others, put forward the thesis that aesthetic properties supervene upon non-aesthetic ones.<sup>25</sup> Crucial in this is the idea that the emergent—supervenient—aesthetic attributes are irreducible to their non-aesthetic basis.<sup>26</sup> One cannot translate e.g. ‘sad’ into properties like ‘grey’, etc. We must have an answer to the question why this is so, lest the notion of aesthetic supervenience begs the question: how do we perceive supervenient qualities? Merely by looking (as e.g. colours are perceived), or do we need the homunculi faculty of taste, as Sibley thinks. However illuminating the notion of supervenience may be, for the most part it illuminates where those who defend it think we should stop asking questions.

In conclusion: The distinction between primary and secondary qualities—as it stands—has little relevance for ontology. Making the distinction means proposing some account of perception in terms of sense modalities. The account of perception that follows from my arguments is a direct realist one: ‘perceiving something is being in direct, polymodal-embodied contact with it’. We perceive things under a description and this accounts for our ability to bring such a large number of different data from the various senses into the perception of singular events. I will return in Chapter 8 to this theory of perception. Sibley’s suggestion that aesthetic properties are perceived not merely through the normal senses but through taste illustrates that aesthetic qualities are unlike primary and secondary qualities. However, in contrast to Sibley I understand this distinction between aesthetic and perceptual properties in terms of a restriction of perceptual polymodality and embodiment. Sibley’s use of ‘taste’ does not explain why we would want to describe aesthetic (disembodied) properties in terms borrowed from emotional, and ethical contexts. I will argue in the second and third parts of this study that the mental power which is missing from our awareness of aesthetic properties is imagination, not taste.

### 4. Subjectivism—Preliminary Remarks

According to Wollheim there are four important answers to the question of the status of aesthetic properties.<sup>27</sup> According to realism aesthetic evaluations are either true or false. The realist compares aesthetic values with primary qualities by taking their existence to be independent of other properties and of

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<sup>25</sup> Levinson, ‘Aesthetic Supervenience’, 1990, p. 134.

<sup>26</sup> Levinson, *op.cit.*, p. 146-48.

<sup>27</sup> Wollheim, ‘Art and Evaluation’, 1980 He doesn’t explicitly distinguish between aesthetic descriptive properties and our aesthetic evaluations.

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(human) psychological states. Aesthetic values are independent from the person attributing it to an object. The second answer—objectivism—holds that values in general depend on mankind, not on specific people (like a relativist thinks). For the objectivist too aesthetic judgements are true or false but what decides their truth is not the properties of the object but the ‘correlated experience’. This ‘correlated experience’ entails various mental phenomena that derive their relevance to the matter from being a response to the work of art shareable by everyone.<sup>28</sup> According to the objectivist all people should have the very same response containing thoughts about the object—not about the subject. This, however, Wollheim thinks, disqualifies objectivism as an account of aesthetic values. Objectivism should explain why and when an aesthetic judgement is valid, and should do so by referring to objective properties and to our understanding of the work of art, not to a consensus among judges.<sup>29</sup> Nor does objectivism really entail an objective account because it doesn’t specify the sufficient conditions for objectivity. Suppose, for example, that everybody agrees about some work’s aesthetic value, but all cite the wrong reasons (e.g., economic or social ones), then, evidently, the attributed value does not pertain to the object, and therefore, is not objective. Objectivism ought to specify when and how an evaluation is caused by a work, and, how this causality relates essentially to human nature. Because the theory cannot possibly provide these specifications (no theory can) it doesn’t give a necessary condition either for the existence of some value property. Consensus alone is insufficient. Moreover, someone missing one of the requisite human characteristics may for that reason miss the experience demanded by the work or he may have the experience in the absence of the work’s meriting it—but neither of these failures proves or disproves some value’s presence in the object. Lastly, according to an objectivist point of view aesthetic values compare with secondary qualities. Frank Sibley is an objectivist. He identifies taste as the faculty requisite for the perception of aesthetic values. Persons with taste shall perceive values aright, but what to do with a person lacking in taste who claims to perceive some aesthetic value or other? Persons with taste should be able to correct him, but how do we know who has taste and who hasn’t? We might take some aesthetic value and check who are the people perceiving it aright, but how are we to take an aesthetic value if it hasn’t been established that we have taste? I have argued above that aesthetic properties are not comparable to secondary qualities because of their restricted modality.

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<sup>28</sup> Wollheim, *op.cit.*, p. 232-33.

<sup>29</sup> Wollheim, *op.cit.*, p. 234.

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The third answer—relativism—alleges the dependence of aesthetic values upon specific people or groups of people. Which people or groups are involved depends on the exact theory held. There are two varieties of relativism. According to the first, one group holds the authority and all others must comply with its judgements. This relativism should first explain where the authority stems from, and it cannot answer this by giving a realist or objectivist account without lapsing into these respective positions. So the authority is not based on de facto considerations. If, however, it is de jure, then relativism offends the principle of acquaintance, in excluding alternate routes to the judgements of the group holding the authority. One might want to back out by retreating into a ‘everybody holds an equal authority’ stance, but this merely multiplies our problems, because of every object contradictory judgements will be true. One might also want to retreat into the ‘an aesthetic judgement does not attribute a property to an object, but means: “this object is held beautiful, by someone”’ stance. Evidently, this changes what began as an aesthetic problem (what is the status of aesthetic value?) into a sociological one: ‘who holds that this or that value pertains to this or that object?’ Aesthetic value thus is sacrificed to sociology. Yet another variety of relativism alleges that it is a certain experience that justifies someone's attributing an aesthetic value. Here, however, aesthetic value becomes a problem of the truth of the claim of having had the appropriate experience. Wollheim: “The issue about Relativism might be put by saying that, when Relativism goes in one direction, it takes the predicate ‘is valued’ as this occurs in aesthetic evaluation and reinterprets it as ‘is valued by’: when it goes in the other direction, it takes the predicate ‘is true’ as this applies to aesthetic evaluation and reinterprets it as ‘is true for’.”<sup>30</sup> The fourth, and most plausible answer—subjectivism—is not a brand of relativism. It has a double task: first, it must argue against objectivism that the relevant aesthetic experience is complex enough to introduce doubts as to whether or not subjective considerations form part of it. Secondly, it must argue for the plausibility of the idea that somewhere between the object and the perceiving subject the direction of fit is reversed: the beholder does not merely passively perceive what is in the object but actively projects idiosyncracies into it as well. The appreciative experience more or less fills the object with value. Both demands Wollheim puts to subjectivism shall be amply met in the chapters to come.

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<sup>30</sup> Wollheim, *op.cit.*, p. 238.

## Chapter Three

### The Definition of Art

#### 1. The Institutional Definition

Up to this point I have been talking about some of art's properties, semantics, and values. But what is art? Shouldn't we first define it before entering further considerations? What we should be looking for here, and what analytical aestheticians have been looking for during the last few decades, is a real definition with a descriptive and an evaluative aspect to it. A definition, that is, which does not merely describe common usage of the term 'art' but is recursive in specifying how it can be used to recognize (and create) future art works. Analytical aestheticians seem to have made it their job to deny the possibility of such a definition and they may be right. Nevertheless this is how the problem of defining 'art' presents itself. Asking for such a definition is asking for a specification of the definiendum's essence. Such a specification should consist of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions. In 'Art is or contains X' X is a necessary condition if all art is or contains X—and if everything that is or contains X indeed is art—then X also is sufficient for an object or event to be art. The problem with art seems to be that there is no such X that novels, paintings, performances, bottle dryers and music have in common. According to Morris Weitz, 'art' is an open concept, one resembling the concept of 'game' which too entails no essential characteristics shared by all games. Games at best possess what Wittgenstein has called a family resemblance: every member resembles one or other member but none resembles all of them.<sup>1</sup> According to Weitz none of the

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<sup>1</sup> Weitz, 'The Role of Theory in Aesthetics', 1956. The—vicious—circularity of the concept of family-resemblance shows from its paradigm example, the resemblance between members of a family. The sole reason to watch for these resemblances and ultimately find them lies in our knowledge of a genetic relationship. When confronted with a group of people assembled randomly we might find an equal amount of resemblances. So for the concept to be functional one must already possess some criterion of classification that does not depend on the perceptual. Cf. Mandelbaum, 'Family Resemblances and Generalizations concerning the Arts', 1965

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definitions of art prevalent in his time was successful. Either they included or they excluded too much. Even the definition that attributes artifactuality to all art specifies a condition that is neither necessary—certain (modern) works are natural objects—nor sufficient—obviously there are artefacts that are not works of art. Instead, the definitions that Weitz found were merely aggrandizements of valued properties of exemplary works of art. If, for example, you adore abstract art you might then propose a definition of art as ‘significant form’. However, since not all art works amount to significant form (supposing we understand this property), and not all significant forms are art works, such definition is merely ‘honorific’ or ‘persuasive’.<sup>2</sup> Honorific definitions are interesting only in the degree to which they induce us to appreciate different aspects of works of art; they do not really furnish a definition. According to Weitz we should keep classification and evaluation apart: a broken vacuum cleaner may not be a good exemplar but it is still a vacuum cleaner. Weitz thinks that no true definition of ‘art’ is possible, and that the best we can do is procure an enumeration of existing works. Evidently, enumerative classifications lack the advantage a definition has of specifying a priori what properties a work of art is supposed to have to merit its status.

Accordingly, George Dickie proposed the ‘institutional conception’: “A work of art in the classificatory sense is (1) an artifact (2) upon which some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the Artworld) have conferred the status of candidate for appreciation.”<sup>3</sup> From hindsight most of the time this conception of art may be just fine, but then again it hardly alleges more than the simple answer to the question “Why should this thing be an art work?” “... because people say so”. As a definition, enabling people to create or recognize new works of art, however, it is highly inconsequential. Participants in the art world who confer art status to new non-art objects must be ready to provide aesthetic reasons for such conferral. In this they cannot fall back on the conventions of the institution, because these have obviously not yet conferred art status to these objects. Thus the institutional definition does not allow one to introduce a new work of art, exactly because it deviates from the art that has been recognized. Whence do art institutions derive the authority to make objects into works of art, if not from aesthetic reasons? In most cases the conferral of art status will be

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<sup>2</sup> The latter term was introduced by C.L. Stevenson, e.g. *Ethics and Language*, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Dickie, ‘The Institutional Conception of Art,’ 1973, p. 25. Also his: ‘Defining Art’, 1969.

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defended in terms of the works' conforming to some established stylistic tradition or genre (say, a new—cubist or realist—painting, a cast sculpture, a sonata, etc.). This, however, does not support the institutional conception of art. Puzzle cases for this conception rather lie in works which significantly deviate from such traditional ways of art making, and to confer art status upon such things or events is bound to need aesthetic reasonings.

Dickie's definition has two parts, but only one has received fair attention in subsequent discussions. The meaning of the part that attributes status conferring powers to members of the art institutions seems well established by now. However, the part describing the function of such ascription remains mostly neglected. What can it mean to be proposed as a candidate for appreciation? It is part of the nature of being a 'candidate' that an object can be judged non-eligible, but where does this possibility leave the procedural character of the definition? Art institutions' procedures must introduce criteria of aesthetic evaluation. As a consequence the definition cannot remain classificatory in the long run. If on the contrary, the lack of appreciative success were irrelevant for an object's being a candidate then why should 'being a candidate' be part of the definition? Why not make it into the idle formula that apparently it is: "an object is a work of art if some art institution says it is a work of art." Evidently, such reformulation decreases to nil the importance of the institutional definition and of the domain it is supposed to define. Notwithstanding problems like these, however, the institutional conception does introduce the mind-boggling problem of how else to define art. What to do with the evident arbitrariness of this procedural definition? Surely art serves a point? Dickie does not say what a work of art is supposed to look like, what it is supposed to achieve. He thus provides the concept 'art' with an extension—rather than with an intension with which we might fix this extension. One wants to include in the definition of art the value that some art works obviously have, as well as their effects on people, and the reasons we provide for liking them.<sup>4</sup> As Weitz alleged, however, these elements fall outside the definition. I disagree with this thesis, believing, on the contrary, that these evaluative aspects ought automatically to fall within the definition. It is my thesis that 'art' can be defined recursively: something is a work of art if it conforms to acknowledged artistic procedures (not art world procedures of status attribution), and these procedures are or should be acknowledged as artistic

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<sup>4</sup> It is only evident that such reasons are related to existing works of art. Cf. Levinson, *Music, Art, & Metaphysics*, 1990.

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once certain of their typical instantiations occasion some specifiable experience. This experiential effect I shall have more to say about in the chapters to follow—however, not in the name of an empirical identification. I do not propose that aesthetic experience is definitory of art, because that would lead to arguments from authority: Q: “Can’t you see that this is an art work? A: “But it isn’t. Q: “Yes it is. I just had an aesthetic experience which proves it.” A: “No it isn’t. I had no such experience.” Et cetera.<sup>5</sup> The sheer disposition of occasioning an aesthetic experience may be a necessary condition for an object’s status as a work of art—which is not saying much—but it certainly is insufficient. Some objects cause aesthetic experience, without being works of art. On the other hand the art-status conferring role—if sufficiently specified so as to include the aesthetic evaluations that necessarily inhere it—ascribed to ‘art world’ institutions may be sufficient for an object to be a work of art, but it isn’t necessary—unless, of course, one is willing to broaden into empty tautologies the concepts of ‘institution’ and of ‘art-world’ so as to include everything that has ever led to an object’s being an art work. What should interest us here is the reciprocity between the general concept ‘art’ and its individual instantiations, art works: how does knowing what ‘art’ in general means help us to recognize individual works and how does understanding individual works of art help us to define art in general? With artefacts in general this reciprocity is typical, in that the concept not only specifies what each instantiation of the definiendum looks like, but also why it should be like that; the relevant concept also specifies the goal to be served by the object falling under it. One should wonder whether with art and its instantiations a comparable reciprocity can be secured, and if so, to what extent.

### 2. Definitions and Purposivity

It is either problematic to provide closed definitions of artefacts because it is hard to incorporate both past and future instantiations of the artefact, or such definitions are of their definiendums’ essence merely stipulative. Artefacts are specified not only by the aims they serve but also by the procedures with which we produce them. A functional definition relates the definiendum to its goal; a procedural one relates it to the procedures according to which the

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<sup>5</sup> This argument from Douglas Dempster, ‘Aesthetic Experience and Psychological Definitions of Art’, 1985 knocks down instrumental, psychological definitions of art, such as those proposed by Beardsley (e.g. ‘Aesthetic Experience Regained’, 1969) and Schlesinger, ‘Aesthetic Experience and the Definition of Art’, 1979. Cf. also Davies’ discussion of the functionalist definition of ‘art’ (in *Definitions of Art*, 1991).

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definiendum has been produced. If we can bring together procedural and instrumental aspects of the definiendum we may succeed in recursively defining artefacts. Kant would say: the concept of an artefact describes the internal purposivity of the object, i.e., the properties it should have; and its external objective purposivity, i.e. the aim it should serve, its use.<sup>6</sup> Specifying an object's use already more or less specifies its internal purposivity. Starting from the aim of the vacuum cleaner it is only logical that we fix a manoeuvrable hose to it. However, our goals or their specifications may change over time and this will have an effect on the way the artefact is produced. This may even separate the procedural and functional elements in the artefact's definition. For example, there exist dust sucking animals, and 'dustbusters' that apparently answer the external purposivity of the vacuum cleaner but are not seen as such because they have not come into being according to the right procedures of production. This is an important distinction. Normally the internal purposivity of an artefact fits the external in seamless manner, because the artefact is developed to serve its aim best. A broken-down vacuum cleaner shall still be a vacuum cleaner due to its internally purposive build, which was originally geared to serve its goal even though it no longer does so.

Works of art, evidently, come in many different guises and forms, and we admire them for their singularity. Nevertheless, they can be classified into genres, styles, and techniques, all of which, for the sake of the argument, I take to be artistic procedures. I defend the thesis that it is these classificatory characteristics, these artistic procedures that are or are not admitted into the temple of art by (something like) the art world. Each of these procedures has its own inner purposivity, which ideally should conform to a specifiable and, I think experiential, external functionality. As with the vacuum cleaner though: an art work that we would want to deny aesthetic or artistic value may nevertheless, due to its sharing in this or that style or genre be a work of art. A thing is an art work if it answers the inner purposivity specified by some or other procedure pronounced to be artistic. A strictly procedural definition might have it that this internal purposivity suffices, and that no external compliance with goals or effects typically ascribed to successful art works is needed. However, this is like accepting the broken down vacuum cleaner as the paradigm exemplar of this artefact. In the context of this argument Paul Crowther has remarked that there exist distinct ways to

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<sup>6</sup> Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1974, § 15.

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attribute a status to an object.<sup>7</sup> For example, you can attribute the status of ‘hammer’ to an object by fixing something heavy onto a manageable piece of wood. One has then changed the materials so that the resultant object deserves the status of being a hammer. If one calls this object a hammer one merely recognizes its status. Contrary to this, attributing status to some object is an entirely different practice. One now does not change the materials but merely supplants a semantical dimension onto the object involved. As is done for example by relating a pair of shoes to ‘the scene of the crime’: the shoes don’t change but they now have the status of ‘evidence’ attributed to them. Such attribution is contingent, and external. This is exactly what Dickie in his institutional conception suggests the art world does to objects in giving them the art status. Such attribution is far too contingent: art should merit its status. It is an intelligible question to ask: “Should we automatically accept whatever the art world proposes as an art work?” Indeed, the answer is “no”, and, therefore, the institutional conception does not suffice. This conception, in short, is not recursive: it does not specify why (the first) works of art deserve their status, nor does it teach what criteria a member of the art world is supposed to apply in his attributions, or, for that matter, if he can possibly ever succeed in introducing a new work. Moreover, what status did an acknowledged work of art possess before it received its status? Surely it was already an art work (the realist replies)? The institutional conception does not help us to decide whether a new work or procedure is artistic or not, so we may seriously wonder whether this is a definition in the first place. This objection appears to have been admitted from the beginning in that Dickie’s theoretical pretence has merely been to classificatorily specify art. We should then only wonder whether this is the kind of approach to art that we prefer.

### 3. Artistic Procedures and Exemplars

Should the definition of art be applicable to individual art works, or rather to the artistic procedures and techniques artists make use of in creating their works? By the way no answer to this question is going to help the institutional conception, since either way it shall be incapable of explaining how and why new instances are introduced by members of the art world, irrespective of whether these members are individual works or artistic procedures. Benjamin Tilghman in his book *But is it Art?* describes a gentleman confronted with a pile of rubbish in a museum of modern art,

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<sup>7</sup> Crowther, ‘Art and Autonomy’, 1981.

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wondering whether this is or isn't a work of art:<sup>8</sup> "But is it art?" One must seriously wonder whether this gentleman would be satisfied if someone were to explain that the pile is indeed a work of art because the museum's director said so and because there is a sign next to it specifying the year and place of creation. The man would still want to know why the director should have done that. In other words, he is not asking for the institutional attributive statement, but for its legitimation. He wants to know, in Tilghman's words, how he is supposed to appreciate the work. It seems to me that however convincing an argument against the institutional conception this is, it also confuses the issue in seeming to imply that a work should be evaluated before the status of art is conferred upon it. This, I believe, would be going a step too far. Following Tilghman's analysis this gentleman might experience a comparable despair when confronted with his first cubist painting or non-narrative novel or film. However, difficulties in finding out how to appreciate a work do not necessarily imply that it is impossible to do so, or that the relevant thing or event is not art. One might merely be a conservative who does not accept the very possibility of new artistic procedures. Partly agreeing with Tilghman then, I think that indeed our gentleman is not asking for a definition of art, but nor does he merely want to know how to appreciate this singular work. Instead, he is asking how one ought to appreciate works like this, constructed following unrecognizably artistic procedures, and lacking known artistic properties. A realist answer must ensue explaining the procedures involved, and specifying the aesthetic reasons for allowing them to enter the domain of procedures yielding art works. Not coincidentally our gentleman would have no problems with a landscape painting of poor aesthetic quality, even though it lacks the ability to move him. Each acclaimed work of art shall have to participate in artistic procedures, such as genres, styles, or kinds of works of art to be acknowledged as a work of art. Next, however, it shall have to deviate from these procedures to be sufficiently original. The definition of art is at risk when we are confronted with things or events that deviate too much to form part of the relevant procedure. Cubism deviated from the art form of 'painting', but not so much as to fully step beyond it. It made the forms in the painting more geometrically shaped, it changed the materials by including sand and pieces of newspaper, et cetera, but it didn't leave the plane. It did, however, sin against realist depictive procedures, and was accepted only after it itself produced works of sufficient aesthetic quality. It is, therefore, procedures that are accepted into the world of art, not individual works, and

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<sup>8</sup> Tilghman, *But is it Art?*, 1984.

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once one understands the reasons why something new has been accepted one should find no deep problems in trying to appreciate a singular work partaking in it.<sup>9</sup> So there really are two levels at which one might ask: “But is it art?” There is a question about what kind of appreciative activities one ought to undertake, and one about how the appropriate kind of activities is supposed to heed aesthetic satisfaction. Only the first question points at the general conception of art; the second presupposes an answer to it, and points instead at the actual appreciation of an individual work.

The rather obvious idea defended by Catherine Lord that works of art are appreciated for their singularity’s sake and not for their pertaining to some genre or style sustains this argument.<sup>10</sup> She suggests understanding works of art as rigidly designated individuals, in the terminology of Kripke.<sup>11</sup> Contrary to what Kripke might want to argue, Lord thinks the rigidly designated identity of works of art is not based on material but on aesthetic considerations. She argues that Michelangelo could have produced the very same David from a different piece of marble. According to Kripke the resulting David would then not be ‘the’ David, simply because it is based in a different ontological entity. Lord on the contrary argues that the identity of the David depends on the aesthetic considerations of its sculptor: it depends on Michelangelo’s decision that it be finished. It is this decision that fixes the properties of the sculpture that are relevant for our aesthetic appreciation. Not every perceptual difference should for reason of being visible also lead to an aesthetic difference. Aesthetic difference is in terms of expressive properties, not of secondary or primary qualities. Thus the aesthetic identity of the David ensues from decisions made after the work has been carved out of the stone, however much these carvings will be related to the stone’s characteristics, its veins and colours, et cetera. Evidently, this position presupposes an account of aesthetic evaluation’s relation to the object evaluated. What to do with the so-called hard cases of anti-art, such as Duchamp’s Fountain, and Cage’s 4’33’’?

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<sup>9</sup> The introduction, in the seventies, of the ‘performance’ as a new artistic means went like this, I think.

<sup>10</sup> Lord, ‘A Kripkean Approach to the Identity of a Work of Art,’ 1977; Lord, ‘Indexicality, Not Circularity: Dickie’s New Definition of Art’, 1987. Cf. also Winfield, ‘The Individuality of Art and the Collapse of Metaphysical Aesthetics’, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, 1972.

## Chapter Three – The Definition of Art

### 4. Anti-Art and Four Orders of Artistic Intentionality

In the past, works of anti-art gave those trying to define art the greatest trouble. Duchamp's *Fountain*, for example, was not constructed by the hands of the artist, and it does not comply with convention D (for depiction) or convention E (for exemplification), although by being what it is, a urinal instead of a conventionally produced work of art, it does make us think about the power of museums. It derives its art status merely by being in the museum, not by having us appreciate its primary or secondary qualities. Because of this it did not partake in any of the acknowledged artistic procedures, nor, however, did it initiate a new one. The same goes for Cage's *4'33''*, whose sounds were not invented or even structured by the composer or the performer, and no artistic procedures have been followed in making them.<sup>12</sup> Instead these sounds are caused by the public. If the audience were to start singing a jazz ballad, they would be giving the musical performance, not the pianist. Moreover, they would have then performed a jazz ballad instead of Cage's *4'33''*. Since in this 'work' the public cannot comply with any artistic procedures either, *4'33''* cannot possibly have an artistic follow-up. The same argument would arise if we were to try to make a recording of the performance. Which sounds ought one to record? If Cage's specifications include that the sounds to be heard must be produced by the public that listens to the work, then a piece of silence should be reproduced, and the piece recorded will not be a recording of any specific performance of the work, and, in the end it will not be an instance of Cage's *4'33''*. If, however, Cage had specified that the sounds of the public present at the performance by some pianist, say Peter, form the work, then most of its significance would evaporate, and only one singular performance should be made of it. What might the meaning of this work be? Since it is impossible to establish which exact sounds are supposed to be heard during a performance of *4'33''* this question cannot be answered relative to the work, but only to some specific performance of it. Therefore, there is no avoiding the conclusion that the meaning of this work must be sought at a level transcending the musical or audible. Notwithstanding these far-reaching ontological problems, Cage's *4'33''* does function within a traditionally artistic setting: the music theatre, and in this it resembles *Fountain*. It is in the theatre that the pianist enters the stage, that he is seated at the piano, and that he

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<sup>12</sup> For those who are unfamiliar with *4:33'*: this 'work' is 'performed' in a music hall by a pianist who enters the stage, bows to the audience, takes his seat behind the piano, opens it, waits for four minutes and 33 seconds, closes the piano, bows again, and leaves the stage.

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dwells for a certain amount of time. But neither he nor the composer intentionally creates anything audible, which would have been the only appropriate thing to do given this specific setting. Thus, even though the work makes ample use of aspects of musical performance, these aspects in themselves are non-musical and do not comprise what makes a performance into a performance of music: 4'33'' is not a musical work. There is no artistic intentionality in 4'33'' or Fountain, only causality, and the effects of these works of anti-art are restricted to philosophers trying to find out how to devise a definition of art that might accommodate them without expelling more traditional procedures. If only we were smarter. It is my thesis that most confusion regarding the definition of art stems from our failing to distinguish between four levels of choices, only two of which are definitory for 'art'. Although the story of art is much more complex than this, this distinction should provide us with a better understanding.

First-order choices regard classifications within the arts, and artistic genres. Is one embarking on the creation of a work depending on conventions D (for depiction) or E (for exemplification), or whatever other artistic conventions can be established?<sup>13</sup> Upon such decisions further first-order choices present themselves more or less automatically: what genre should the work be in, what style is going to be realized (or used and changed)?<sup>14</sup> Once these decisions are made and one has started to produce the desired work, second-order choices will surface, which eventually have to be made in the light of third-order, aesthetically evaluative decisions. Second-order choices aim at the actual application of the material to be used to realize the work opted for: what colours to use, how thick should the paint be applied, what brushes to use? More importantly: where exactly to put this or that daub of paint, how much stone must be carved out, et cetera. In practice it will be difficult to distinguish first- from second-order choices, and we may never be able to suggest some knock-down standard, if not for the very fact that what were once first-order choices (such as setting out to paint a Madonna) are now second-order ones (nowadays, one who chooses to paint a Madonna restricts his use of material rather than choosing a subject matter), and the other way around. The questions I identify here as secondary are answered in the light of the desired aesthetic effect of the resulting work. One wants it to possess this or that representational or expressive property. These I call third-order choices. The paradigm third-order choice is the

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<sup>13</sup> Such as convention M (for music): abstract from real-life sounds and listen to the sounds heard in their mutual sequential relationality—or something to that avail.

<sup>14</sup> Crowther, 'Creativity and Originality in Art', 1991.

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decision that the work be finished. Evidently, these three types of artistic choice are mutually enhancing and delimiting. Nevertheless some specific, and hierarchical, relation exists between them in that the third-order choices are the ones that enhance the first- and second-order choices, and that put an end to these. Not unimportantly, it is third-order aesthetic decisions that enable an audience to re-enact a work of art. People may share only aesthetic choices, not first- and second-order 'material' ones. Of course, it is the effects of 'material' choices that are perceived, but they are not shared. Because third-order choices put an end and an ending to second-order choices made within the genre and type of work emanating from the first-order choices made, the sharing in these third-order choices presupposes a perceptual awareness of these first- and second-order choices. Lastly, fourth-order choices regard a work of art's relational properties. They involve art criticism, frames, lighting conditions, museum conditions in general, other people's pointing and remarks, et cetera. Choices based upon these activities are made in order to bring to the fore certain aspects or properties of the work of art rather than others. As such, a curator may change the way in which we regard a painting by putting a different frame around it, a red, wildly-adorned one, say, instead of a green, sober one. However, fourth-order choices do not change the work of art itself, notwithstanding their possibly striking influence on how we perceive it. We saw in our discussion of Goodman's argument regarding the aesthetic difference of a 'perfect fake' that having people watch in different ways does not automatically lead to aesthetic differences. Aesthetic differences must be based in primary and secondary qualities of the work inasmuch as these enact third-order choices. Although there exist no absolutely trustworthy conditions for perceiving a work of art, its objective properties, or primary and secondary qualities, do form the last resort for an aesthetic interpretation of the work. A frame may change our perceiving the colours of a work, but 'in themselves' these colours do not change, and if they themselves do not sustain some changed appreciation then the frame in question can be seen as inappropriate. In short, they may be hard to sort out, but there are certain criteria of appropriateness for fourth-order choices. If the artist painted his painting with a specific frame in mind, then the frame will form part of the second-order choices guiding the artist in the creative process.

There can be no aesthetic evaluation without perception of material orchestrations. As a consequence this four-level theoretical reconstruction of art production sustains the acquaintance principle. Because artistic techniques come with a goal to be understood in terms of third-order considerations and decisions, we now can incorporate the alleged experiential 'functionality' of

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art within our conception of artistic procedures. Notwithstanding the theoretical importance of making this four-level distinction, no artist performing all three kinds of choices in his creation of a work is fully 'in charge' of his choices. Artistic procedures have a dynamic of their own and are embedded in cultural processes that cannot be fully supervised. Moreover, and this follows directly from the distinction proposed here: only those choices that enter into the resultant work and can be perceived and experienced by an audience are artistically relevant. I am not proposing that we consider the artist's intentions; in fact, I'm proposing the contrary. Crowther's distinction referred to above between recognizing the status of an object and merely attributing it can now be explained in terms of my four-level model. Among the art world's attributive procedures—which Dickie thinks are definitory of 'art'—there are those that consist of artistic first-, second- and third-order choices. These are status recognizing. Then there are those that are strictly on the fourth level: these are attributive in Crowther's pejorative sense. They can never autonomously make something into a work of art. As a consequence, they should be excluded from the conditions that are either necessary or sufficient for a thing's artistic status. It is necessary for a thing or event if it is to be a work of art, then, that it be the result of a mixture of first-, second- and third-order choices. Thus by definition a work of art must consist of primary and secondary qualities functioning in an aesthetic manner. This corresponds to the principle of acquaintance: it is for reason of the necessary implication of second-order choices informed by third-order aesthetic ones that the audience must for the sake of an aesthetic valuation be acquainted with the work itself, that is, with its primary and secondary qualities (and then something). To wind up the 'necessary' part of the definition of art we need an account of aesthetic appreciation and of the aesthetic properties that allegedly supervene upon secondary and primary qualities that make up a work of art. This will be part of my argument in a later chapter.

### 5. Art's Characteristics

Can we provide the sufficient conditions which together with the named necessary ones add up to a decent definition of 'art'? One simple answer would be: if an object is the result of manipulations on all four levels then it most certainly is a work of art: taken together, the four levels of choices are a sufficient condition. Indeed this goes for all traditional works of art. But can we think of a thing answering all four types of choices that is not a work of

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art? No—at least, I can't. How many acknowledged works of art are excluded by my definition? I consider Fountain to be a piece of anti-art. It does not embody artistic second- or third-order choices. Perhaps it does embody a first-order choice in resembling a sculpture, but even this may be denied because supposedly no object is a sculpture that is not the result of second-order manipulations. What about concept art? What about Oldenburgh's refilled hole in the ground? There appears to have been second-order manipulation but we cannot appreciate it because it has annihilated itself. What to say of a Rembrandt painting no-one has ever set eyes upon, because it was destroyed the minute Rembrandt considered it finished? Is this painting a work of art? With no work available to the senses, such questions seem meaningless. Moreover, Oldenburgh seems to have destroyed his so-called work with no third-order aesthetic aim in sight: no acquaintance is necessary for a proper evaluation of this work; knowing of what it supposedly consists suffices to understand it. Only philosophers may appreciate it, but these for the most part are bad appreciators of art. Yet it seems that forcing the audience to think about some piece of non-art—what is known as concept-art—has evolved into a kind of artistic procedure. If anywhere, then, this concept-art 'procedure' takes place solely at the first- and fourth-orders: the artist shows the museum director where his idea is supposed to be located, and where to put the sign. Which idea, and which sign are indeed the artist's choice. If we want to include this in the temple of art because the instructions include some materiality, then it seems to be poor art at best. Its visual, temporal, spatial or literary impact all are nil: we are provoked only philosophically.

Art as we know it is a modern, western invention brought to life for the sake of providing people with certain appreciative experiences. However, this does not mean that aesthetic experiences define art, because many an object clearly and indisputably is a work of art, without perhaps ever having provided one person with an aesthetic experience, and even if some work sometimes did provide one person with an aesthetic experience, it will most certainly not do so continuously. Ideally only works of art are supposed to provide certain experiences. It ensues from our characterization of art that we should not attempt to define a specific object's artistic essence, as there is no such thing as a general essence of individual works of art. Instead, there may be an essence to its ideal of experiential functionality, and I shall attempt to employ this thought in what follows. In the present section I opt for a characterization not a definition of art.

Dickie said: "A work of art in the classificatory sense is (1) an artifact (2) upon which some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social

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institution (the Artworld) have conferred the status of candidate for appreciation.”<sup>15</sup> My amendment would be that for a thing to be a work of art it must be produced according to artistic procedures whose aesthetic relevance has been established by members of the art world. This would be my specification of art’s most characteristic traits. It is not really a definition because it begs the question of sufficient conditions by relating art status to aesthetic evaluations, and by historicizing the introduction of artistic procedures. I put it this way:

1. Artworks exemplify some artistic procedure.
2. A procedure is artistic only if it includes second and third order choices as specified (because artworks must admit appreciations answering the principle of acquaintance).
3. A procedure is artistic once it has been shown to be aesthetically rewarding, i.e., it must have been shown to license exemplary works.
4. These exemplary works’ exemplarity is to be established by appropriate aesthetic evaluations.

Thus, art status attribution in the end is based in aesthetic evaluation. We now have a classificatory characterization that does not specify the conditions of singular works but those of artistic procedures, and bases this specification ultimately on the aesthetic evaluation of actual art works. In response to Weitz’ formulation of the problem: evaluation cannot be kept out of the definition of art, but it should not be brought in bluntly as a means to assess the value of individual works. Instead, evaluation should function as a means to establish the capabilities of artistic procedures which can subsequently be applied as a classificatory means. Weitz’s is a false dilemma. Evaluation precedes classification as much as it precedes honorific definition.

Returning to the argument of the previous chapters: works of art of all kinds involve a reduction of the polymodality characteristic of our embodied perceptual access to the world. Some modality, however, must remain in position if the work of art is to make up for this reduction. This is why the inclusion of second-order material—stylistic—choices should be such an important element in artistic procedures. I am aware of the density of these remarks at this stage of the argument, but I will return to them in the third part. We are faced with the theoretical task of accounting for the aesthetic evaluation of singular works of art in such manner as to argue for the foundational role of these evaluations with regard to the successful introduction of the relevant artistic procedures. Before we address this issue (and to strengthen the objections raised against ‘cognitivism’ in Part I) an historical intermezzo will be undertaken in Part II. It will investigate just

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<sup>15</sup> Dickie, ‘The Institutional Conception of Art’, 1973, p. 25

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what two philosophers arguing on the brink of the modern period have brought to bear on the art practice that we are acquainted with. First I shall return to Immanuel Kant, who, two centuries ago, developed a systematic, and philosophically sophisticated, aesthetic theory. Kant made ample work of establishing the non-viability of cognitivist reductionisms, and defended a non-relativist subjectivism. If art is supposed to depend upon events of aesthetic evaluation grounded in our aesthetic experiences, Kant's theorizing about the transcendental characteristics of what is involved in these evaluations and experiences becomes of tantamount importance for a critical assessment of our artistic practice. We shall find reason, however, to more or less doubt the effectiveness of Kant's critique of cognitivism as it was allegedly professed by one his predecessors, Alexander Baumgarten. Therefore, after we have assessed the value of Kant's contributions, we shall go back a little further in time, to the founding father of modern aesthetics, Baumgarten.

## PART II

### KANT AND BAUMGARTEN ON ART'S EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION

#### Introduction to Part II

In Chapter 1 we established how a mainstream in analytical aesthetics—called ‘cognitivism’, for the obvious reasons of its stress on the cognitive merits of works of art and on the merits of a descriptive approach to art—has been unsuccessful in explaining the fundamental aesthetic concepts (such as representation, expression, aesthetic property), due to these concepts’ basis in experiential effects of works of art, whether these effects relate to the experiences of aesthetic appreciation and evaluation or to the experiences that are represented or expressed in works of art. As is common knowledge among aestheticians, Immanuel Kant was the one to systematically account for aesthetic evaluation in terms of subjective purposivity. It is my intention to show that his reasons for doing so should be our reasons for looking for another strategy—one different from that provided by cognitivism—to tackle these problems. Unfortunately, and just as commonly known, Kant’s aesthetics although brilliant in depth, contains many obscurities. Also he does not address the problems of representation and expression in art. Or does he? Kant’s analysis of aesthetic ideas can be said to at least imply an analysis of art’s experiential moments as represented or expressed. It will be argued that his analysis of aesthetic ideas which supposedly carry the representational and expressive aspects of a work of art is in terms of the experience of the free play of the cognitive faculties that founds the aesthetic judgement, and that Kant thus implicitly brings together the representational and expressive behaviour of works of art with aesthetic evaluation in general. The Kantian argument, however, is complex, and much has to be done to disentangle it. For instance, Kant’s analysis of aesthetic ideas regards art and its moral effects upon the beholding subject, and his analysis of aesthetic judgement regards aesthetic evaluation, but how do the two—art appreciation and aesthetic evaluation—relate to each other? Moreover, Kant has explicitly argued against Baumgarten’s aesthetics, taking this as a variety of cognitivism. However, did Kant assess correctly the tenets Baumgarten held? I shall argue that Baumgarten’s ideas, possibly due to their reminiscing rhetoric, or their primitiveness, point to an interesting perspective on Kant’s

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aesthetic ideas. Baumgarten took aesthetics to be a science for the study of perceptual knowledge, and, on the face of it, this indeed seems to imply a cognitivist approach. However, I shall demonstrate how Baumgarten took this perceptual knowledge not as descriptive and conceptual in nature. A second criticism put forward by Kant concerned Baumgarten's thesis that beauty was a species of perfection. In his section on objective purposivity, Kant argued for the irrelevance of perfection of whatever kind for our assessment of beauty. However, with the notion of perceptual knowledge Baumgarten referred to phenomenal experiential knowledge rather than to discursive knowledge. Therefore, the perfection taken to be basic for beauty seems not at all to be concept-related or guided by conceptual or external considerations. We shall find that a better view on Baumgarten's theses will—in retrospect—sophisticate our understanding of Kant's analysis of aesthetic ideas as 'animating' the mind and introducing 'soul' into the world. We will find two important things in Baumgarten's views: first, a stress on the non-discursive nature of the 'extensive' knowledge that founds beauty. Secondly, a confusion between subjective and objective aspects of the aesthetic situation which points towards an interesting characterization of 'aesthetic properties', and aesthetic evaluation.

## Chapter Four

### Aesthetic Evaluation, Subjectivism

#### 1. Taste and Common Sense

According to Kant, the most crucial problem for aesthetics is the antinomy of taste: we argue a lot about aesthetic matters, and rightly so, but at the same time we are convinced that no mechanical test could prove a judgement of taste, nor may we base our judgements on the testimony of other people. We hold the principle of acquaintance. We seem to have to see for ourselves, and are more or less at a loss if we try to find a set of principled considerations to help us in judgement. Nevertheless, as Hume remarked, we seem to agree that some works of art are more valuable than others.<sup>1</sup> Kant argues that if a principle of taste exists it certainly will not consist in an enumeration of prevalent judgements, nor will it be a logical principle that would enable us to prove a thing's beauty from its properties.<sup>2</sup> Kant's aesthetic theory can be read as an account of this antinomy of taste starting with an analysis of the claims we make in aesthetic discourse. Kant distinguishes pure judgements of taste from judgements depending somehow on conceptual constraints. Both types of judgement involve a subjective purposivity which is described in terms of the cognitive faculties playing freely. However illuminating this is, Kant's account of the alleged universal validity of these judgements in terms of a common sense is puzzling.

Kant takes taste as a typical instance of common sense and as entailing recognition of our presupposing common sense's existence, but leaves suspended the general question of how exactly common sense relates to the judgement of taste. In more detail, Kant associates this common sense with a reasonable and non-specific demand for consent; it is the condition of

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<sup>1</sup> In Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste', 1969.

<sup>2</sup> In § 17 of the Critique of Judgement, and again in § 34. I cite the B-edition from 1793, and these later editions: Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1974 (Henceforth: KU, B, S) and Meredith's translation: Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, 1952 (1793) (Henceforth: CJ, M).

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‘communicability as such’; that which makes us demand of other people that they respond to a certain object as we did.<sup>3</sup> As such Kant takes the judgement of taste to be an exemplary instance of this consent, a typical illustration of common sense’s obligatory working.<sup>4</sup> However, he also thinks that this common sense ...is a mere ideal norm”,<sup>5</sup> and the subjective principle of taste.<sup>6</sup> The elements of the faculty of taste laid out in the Analytic of Beauty, such as ‘disinterestedness’, ‘universal though conceptless pleasure’, ‘purposeless finality’, and ‘necessity’, will be united in it. Lastly, and in seeming contradiction with the above, Kant thinks that our judgements of taste are possible only if a common sense is presupposed, but at the same time this common sense must be understood as merely an effect of the free play of the cognitive faculties.<sup>7</sup> Paradoxical remarks such as these form the intrinsic motivation to the argument of this chapter. How are we to understand the subjectivity of this ‘principle’?

### 2. Beauty’s ‘Rule’

One of the perspectives Kant presents on the antinomy of taste involves the argument that even though we find that our judgements of taste should be universally agreed upon we do not claim that they are logically necessary. This is illustrated by the fact that we do not think that a criterion amounting to a truth value could be established for these judgements. We cannot find a truth value based on correspondence with a beautiful object’s natural properties, nor one in terms of a coherence with determinate truths unattached to the judgement of taste under consideration. The only rather uncertain way to establish the ‘correctness’ of a judgement of taste is by eliminating those aspects from the experience involved that might cloud the aesthetic relevance of the judgement.<sup>8</sup> Instead of logically necessary, the

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. the note in the ‘Remark’ of the deduction of judgements of taste (§ 38, CJ, M147, KU, B151, S221).

<sup>4</sup> CJ, M85, KU, B68, S159.

<sup>5</sup> CJ, M84, KU, B 67, S159.

<sup>6</sup> “Therefore [judgements of taste] must have a subjective principle, and one which determines what pleases or displeases, by means of feeling only and not through concepts, but yet with universal validity. Such a principle, however, could only be regarded as a common sense.” CJ, M82, KU, B 65, S157.

<sup>7</sup> “The judgement of taste, therefore, depends upon our presupposing the existence of a common sense. (But this is not to be taken to mean some external sense, but the effect arising from the free play of our powers of cognition).” CJ, M83, KU, B64-65, S157.

<sup>8</sup> “It may be a matter of uncertainty whether a person who thinks he is laying down a judgement of taste is, in fact, judging in conformity with that idea; but that this idea is what is contemplated [darauf beziehe] in his judgement, and that, consequently, it is

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validity claim of the judgement of taste is exemplary:<sup>9</sup> the beautiful object is supposed to be an outstanding instance of a 'rule' that we cannot describe. Now what kind of rule can this be?<sup>10</sup> For example, in a botanical encyclopaedia examples of plants are depicted in such a way as to enable us to identify actual plants in nature. A conventional system is at work here: we must understand the ways in which plants differ in general from their representations to remark the resemblances between image and thing. We must reconcile differences in dimensionality, dimension, colour, mobility, et cetera. On top of this, we must be aware of the various ways in which pictures of distinct plants differ from one another. There are, indeed, rules involved in such botanical identifications, and each time we succeed in identifying a plant we will be able to provide to our satisfaction a description of the relevant distinctness. Put differently, such pictures as these comply with the concepts that describe the depicted plants, and they can be understood as aesthetic normal ideas—which Kant took as irrelevant for (the ideal of) beauty, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter.

It cannot be this way with a concrete beautiful thing being an exemplary instantiation of a 'rule'. Clearly we do not have encyclopaedic books wherein all exemplary cases of beautiful things are classified. Of course we have books representing the paintings of subsequent ages, periods, styles and painters, but of necessity these books do not assemble all and only aesthetically excellent paintings, nor do they enable their readers to 'cross-categorically' recognize natural beauties or beautiful artefacts of distinct kinds, such as aeroplanes, novels, musical works, sculptures, et cetera. This is due, in the end, to the fact that each criterion of classification will be of a

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meant to be a judgement of taste, is proclaimed by his use of the expression 'beauty'. For himself he can be certain on the point from his mere consciousness of the separation of everything belonging to the agreeable and the good from the delight remaining to him; and this is all for which he promises himself the agreement of every one—a claim which, under these conditions, he would also be warranted in making, were it not that he frequently sinned against them, and thus passed an erroneous judgement of taste." CJ, M56-57, KU, B26, S130-131. Kant alludes once more to our uncertainty in matters of taste in the following: "Hence the common sense is a mere ideal norm. With this as presupposition, a judgement that accords with it, as well as the delight in an Object expressed in that judgement, is rightly converted into a rule for every one. For the principle, while it is only subjective, being yet assumed as subjectively universal (a necessary idea for every one), could, in what concerns the consensus of different judging Subjects, demand universal assent like an objective principle, provided we were assured of our subsumption under it being correct." CJ, M84-85, KU, B68, S159-160.

<sup>9</sup> § 18, CJ, M81, KU, B63-64, S156.

<sup>10</sup> § 19. Cf. also § 8, CJ, M56, KU, B26, S131.

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general nature and will therefore be irrelevant for the assessment of an individual entity's aesthetic value. Secondly, to advocate the possibility or even desirability of such a general, rule-governed objectivism with regard to individual beauties apparently is a contradiction in terms. All trees of a certain kind have leaves of a certain kind, but they will not all be of equal beauty. Beauty is an aspect of a thing's 'thisness' and not of its general characteristics. Alternatively, we might think of the general meaning, or essence, of the term 'beauty' as residing in some family resemblance. However, this 'family' would comprise the beautiful individuals of each and every kind of perceptual object and we would still be in need of a criterion to establish which instances of a kind fall within the 'family' of beauties and which don't. However, as is the case with a human family where genealogy decides over the relevance of the similarities involved, such a criterion will be external to what seems to be the resemblance relation wanted. So the claim of a family resemblance between beautiful objects merely begs the question. The idea then that beauty is exemplary of some undecidable rule is metaphorical at best—at least if for the sake of the argument we are allowed the idea that there is a literal sense in the first place to the involvement of rules in more straightforward cases of meaning attribution.<sup>11</sup> The idea of an undecidable rule needs elaboration.

An important part of this elaboration is that in claiming universal validity we acknowledge that the free play engages more normal cognitive considerations. This is the purport of Kant's statement that judgements of taste are not simply subjective<sup>12</sup> and it might account for the appearance that some rule is implicated in aesthetic matters. However, we are also aware of the insufficiency of these everyday cognitive considerations, and of the relationality of our evaluations with regard to our very own perspective and feelings. Such acknowledgements would then seem to explain why this aesthetic rule is not a real one: we might think that idiosyncrasies in our background knowledge explain our uncertainty with regard to judgements of taste. In effect, however, our judgements of taste do not describe an object's natural properties, so our uncertainty about our evaluative judgement cannot be reduced to the acknowledgement of merely cognitive shortcomings,<sup>13</sup> as Kant argued against the Baumgartian idea of the beauty of sense knowledge

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Boghossian, 'The Rule-Following Considerations', 1989 for an elaborate discussion of the rationale of rule-following.

<sup>12</sup> "Proofs are of no avail whatever for determining the judgement of taste, and in this connexion matters stand just as they would were that judgement simply subjective." § 33:1, CJ, M139, KU, B140, S213.

<sup>13</sup> Nor to Goodman's syntactical and semantical 'symptoms' of art's 'languages'.

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as being knowledge of a confused kind.<sup>14</sup> Nor can it be taken away by more knowledgeable approaches. Instead, the uncertainty relates to a different theoretical point which is connected with the role of imagination in the aesthetic experience. I will go into this in Sections 6 and 7, when specifying the regulative and ideal nature of aesthetic experience, and in Chapter 8. First, I will consider the possible relevance that cognitive considerations may be allowed to have within our judgements of beauty.

### 3. Beauty's Independence from Determinate Concepts

According to Kant the aesthetic judgement is pure if it is not clouded by interests, emotions or concepts, although it may be related to them. Put differently, and concentrating on the role of concepts, purity means that in a judgement of taste no determinate concept may be found at the predicate place. If in specifiably different ways a judgement of taste does involve a concept which determines the object, then the judgement is dependent. The aesthetic evaluative predicate itself does not determine its object, as is evident from beauty's lacking a rule of application. Instead, it expresses the pleasure with which the free play of the cognitive faculties manifests itself. Put otherwise, it is this pleasure with which we become aware of this free play, and it is such pleasant awareness that we express with the predicate of 'beauty'. So whenever we attribute beauty, the pleasant awareness of a free play of our cognitive faculties is presupposed. As a consequence every judgement of beauty must be 'pure' in the Kantian sense, whether in it beauty is attributed to a work of art, to some frivolous decoration, or to an artefact complying with some end or other.<sup>15</sup> Our discussions may concern natural properties of the object, but it should be our own pleasant awareness of our mental activities regarding these properties (among others) which we actually express in the judgement of taste. If we want to prevent this subjectivism from lapsing into idiosyncratic relativism, we must find a way to relate this pleasant awareness to more determinate considerations regarding the object, i.e. to the concepts with which we determine this object.

In his recent *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued* Anthony Savile argues that the purity of the judgement of taste relates to its justification (determining ground, is what Kant says) not to its content, that is, the question of purity is

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<sup>14</sup> §15:2. CJ, M69, KU, B44-45, S143.

<sup>15</sup> Such is the import of Kant's remarks on the botanist, who may judge the beauty of a flower in a pure way only by abstracting from his knowledge of biological functionality. (§16:2, CJ, M72, KU, B49, S146).

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supposed to be irrelevant to the concepts and terms used to form the proposition with.<sup>16</sup> According to Savile, on the basis of a judgement of taste certain determinate remarks are made about an object, the truth of which remarks can be ascertained along normal lines. This is irrespective of the fact that the grounds we have for including such determinations must be pure, i.e. they may not be derived from the concepts determining the measure of perfection of the object, nor from sensuous pleasures. Savile's point of view certainly appears to be an interesting way to look at Kant's aesthetics, which seems to support some such distinction, albeit not explicitly so, because Kant's analysis regards the a priori grounds of the judgement of taste exclusively, and not its empirical contents. Nevertheless it is not clear at first glance what the distinction between the terms used and the grounds we ought to have for using them should amount to.<sup>17</sup> How can we alienate the 'truth' of what we say about a beautiful object, from our justification for doing so? Moreover, I am not convinced that the application of terms to an aesthetic object and its properties obeys normal truth-making procedures, as is evident from the fact that aesthetic discourse tends not to be about more normal secondary qualities, such as colours, but about 'complex properties', such as 'tense', 'harmonious', 'enchanted', 'elegant', et cetera. To apply such predicates as these seems to presuppose more sagacity than 'mere looking', and as Kant has it—and Savile acknowledges—does not allow for mechanical tests, or, for that matter, the use of samples and scales. Next, a different perspective on the distinction proposed by Savile will be implied. For now, however, I should like us to look at a different proposal.

Ted Cohen argued that in the case of complex works of art (in cinema, for example) every judgement of taste is dependent.<sup>18</sup> He thinks that the notion

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<sup>16</sup> Burgess, 'Kant's Key to the Critique of Taste', 1989, p. 492 differentiates between the pleasure's ground and the pleasure's source, along different, less plausible, lines: "...the pleasure's ground is the free play of the cognitive faculties; recognition of this free play as satisfying cognition in general is the pleasure's source."

<sup>17</sup> I propose (in Chapter 5, Section 3) a distinction between 'grand' aesthetic values, such as beauty and the sublime, and the reasons we are willing to provide in defence of them, only the latter of which are informative—returning with this to the discussion in chapter Two.

<sup>18</sup> Cohen, 'An Emendation in Kant's Theory of Taste', 1990. Ruth Lorand, 'Free and Dependent Beauty: a Puzzling Issue', 1989 has argued against the intelligibility of Kant's distinction between 'beauty' as a genus term, and its two species: free and dependent beauty. If the genus 'beauty' is absolutely conceptless, dependent beauty – which supposedly implies some conceptuality – cannot be a species of beauty, whereas if the genus is not supposed to be absolutely devoid of conceptual constraint then a 'pure' kind of beauty is not among its species. One cannot have it both ways. Either way the genus collapses or both of its species do. My argument sustains this critique, in that I take Kant's notion of pure

## Art and Experience – Part II

of dependent beauty can best be understood as explaining the role played by the concept at the subject position within the relevant proposition stating the judgement of taste, 'X is beautiful'.<sup>19</sup> With respect to complex works of art, such as those of the cinema, it surely makes a difference if one appreciates a film's plot instead of its editing or lighting qualities.<sup>20</sup> Now, we may all agree that agreement about the concepts with which to describe the object will deepen any critical argument, but why is this the case? Descriptive agreement definitely will not suffice for an actual evaluation, because 'beauty' is not derivable from determinations of the object, nor is it itself a determinate concept, as there is no real rule involved in its application, as we have already seen.<sup>21</sup> In order to make Savile's and Cohen's remarks fruitful for our approach, we must establish two things: first, we must find out whether such determinate concepts fill in the subject concept in every judgement attributing aesthetic excellence. Secondly, we must explain the role these concepts play within the experience that founds the predicate concept and legitimates the judgement as a whole.

It is well known that Kant took natural beauties to be pure, and not dependent upon concepts with which the ends are determined that are met by the object, among others because, evidently, there are no such concepts. However, in the case of our appreciation of a tree, much the same as with complex works of art, it will surely make a difference if we admire the tree because of its shades of colour rather than because of certain shapes of its bark or of its trunk, et cetera. Some conceptual determination is presupposed here too. Moreover, it appears that without any concepts at all no representation whatsoever will be formed in perception, as—counterfactually—our mind would be confronted with an unsynthesized heap of sense data: at least the categories of understanding will have to be involved and normally also one

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beauty not to refer to a species of beauty—because no perception could do without concepts—but to the necessary implication of aesthetic experience instead. Cf. also Stecker, 'Free Beauty, Dependent Beauty, and Art', 1987; Stecker, 'Lorand and Kant on Free and Dependent Beauty', 1990; Lorand, 'On Free and Dependent Beauty'—A Rejoinder', 1992; Lord, 'A Note on Ruth Lorand's 'Free and Dependent Beauty: a Puzzling Issue'', 1991.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen, *op.cit.*, p.142. Cf. also CJ, § 6.

<sup>20</sup> According to Savile, *op.cit.*, the notion of dependent beauty functions negatively only: a judgement of taste is precluded when too much weight is placed on the relevant concept and on the object's measure of perfection with regard to it. I think this position evades the need for an account of the role of the cognitive considerations within the free play.

<sup>21</sup> Cohen, *op.cit.*, p. 144. Cf. also Kulenkampff, 'The Objectivity of Taste: Hume and Kant', 1990, p. 109: "... aesthetic predicates, as Kant showed, don't represent concepts of objects with clear cut criteria for their application."

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or more empirical concepts. So our determinate grasp of the natural world has a role to play in the relevant aesthetic experience, and such a grasp evidently embraces specific conceptual determinations. In consequence, determinate concepts are involved in our judgements of natural beauties as they are in our aesthetic judgements of art.

In general then, if we ascribe aesthetic excellence to some particular thing this will be related to the empirical concepts with which we describe the object's natural properties and relations. The excellence, however, cannot be inferred from these properties or their concepts, nor may it be derived from the involved measure of perfection with regard to that concept or to the goals this concept involves. With regard to this, Kant distinguishes between the internal and the external purposivity of an object, which is preferably (read, exclusively) an artefact. That is, an artefact's objective purposivity can be measured externally in terms of its fulfilling the ends specified in the concept of the artefact, or internally, in terms of the quantity of properties that subsume it under the concept in question. The concept of an artefact not only specifies the goals the object should answer but also, respectively, specifies what it ought to look like.<sup>22</sup> If a judgement is based on any of these two kinds of objective purposivity it will then not be a judgement of taste, but merely a confused kind of judgement of the good.<sup>23</sup> It should be based, instead, on our subjective purposivity of the free play of the cognitive faculties. The threat of passing a confused judgement of goodness seems to be absent with regard to natural objects, as there exist no relevant concepts of the goals of natural objects, no external ones at least. In short, instead of such erratic judging we use the notion of aesthetic excellence to express our satisfaction with the way in which in the relevant empirical case our concepts seem to fit the sensory material though not to the measure of providing descriptions of this material, so that someone wanting to argue for some object's aesthetic excellence should ultimately base his remarks on his own satisfaction regarding a specific kind of experience of the applicability of his background knowledge to the relevant object. The concepts making up the judgement's dependence somehow determine the subject matter of the experience which makes up its purity. However, aesthetic excellence's relation with the concepts involved can and, I think, should be analyzed with the help of Kant's transcendental

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<sup>22</sup> Which nowadays is understood in terms of an object's functional or, respectively, procedural definition. Cf. Davies, *Definitions of Art*, Chapter 2. In normal circumstances these two aspects of a concept's definition should correspond with each other.

<sup>23</sup> CJ, Third Moment. Cf. also §57:4 CJ, M207, KU, B236, S281.

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notion of a free play of the cognitive faculties. So let us consider this in more detail.

### 4. The Free Play's Ambiguous Role

According to Kant our aesthetic acknowledgement of the common sense is a consequence of the subjective finality of the free play of the cognitive faculties, of which we become aware by our reflective feeling of pleasure.<sup>24</sup> Within this free play the understanding is repeatedly challenged by the imagination<sup>25</sup> to provide the concepts which imagination keeps challenging. One might therefore characterize this free play of the cognitive faculties as a dialogue, rather than a harmony, between understanding, which at the request of imagination furnishes certain determinate concepts, and the imagination, which keeps disobeying these concepts' application by providing "a wealth of undeveloped material".<sup>26</sup> This notion of the 'free play of the cognitive faculties' performs an ambiguous role though. One can easily see it as a description of the beholder's response to the beautiful object under consideration, but this would make the free play into an empirical event, not one grounding a priori the judgement of taste. However, Kant sometimes takes the emotion resulting from the free play as decisive, and not the empirical mental activities that this emotion is about, and understands this emotion as non-representative: that is, as transcendental, not empirical. If the empirical activity (or attitude) rather than only being necessary for a judgement of taste were instead sufficient for it, then undertaking it would be the same as perceiving beauty. And indeed nothing stands in the way of the idea that from some empirical point of view the free play indeed is a set of mental events that can be engaged in actively: we can actively decide not to let the (empirical) concepts of the understanding determine the sensuous manifold, but have the imagination instead propose all kinds of new perspectives on some specific object, whether these imaginative perspectives are kindred or not to the concepts we might more normally, i.e. in a cognitive experience, want to apply. This may be harder to do in the case of a

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<sup>24</sup> ... the pleasure or subjective finality ... CJ, M147, KU, B 151, S221.

<sup>25</sup> According to Kant "Imagination is the faculty of representing an object even without its presence in intuition." Critique of Pure Reason, Henceforth: CPR: §24:3, B151.

<sup>26</sup> Kant formulates this dialogue as follows: "aesthetically [the imagination] is free to furnish of its own accord, over and above that agreement with the concept, a wealth of undeveloped material for the understanding, to which the latter paid no regard in its concept, but which it [i.e., the understanding] can make use of, not so much objectively for cognition, as subjectively for quickening the cognitive faculties, and hence also indirectly for cognitions..." §49:10. CJ, M, KU, B198, S253.

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natural object or an artefact, neither of which is intended for aesthetic contemplation, but even in such cases it should not be impossible.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps such an actively undertaken set of mental activities is the way to correctly ‘perceive’ aesthetic properties, i.e. we may perceive aesthetic properties such as those referred to by Frank Sibley, not by conceptually determined perception, but solely by way of an imaginative free play. Ontologically speaking it may strike one as funny that the relationship between the mind’s activities and aesthetic properties should be tighter than is the case with so-called secondary qualities, like colours, even though these latter kinds of properties cannot be conceived of without reference to the beholder’s mental states.<sup>28</sup> We are pretty certain that ‘looking for colours’ does not determine one’s seeing a specific colour, say, red. ‘To watch’ normally does not coincide with ‘to see’. We seem far less reluctant, however, to accept the idea that enacting a free play of the cognitive faculties indeed induces one to see beauty. Looking in a certain way at some object or other may cause the object’s beauty to come forward. This is due, among other things, to the fact that aesthetic properties are not merely subject-dependent (as are secondary qualities) but are thoroughly subjective in that they depend on the subject’s imagination on top of his or her receptivity. In this chapter, I shall look into Kant’s answer to this conceptual specificity of aesthetic properties (as distinguished from secondary quality terms); in Chapter 7 I shall return to it, and take more contemporary studies as the reference point.

To begin with, we have more than one reason for not being prone to draw the conclusion that actively undertaking a free play amounts to perceiving beauty. Firstly, because we believe that doing our best does not warrant positive aesthetic evaluation; we want to uphold the more or less realist idea of a thing’s deserving our judgement of taste. Secondly, and perhaps less obvious, the idea that perceptive agency could secure a positive aesthetic evaluation presupposes that beauty, or its cognates, merely is a natural property with regard to which there would have to be rules governing its correct discernment. Kant denies that such rules exist in the first place, but even if they did it would be evident that at least most of us do not have access to them. Therefore, if the free play of the cognitive faculties is to perform its special role, some of its aspects other than mere agency must be what makes us decide to be confronted with a beautiful object. This ambiguity between

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<sup>27</sup> This is part of the argument sustaining Kant’s seeming preference for natural over artistic beauty.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. McDowell, ‘Values and Secondary Qualities’, 1985, and ‘Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World’, 1983.

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active and decisive aspects of a singularly described mental event must be resolved if we are to develop an adequate theory of aesthetic evaluation. However, in Kant's aesthetics the ambiguity seems to stem from Kant's distinction between transcendental idealism and empirical realism: the free play is empirically real but its legitimizing role is transcendently ideal. Unfortunately, I cannot go further into the more general distinction here, but propose instead a—temporary—way out through Kant's treatment of the aesthetic pleasure involved.

According to Kant the faculty of judgement in the aesthetic mode of estimating functions in order "... to [feel] with pleasure the subjective bearings of the representation."<sup>29</sup> Apparently Kant thinks that it is "The feeling of pleasure or displeasure [which] denotes nothing in the object..." which makes the notion of the free play of the cognitive faculties function decisively.<sup>30</sup> The pleasure regarding these subjective bearings of the representation, i.e., the free play of the cognitive faculties, must then be taken as the awareness that settles our aesthetic judgement. Now, this pleasure is not an intentional activity, but a specific awareness of one, a specific way of being affected by sensation, imagination and understanding.<sup>31</sup> Kant's definition of 'pleasure', in § 10, is of great interest here, since it is nominal and does not describe an allegedly substantial, empirical, experience of some clearly circumscribed emotion:

"The consciousness of the causality of a representation in respect of the state of the Subject as one tending to preserve a continuance of that state, may here be said to denote in a general way what is called pleasure."<sup>32</sup>

'Pleasure' then should be taken as an adverbial determination of the relevant awareness of the free play of the cognitive faculties.<sup>33</sup> So it is not the

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<sup>29</sup> CJ, M150, KU, B155, S224.

<sup>30</sup> More than once Kant asserts this Humean view of 'feeling' being non-representative. Cf. CJ, M42, M63, M145.

<sup>31</sup> According to Kant sensation is mere receptivity, i.e. the senses form a faculty of obtaining representations by being affected (CPR, B33). Cf. also Kant: Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht. Leipzig: Meiner, 1922, § 24, IV 57. Perception merely finds some succession within these inner affections schematized by inner sense with categories. (CPR, § 24.) Such self-affection is the a priori act by way of which the understanding comes to grips with a world consisting of spatio-temporally ordered objects and events. Inner sense as such is the mind's receptivity, the transcendental 'spot' where sensuous data meet with transcendental and determinate concepts.

<sup>32</sup> CJ, M61, KU, B33, S135.

<sup>33</sup> "The consciousness of mere formal finality in the play of the cognitive faculties of the Subject attending a representation whereby an object is given, is the pleasure itself ..." CJ, § 12, M64, KU, B36-37, S137-38.

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empirical perceptual and imaginative activities concerning the object but rather the pleasant awareness of such free activities, that constitutes our judgement of taste. For a judgement of taste, therefore, the subjective feeling of pleasure or displeasure is the very manner in which our inner sense ‘correctly’ receives an object’s aesthetic excellence.<sup>34</sup> We merely recognize it by wanting to carry on with the free play involved. Let us therefore conclude that Kant has provided the free play of the cognitive faculties with the double function of empirically providing the judgement of taste with its contents (the subject concept, the reasons we are willing to provide for our judgement), and of transcendentally grounding it (the predicate concept).<sup>35</sup>

### 5. Everyday Sound Understanding

Let me summarize some of the conclusions reached so far with regard to the question of how Kant thinks we legitimize our discourse on aesthetic excellence. Firstly, for the sake of its purity, the cognitive considerations within a judgement of taste need a subjective supplement: no testimony of either natural properties or of aesthetic qualities (if these—counterfactually—were testifiable in the first place) suffices. Secondly, this subjective supplement comes down to the pleasant awareness of the common sense involved in the free dialogue between our cognitive faculties. This common sense Kant describes in the following way:

“... the proportion of these cognitive faculties which is requisite for taste is requisite also for ordinary sound understanding, the presence of which we are entitled to presuppose in every one.”<sup>36</sup>

Now, because we presuppose a common sense, i.e. a communicability, in our everyday communication, it may seem that we take its existence for granted. However, the very fact that it ‘takes us by pleasure’ in aesthetic experience indicates that we do not.

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<sup>34</sup> It is with this conviction that Kant has started CJ: “If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the Object by means of understanding with a view to cognition, but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding) we refer the representation to the Subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure.” § 1, CJ, M41, KU, B3, S115.

<sup>35</sup> Taking either of these functions as the sole principle of taste reduces aesthetics to either an empiricism, or, respectively, a rationalism. Instead, one should account for both functions and their relatedness, because ... “The first would obliterate the distinction that marks off the object of our delight from the agreeable; the second, supposing the judgement rested upon determinate concepts, would obliterate its distinction from the good.” CJ, §58:1, M215, KU B246, S289.

<sup>36</sup> CJ, M150, KU, B155, S224.

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Let us start from the beginning of the argument, though. In section 40 Kant distinguishes common sense from ordinary sound understanding considering the latter ‘vulgar’. The former, on the contrary, he takes as an a priori taking into account of the ‘collective reason of mankind’.<sup>37</sup> But what does this mean exactly? Surely everyday sound understanding has its proper relevance for such a collective reason; it will be mostly on the basis of everyday sound understanding, if at all, that we realize universal communicability. There is, of course, one way not to use sound understanding in aesthetic argument: we cannot justify a judgement of taste by referring to ‘what the people think’. This would be less appropriate even than trying to formulate a standard of taste on the basis of many good judgements uttered by many suitably equipped critics, because in this latter case the results would not be as arbitrary (albeit just as inconclusive) as they would be in reference to what the majority thinks, irrespective of their exact powers and faculties of judgement. Nevertheless, we have seen above how all judgements of taste, pure though they may be, also depend on certain cognitive considerations. Moreover, within aesthetic experience our faculties are co-operating as they would in any cognitive activity.<sup>38</sup> And although it is not understanding but imagination which takes the lead here,<sup>39</sup> understanding is involved. Moreover, Kant surely does not mean with what we have constructed as his remarks on the permissibility of conceptual determination at the subject place in our aesthetic judgements, that this only regards scientific knowledge, at the expense of everyday, vulgar considerations. So we may safely conclude that everyday sound understanding will have something to contribute to the determination of the valued object and will thus form part of what the aesthetic judgement is all about. What is expressed in an aesthetic judgement is the pleasure regarding the communicability of our everyday understanding of the object, and not merely of the more specialist understanding provided by critics and experts. Beauty is for everyone—irrespective of the possibility of there being judgements more relevant to some specific object, such as those more normally provided by suitably equipped critics.

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<sup>37</sup> “... the idea of a public sense, i.e. a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (a priori) of the mode of representation of every one else, in order, as it were, to weigh its judgement with the collective reason of mankind ...” CJ, M151, KU, B157, S225.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. CJ, § 3, M45, KU, B8-9, 118.

<sup>39</sup> CJ, M88, KU, B71, S162. Cf. also § 36, M145, KU, B148, S219, and M179, KU, B198, S253.

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Kant also describes the aesthetic feeling of pleasure or displeasure, i.e. our awareness of the common sense, as a feeling of life:

“Here 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 ...”<sup>40</sup>

If this specification is to help explain the judgement of taste, then the notion of the feeling of life should not refer to some vague and speculative principle of personal identity. Instead it should involve certain concrete, though fundamental, feelings that may serve as an evaluative, internal criterion of the process that ‘a life’ comprises, in much the following way: whenever the feeling of life (feeling of “pleasure or displeasure”) is enhanced, be it positively or negatively, there are possibilities at stake: alternatives to some actual situation. If the feeling of life is positively enhanced then something is to be celebrated (and to be continued). If we are allowed the idea that this feeling’s enhancement relates to possibilities, then such a celebration will necessarily also regard the acknowledgement that the situation as experienced is not nearly as inevitable as it might have seemed before, but is nevertheless of such nature as to have one want it continued. The feeling of life thus also becomes the criterion with which imagination works in its schematic synthesis of the manifold of the senses, and in its guiding role in the free play. Returning to our subject matter then, aesthetic judgements express not only our awareness of the communicability of our cognitive considerations, but also the fact that there is no metaphysical necessity to this communicability. We must understand aesthetic pleasure, then, as a reflective assessment by our feeling of life, of the contingency of the common sense that is involved in our (everyday) determinations of the world and the objects and events inhering in it.

### 6. An Ideal Aesthetic Experience

How are we to understand this transcendental assessment: can it be upheld against contemporary scepticism such as that expressed by Nelson

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<sup>40</sup> CJ, M42, KU, B3, S115. [My italics].

## Art and Experience – Part II

Goodman? Goodman surely is right in supposing that within an aesthetic argument we are interested in information about the object more than in some uninformative idiosyncratic evaluation.<sup>41</sup> And we can state an everyday corollary to this: we let ourselves be convinced by arguments and descriptions of the object; we do communicate about aesthetic values as if they were natural properties; moreover, we hardly ever have aesthetic experiences of the kind that would correspond to the Kantian analysis, let alone actually ever refer to them. Therefore, it is no coincidence that a theoretical definition of empirical aesthetic experiences is not available. Monroe Beardsley, for example, has found only a set of necessary conditions, and has argued that we are unable to state the conditions that are also sufficient for such a definition. So we may in the end be tempted to dismiss altogether the claims involved and the notion of aesthetic experience, as Goodman does. However, we think something is wrong with the elitist person judging aesthetic matters from a purely social point of view, and citing other people's appraisals rather than 'looking for himself.' We adhere to the principle of acquaintance.<sup>42</sup> We are in need of an account of evaluations' normative effect, rather than of their descriptive efficacy and, indeed, Kant has something to say about this normativity. Starting then from the idea of evaluation's normative effect, we may as well conclude from the above sceptical remarks about empirical experiences that in arguing about matters of taste, although we refer to actual experiences, we do not mean these to be decisive.

So far I have attributed to Kant the view that the relevant aesthetic pleasure concerns our common sense and the contingency of its presupposition. The lack of a provable, physical necessity of the values that are ascertained in an aesthetic evaluation, is what makes the awareness pleasant in the first place. As argued above, aesthetic experience concerns the surprise involved in our awareness of the actual, and contingent, co-operation of our cognitive faculties with regard to some specific part of the world. Perhaps then we may conceive of aesthetic excellence as providing an experience of the central metaphysical problem of representation, of how our symbols hook onto the world. To provide an experiential awareness of this problem is a big task that we assign to aesthetic experience in aesthetic discourse; Indeed too big, it

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<sup>41</sup> Goodman, LA, chapter VI, p. 261: "To say that a work of art is good or even to say how good it is does not after all provide much information, does not tell us whether the work is evocative, robust, vibrant, or exquisitely designed, and still less what are its salient specific qualities of color, shape, or sound."

<sup>42</sup> As Kant formulates it: "We want to get a look at the object with our own eyes, just as if our delight depended on sensation." §8:6, CJ M56, KU, B25, S130.

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seems, for any concrete empirical experience to meet. (It may be too vague as well for any experience not to meet it.) This is why we think of it as overcoming us if we are lucky enough; and why we think that, notwithstanding the trouble we go through in our perceptual contemplation, we cannot simply wring it from such contemplative activity, even though at some point missing a particular work of art's aesthetic excellence may be due to a lack of concentration by the beholder. Nevertheless we do readily refer to and believe in the notion of an aesthetic appreciative experience which secures our attribution of aesthetic values such as aesthetic excellence, artistic creativity, style, and aesthetic authenticity. We talk along lines which ultimately point to some specific experience, and if we want to understand such referring, a better strategy than denying our actual experiences' empirical identity and relevance would lie in understanding the functionality of such reference as involving some ideal notion of this experience.

### 7. A regulative Principle of Aesthetic Discourse

In keeping with the distinction that Kant proposes in the Preface to the first edition of *Critique of Judgement*, in the context of the aesthetic problem we should now ask whether this ideal notion of a pleasant, aesthetic, awareness of the contingency of a presupposed common sense should be regarded as constitutive or regulative for our notion of aesthetic excellence.<sup>43</sup> In his analysis of the 'analogies of experience' in *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant accounts for the difference between 'constitutive' and 'regulative' with the help of a distinction between mathematical and philosophical analogies: a mathematical analogy enables us to know a fourth member if one knows three already, whereas in a philosophical analogy only some rule of recognition is implied, and an ability to recognize the next instance if it should occur, but not the possibility to infer this next instance.<sup>44</sup> In this sense, philosophical analogies are not constitutive, but regulative. Also, if a discursive domain is being constituted by some unique a priori principle it shall be independent from other domains.

To start with the latter point: the alleged autonomy of our discourse on aesthetic excellence is merely relative, because it does not imply such independence: the aesthetic domain is connected with our knowledge claims as it is with our actions, however problematically so. The notion of the pleas-

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<sup>43</sup> CJ, M4, KU, BV-VI, S74.

<sup>44</sup> CPR, B 222, R258.

## Art and Experience – Part II

ant awareness of common sense which forms the principle—with its undescribable rule—of aesthetic discourse therefore cannot be constitutive. This we could also have derived from the fact that we cannot prove a thing's beauty on the ground of such an awareness nor on the ground of an analogue with three acknowledgedly beautiful things. So on both counts the principle of aesthetic discourse must be regulative. And because this principle—the pleasant awareness of a common sense—rests upon the idea of an identifiable aesthetic experience, for aesthetic discourse aesthetic experience itself functions as the regulative principle.

The empirically indistinct character of aesthetic experiences with regard to their functionality can, in combination with the regulative functionality of its notion, be accounted for by taking the aesthetic experience as functioning within aesthetic discourse as an 'asymptotic' ideality, rather than as an identifiable, and substantial, empirical event. But why should this ideal experience be relevant for our everyday, i.e. empirical, critical practice? This question may prove far less intelligible than it may seem at first sight, because we are not sure what empirical activities should be undertaken in order to recognize an aesthetic value, nor are we certain that they are the kind of things that are there simply to be recognized. Kant has made it clear that as empirical events aesthetic experiences are indecisive. On the one hand, the ideal aesthetic experience may be an actuality for some of us at some specific time, but even then no determinate claims as to this actuality will provide a knock-down argument for a specific evaluation, nor will they deepen the relevant issue. We will not be convinced of a thing's beauty by a statement such as: "Believe me, I had this aesthetic experience when contemplating this object, so it must be beautiful." Moreover, no empirical identification of aesthetic experiences is ever going to be operable, as the symptoms of aesthetic experience reveal an obvious vagueness.<sup>45</sup> We saw above that this is not accidental. Instead it provides more evidence of its merely regulative nature. As such the aesthetic experience is an ideality, and may just as well, without loss of regulative functionality, be a figment of our (theoretical) imagination. On the other hand, this aesthetic experience is an idealization in that we ascribe comprehensiveness, and coherence to it, and take it to include many important realizations related to common sense, and

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<sup>45</sup> Monroe Beardsley readily conceded this. Cf. Fisher, 'Beardsley on Aesthetic Experience', 1983, p. 89. The remark at least regards attempts of providing a description of aesthetic experiences independent of their objects. If instead one would try to relate the experience in non-contingent manner to objective qualities much of this vagueness might recede. However, since objective properties cannot be taken as decisive, such a strategy does not seem available here.

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to possess a moral significance that possibly can only be explained in terms of some ideal way of life. That leaves us with the question why aesthetic excellence would bring in the moral significance that Kant attributes to it.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> This chapter rehearses the arguments in my paper, Gerwen, 'Kant's Regulative Principle of Aesthetic Excellence: The Ideal Aesthetic Experience', 1995. A draft of this paper was presented at the Annual conference of the British Society of Aesthetics, September, 1993. I have profited considerably from critical remarks by Paul Crowther, Nicholas MacAdoo, Anthony Savile, Jan Bransen, Marc Slors, and Menno Lievers, Professors Karl Schuhmann, Willem van Reijen, Pat Matthews, John Neubauer, Rudolf Makkreel, and an anonymous referee for *Kant-Studien*. I am grateful to the editors of *Kant-Studien* for allowing me to use this paper here.

# Chapter Five

## Aesthetic Moral Relevance

### 1. Aesthetic Ideas and the Free Play

Let us look once again at the free play of the cognitive faculties, now from the point of view of its alleged subject matter, beauty, which Kant takes to be some unity within multiplicity which cannot be described or thought of by way of empirical concepts.<sup>1</sup> Beauty is the expression of aesthetic ideas, at least where the fine arts are concerned.<sup>2</sup> Aesthetic ideas are defined as presentations which have come to lie beyond the limitations of some concept as a consequence of the addition of perceptual elements to such concept's more normal representations. As such they occasion in the beholder an abundance of thoughts and considerations without leading to a cognitive judgement. An aesthetic idea is ...

“... that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e., concept, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get on level terms with or render completely intelligible.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The beautiful object will be variegated and regularly ordered at the same time, but not rigidly so. A wildly rippling brook and hearth-fire cannot be beautiful, nor can a regular pepper-garden, (General Remark:6-7, CJ M88-89, KU, B72-73, S163-64).

<sup>2</sup> § 51:1. CJ, M183, KU, B204, S257. Let us for a moment consider Kant's understanding of the beauty of nature as the expression of aesthetic ideas. This implies that natural beauties also induce much thought, without the possibility of any definite thought or concept being adequate to it. Apparently it will be relevant for its beauty how a specific object of nature is perceived, or, under what description. The concepts involved herein will guide our perception but they do not determine the free play.

<sup>3</sup> § 49:3. CJ, M175-76, KU, B192-93, S249-50. Cf. also Burgess (Kant's Key to the Critique of Taste., 1989), who argues against Guyer that the subject's interpretative activities which form the ground of aesthetic pleasure aim at the never-ending reconstruction of the aesthetic idea involved. Because of this it is senseless to speak as Guyer ('Pleasure and Society in Kant's Theory of Taste', 1982) does, of two separate acts of reflection, one aiming at the object, the other at the subject's mental acts.

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Aesthetic ideas are internal intuitions of the imagination. That is, they are not determined by concepts—because these have their own rules of application determining the correctness of these representations, which would consequently be unsuitable as objects of aesthetic judgements. Moreover, since imagination is not a source of knowledge (only perception and understanding are), such determination would even be impossible.<sup>4</sup> Instead of presenting some concept in its perceptual form, aesthetic ideas show representations that are kindred to such a concept. This is why they induce us to associate more thought than can be fully determined by this or any other concept. Aesthetic ideas animate the mind “...by opening out for it a prospect into a field of kindred representations stretching beyond its ken.”<sup>5</sup> The aesthetic attributes in an aesthetic idea are meant “subjectively for quickening the cognitive faculties”. Beauty’s possibility therefore depends on the awareness (or anticipation) of such quickened mental activities, i.e. of a free play of cognitive faculties. As a consequence, and by definition, aesthetic ideas are produced on the basis of, or at least by reference to, a free play of the cognitive faculties, and they can be perceived only by a free play of cognitive faculties, that is, by way of the senses being guided by the imagination and not having the understanding determine their intuitions.

In sum, there is circularity involved with these two moments of the aesthetic situation. They correlate analytically: were we to perceive an aesthetic idea cognitively and to determine it according to the concepts provided by the understanding it simply would not have been an aesthetic idea. Were we to perceive, say, a tree, with a free play of the cognitive faculties then we would not simply have perceived a tree, but the beauty of a tree. Kant thus specifies stipulatively the necessary and sufficient conditions of the aesthetic nature of these experiences and ideas.<sup>6</sup> Aesthetic ideas are the kind

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<sup>4</sup> CJ, M210, KU B240, S283-84. The fact that imagination is not a source of knowledge is a fact of Kantian theory. Having defined knowledge as the combination in a judgement of sensuous data with determinable and determining concepts, the faculty that combines the two, the imagination, indeed does just that: it combines, and does not produce knowledge. Some theoreticians suggest that Kant with the notion of ‘aesthetic idea’ completes the negative dimension of his epistemology: aesthetic ideas are blind intuitions. But I am afraid this suggestion is not very helpful, since it inhibits our understanding of the impact our knowledge claims have within aesthetic experience. Cf. Lorand, ‘Free and Dependent Beauty: a Puzzling Issue’, 1989, and Scheer, ‘Zur Begründung von Kants Ästhetik und ihrem Korrektiv in der ästhetische Idee’, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> §49:7, CJ, M177-78, KU, B195, S251-52.

<sup>6</sup> An entity or event is an aesthetic idea if and only if it is the subject of a free play of the faculties; and, a set of mental events is a free play of the cognitive faculties if and only if it has an aesthetic idea as its subject matter. Cf. Scruton, *Art and Imagination; A Study in the Philosophy of Mind*, 1974, p. 36.

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of things an appreciative free play of the cognitive faculties is an awareness of, and such a free play is the sole mental process by way of which we perceive aesthetic ideas. Empirically, this circularity hardly forms a nuisance, because in effect an appreciative experience is a process involving alternately, cognitive, perceptive, and imaginative activities. However, transcendently—i.e. regarding the ideal aesthetic experience—this circularity would seem to encapsulate the aesthetic domain at large in some theoretical self-sufficiency. The definition of the foundational ‘transcendentals’ of the aesthetic domain indeed accounts for the autonomy of the aesthetic domain, but where does it leave its heteronomous relevance?

An important part of the answer to this question of the aesthetic domain’s heteronomous relevance lies in Kant’s introduction of the notion of the ‘soul’ (Geist). We have now definitely and exclusively entered the domain of art. Painting, and sculpture, but also poetry and rhetoric “derive the soul that animates their work wholly from the aesthetic attributes of the objects ... ”<sup>7</sup> According to Kant art can only be “animated with soul” by its effect of quickening the mind into a free play. “‘Soul’ in an aesthetic sense, signifies the animating principle in the mind.”<sup>8</sup> But what is this ‘soul’ and why would one want to call it an aesthetic principle if it were as subjective as is implied? The associations which are induced by the introduction of ‘soul’ into an integrity of whatever nature, are essentially subjective in nature. These associations are not determined by the concepts of understanding but are guided by the imagination in its productive use: free from the laws of association that govern experience.<sup>9</sup> In this free act the imagination is said to follow certain ‘laws of analogy’ and ‘principles of reason’ which, however, Kant does not specify; and since these ‘laws’ and ‘principles’ do not produce conceptually determinable entities one may question the appropriateness of this terminology. Some explanation is wanting here—especially of Kant’s use of the notion of ‘imagination’. Because all intuitions that enter the mind are the (transcendental) objects of our mind’s receptivity, then imagination, because it too introduces intuitions, belongs to our sensibility.<sup>10</sup> Kant distinguished between the reproductive and spontaneous uses of imagination.

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<sup>7</sup> §49:7; CJ M178, KU, B196-97, S252.

<sup>8</sup> § 49:2. CJ, M175, KU, B192, S249

<sup>9</sup> §49.4 CJ, M176, KU, B193, S250.

<sup>10</sup> CPR, §24:3; KU, B151-152, 192-193.

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The latter forms the basis of our fantasy: we freely form the objects, instead of following their existent forms and subsuming them with the help of the rules of the understanding under the relevant concepts. Such subsuming is the work of reproductive imagination. Reproductive imagination merely abides by the laws of understanding, and one might, therefore, as well take it as an act of understanding: it does not form part of the a priori production of representations—Kant relegates this reproductive imagination to psychology.<sup>11</sup> Productive imagination, on the contrary, does produce intuitive representations according to its own freedom—as a consequence it does form part of transcendental philosophy’s subject matter. Now in a judgement of taste our productive imagination refers a representation not to the understanding, but to our feelings (CJ, §1), or, as Kant puts it in the conclusion to the analysis of the judgement of taste: “taste [is] a critical faculty by which an object is estimated in reference to the free conformity to law of the imagination.”<sup>12</sup>

Two sections in Critique of Judgement might furnish a way to account for aesthetics’ heteronomous relevance, and to understand the use of the notions ‘imagination’, ‘soul’, and ‘animation’ within the argument so far. The sections concern ‘The ideal of beauty’ (17), and ‘Beauty as the symbol of morality’ (59). The arguments in these sections hook up with the (complex) arguments concerning the role of common sense that we have already gone into above.

### 2. The Ideal of Beauty and its Moral Relevance

Section 17 starts with the reminder that there can be no objective rule of taste using concepts to determine things’ beauty, because judgements of taste are aesthetic, i.e. they ought ideally to have the feeling of the subject as their determining ground.<sup>13</sup> Neither would classifying what people in various cultures and periods have deemed beautiful produce much beyond a merely empirical enumeration of judgements, incapable of explaining the origins of the homogeneity found between the judgements of these people. Although

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<sup>11</sup> “Now, in so far as imagination is spontaneity, I sometimes call it also the productive imagination, and distinguish it from the reproductive, the synthesis of which is subject entirely to empirical laws, those of association, namely, and which, therefore, contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of a priori cognition, and for this reason belongs not to transcendental philosophy, but to psychology.” CPR, §24:3; B151, R192.

<sup>12</sup> CJ M85-86, B68-69, S160-61

<sup>13</sup> §17:1; CJ M75, KU, B 54, S149.

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we do find things exemplary in light of their beauty, this exemplarity merely is a provisional idea of reason used as a guide in our judgements: exemplariness is distinguishable from objectivity in that we cannot establish it mechanically in the same way that we might establish that its object is an instance of the notion in question. Kant's treatment of the ideal of beauty follows immediately after his distinction between pure and dependent judgements of taste, which has introduced a certain relevance of concepts to judgements of beauty. Together with this (relative) conceptual relevance now the idea is introduced of the possibility of an object of a specific kind being 'more' beautiful, or even 'the most' beautiful object of its kind. Many ideas can be presented to the senses, and if such presentation succeeds, we call it the 'ideal' of the relevant idea. More precisely, an ideal is the representation of an entity answering such an idea.<sup>14</sup> Such presentation, however, being accessible to the senses, must be the work of imagination. It should be evident that the representation of an idea will not automatically be aesthetic, but may instead be the subject of a confused judgement of objective purposivity.<sup>15</sup> That is, where some specific idea is represented this representation must answer quite straightforward restrictions placed upon it by the specifications of the idea. This is due to the fact that the object which is being represented as its ideal answers the relevant idea. (For instance, pictures in ornithology books must answer to the relevant descriptions). Put differently, it is the idea that guides the representation, and which determines the measure of success regarding the potential beauty of the representation, i.e. of the ideal. However, if correctness regarding some kind of objective, external, purposivity should form the criterion for judging an ideal, then Kant seems incapable of conceiving of it as a beautiful thing, as something which occasions lots of thought without leading to cognition, which is how he has characterized beauty as being the expression of an aesthetic idea.

What kind of ideas enable us to form intuitive representations functioning as their ideals? We cannot form ideals of natural things and creatures, because we do not possess the ideas their existence should conform to. As a consequence there is no sense to the idea of the most beautiful tree, or tiger, or whatever 'natural kind'. The best we can do here is try to form what Kant has named an aesthetic normal-idea, which is produced by taking into account (in the imagination) several instances of the relevant species, by putting them imaginatively on top of one another, cutting off whatever seems too

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<sup>14</sup> §17:2; CJ M76, KU, B55, S150.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. CJ, section 58. I will return to this in the introduction to chapter Six.

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exorbitant, and by then choosing the means of whatever discrepancies are perceived. Due to the absence of a rational criterion a normal-idea will be merely sensuous. The representation of such a normal-idea is at best academically correct and cannot be really interesting aesthetically, i.e. when judged in reflection. Artefacts, on the contrary, do comply with concepts and reasons, since evidently we create our artefacts with certain aims of utility in sight. Therefore, in representing the ideal of some artefact we may perhaps fare better than in the case of natural entities in that the concepts determining these aims may inform such representation. However, the argument from section 15 where Kant disqualifies perfection as a criterion for the judgement of taste, becomes relevant here. A short elucidation of this argument should be in order. In section 15 Kant distinguishes between objective and subjective purposivity, relating only the latter to our judgements of taste. As we saw above, the subjective purposivity which is entailed by the free play of the cognitive faculties involves no conceptual determinations, at least not in their determining, i.e. cognitive, role, and is therefore independent from any specifications following thereupon. Objective purposivity, however, does imply such determinations, and it therefore seems relevant for the question of the ideal of beauty. It comes in two guises, one internal, relating an artefact to the measure in which it answers the determinants expressed in the concept designating the object; the other external, relating to the measure in which the artefact answers its practical ends. Externally, a piece of a tree can be purposeful as a chair, but it hardly answers the internal constraints linked with the concept of 'chair'. With regard to this latter, conceptual, and internal, purposivity we must further distinguish between concepts used to designate genera and concepts used to refer to species. It is hard to imagine the possibility of an ideal beauty of furniture, because 'furniture' entails far too many, even conflicting, specifications. Instead, we may seem to be able to imagine an ideal beauty of some specific species of furniture, such as chairs, or tables.<sup>16</sup> However, we must be warned against too hasty a conclusion: ideals of beauty should be related to internal purposivity exclusively, because only then might they be taken to derive their visual properties from purely intrinsically relevant specifications. External, practical, purposivity determines how the object presenting the ideal should perform, instead of what it should look like. Practical considerations are external to the ways in which the ideal involved

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<sup>16</sup> §17:3, CJ M76, KU, B55, S151.

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is or may be present to the senses. If we were to judge an artefact's beauty along the lines of its perfection with regard to such practical functionality we would, therefore, not be judging its beauty, but its goodness, and confusedly at that. So internal objective purposivity might seem more relevant to the production of an ideal, but this too is merely apparent, since merely conceptual specifications (as are comprised in the necessary and sufficient conditions of, for example, a chair) are eventually, if not blatantly, related to the practical use the artefact is supposed to be put to. Excluding the externally as well as the internally purposeful Kant demands that only those ideals be ideals of beauty which are not to be judged according to any external criterion of purposivity whatsoever. So far the argument is intelligible, but what possibilities remain?

According to Kant only human beings can be thought of as 'devising' and developing the ends that guide their being internally, and thus as having their own intellect determine the outlook, phenomenally, of their bodies and actions. Even if sometimes 'man' is merely responding to some external stimulus 'he' shall do so in the light of rational ideas and shall remain able to judge aesthetically about how response, outlook, and actions fit in with these ideas.<sup>17</sup> Thus, 'man' is the sole exception to the above argument, and, as a consequence, only 'he' is capable of an ideal of beauty.<sup>18</sup> 'The rational idea converts the ends of humanity into a principle for estimating [man's] outward form.'<sup>19</sup> The ideal of beauty pleases universally, and positively, provided the representation involved expresses man's morality.<sup>20</sup> However, how do we know when and whether morality is expressed? According to Kant we can only conclude to the actuality of moral expression on the ground of our experience:

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<sup>17</sup> As we know, such aesthetic judging is based on the subjective 'criterion' of the feeling pleasure or displeasure, the feeling of life.

<sup>18</sup> "Only what has in itself the end of its real existence – only man that is able himself to determine his ends by reason, or, where he has to derive them from external perception, can still compare them with essential and universal ends, and then further pronounce aesthetically upon their accord with such ends, only he, among all objects in the world, admits, therefore, of an ideal of beauty, just as humanity in his person, as intelligence, alone admits of the ideal of perfection." §17:3; CJ M76-77, KU B55-56, S151.

<sup>19</sup> I here stress what seems to me to be most relevant for the question of art's experiential functionality from the following citation: "... the rational idea ... deals with the ends of humanity so far as capable of sensuous representation, and converts them into a principle for estimating his outward form, through which these ends are revealed in their phenomenal effect." §17:4; CJ M77, KU B56, S151.

<sup>20</sup> The combined fact that this ideal of beauty does not mingle sensuous stimulus with the judgement but nevertheless carries with it an immense interest, proves that we never judge it purely aesthetically: "Niemals rein ästhetisch".

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“The visible expression of moral ideas that govern men inwardly can, of course, only be drawn from experience; [...] and this embodiment involves a union of pure ideas of reason and great imaginative power, in one who would even form an estimate of it, not to speak of being the author of its presentation.”<sup>21</sup>

To what do we apply the ideal of beauty—people, their representations, or anything whatsoever that is or may be expressive of man’s morality? An obvious example would seem to be that of a painted portrait of a person who evidently is engaged in some kind of emotional and moral event. But should we not view the painting of a tree intimating the experience of standing under it as being expressive of morality as well? Or is the sole ideal of the beautiful representation of things in the absence of persons that of these things’ normal ideas? Could we not, instead of trying to apply the notion of the ideal of beauty to an artefact’s concept, apply it to ‘man’s’ experience of the ends involved in this concept as exemplified in some representation of the artefact? My suggestion is that we can, but only if we comply with the strict limitation of preventing a confused judgement about the measure of goodness of the artefact involved.<sup>22</sup> If sufficiently elaborated, the thesis that man’s morality forms the basis of some ideal of beauty that is generally applicable—instead of exclusively to the representation of persons—might form an answer to one of the quests—for an account of the representation of the experiential—with which we ended Chapter 1. However, Kant has not provided this elaboration.

In aesthetic ideas rational ideas of invisible things are rendered perceptible by the artist, including the moral aspects of life, such as death, envy, vice, love, or fame.<sup>23</sup> Kant’s argument in section 59 that beauty is a symbol (instead of a schema) of morality is as close as Kant gets to pointing to the elaboration wanted. Schemata and examples link exactly that representation with a concept of the understanding that answers to it, the first to pure concepts of the understanding, the second to empirical ones. A symbol, on the contrary, adds a representation to some idea or concept that relates to it by analogy only. All of these are hypotyposes, sensualizations of thought. After specifying certain obvious differences between the ethical and the aesthetic to explain how and why there can be no sense to the idea that the aesthetic might be a

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<sup>21</sup> §17:6; CJ M80, KU B60, S154.

<sup>22</sup> One might think here in terms of Heidegger’s analysis of Van Gogh’s ‘peasant booths’, notwithstanding certain problems involved in that exact analysis. Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, 1960

<sup>23</sup> Kant, CJ, §49:5, M176, KU, B194, S250.

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schema of the ethical, Kant concludes that it must, therefore, be a symbol.<sup>24</sup> That we are aware of this analogy between the ethical and the aesthetic is evidenced in our everyday talk about beautiful things, which very often includes reference to moral properties even in their obvious absence:

“Even common understanding is wont to pay regard to this analogy; and we frequently apply to beautiful objects of nature or of art names that seem to rely upon the basis of a moral estimate. We call buildings or trees majestic and stately, or plains laughing and gay; even colours are called innocent, modest, soft, because they excite sensations containing something analogous to the consciousness of the state of mind produced by moral judgements.<sup>25</sup> Taste makes, as it were, the transition from the charm of sense to habitual moral interest possible without too violent a leap, for it represents the imagination, even in its freedom, as amenable to a final determination for understanding, and teaches us to find, even in sensuous objects, a free delight apart from any charm of sense.”<sup>26</sup>

These anthropomorphic attributions are, I think, instances of the animating effect of aesthetic ideas analyzed above. This, also, is as close as Kant comes to analyzing the aesthetic properties that we adhere to in explaining and defending our judgements of taste. The remark is interesting but puzzling: it signals an analogy between aesthetic and ethical values but does nothing to specify just how this analogy comes into being.

### 3. Beauty not an Aesthetic Property

Evidently Kant does not mean to equate such terms as ‘innocent’, ‘modest’ or ‘soft’ with ‘beauty’ or ‘sublime’. With Kant we should therefore distinguish between grand aesthetic categories such as ‘beauty’ and ‘sublime’ on the one hand, and on the other descriptive ones adhering to the moral outlook of things. Before I go into this distinction I first want to argue that the theoretical grounds for distinguishing between beauty and the sublime are meagre, and that we should disregard the distinction in favour of the thesis that there is one single grand aesthetic category which expresses subjective purposivity—and its negation: ugliness. Kant thinks that it is on the grounds of an awareness of cognitive functionality, of subjective purposivity, that with

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<sup>24</sup> For example: 1. beauty pleases immediately; whereas the moral pleases only through concepts; 2. beauty pleases without interest; with a moral judgement no interest precedes the judgement, but there is always experience an interest connected with the resultant pleasure. 3. With beauty the freedom of the imagination is supposed to be in line with the laws of understanding, whereas in the case of a moral judgement the freedom of the will is supposed to lie in a conformity of the will to rational laws.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Descartes’ theory of affections.

<sup>26</sup> §59:7; CJ M225, KU, B260, S298.

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either one of the grand aesthetic predicates we attribute ‘aesthetic excellence’ to some object. Indeed, with regard to this attribution the very distinction between beauty and the sublime is, in the end, merely gradual. Kant starts his comparison of the two grand aesthetic predicates in Section 23 by stating their similarities. Firstly, both are predicates in judgements of taste (that are logically singular, but nevertheless demand universal assent). Secondly, both concern a reflective pleasant awareness which is underdetermined by the data of the senses and which understanding cannot determine. Next Kant describes certain differences. Beauty, first, relates to form, to limitation, whereas the sublime provides an experience of formlessness. Accordingly, the specificity of the sublime is alleged to consist in its involving an ‘indeterminate concept of reason’, whereas in the case of beauty not an ‘indeterminate concept of reason’ but one of understanding is supposed to be involved. However, we saw above how the aesthetic idea involves the imaginative presentation of some idea of reason, so beauty (being the expression of aesthetic ideas) must of its essence be related to reason as much as the sublime is. Moreover, if we are to understand the aesthetic idea involved in an object of beauty as the imaginative elaboration with aesthetic associations of a concept of understanding, the limits of the relevant concept of understanding will be transgressed, which will activate reason, being the faculty of indeterminate ideas. So on this count too the distinction between beauty and the sublime cannot be absolutist in nature. The second difference between the two aesthetic concepts supposedly lies in the fact that beauty appears through the awareness of a subjective purposivity—as if the beautiful object is ‘made for judgement’—thus providing a feeling of a furtherance of life; whereas the sublime only pleases indirectly, after first having induced a ‘momentary check to our vital forces’.<sup>27</sup> With beauty we realize we are confronted with something that the concepts of understanding cannot determine; with the sublime we are confronted with something that we cannot even grasp imaginatively, something which brings to the fore some concept of reason. To bring out the strictly mental character of the sublime (as opposed to the characteristic of beauty as residing in some object or other present to the senses), Kant specifically remarks that

“the sublime, in the strict sense of the word, cannot be contained in any sensuous form”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> §23:2; CJ M91, KU, B75, S165.

<sup>28</sup> §23:4; CJ M92, KU, B76, S166.

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The sublime therefore does not seem appropriate as a term to use for the aesthetic evaluation of art (or natural objects, for that matter), which following the argument in Part I, I take to be essentially sensuous in nature.<sup>29</sup> However, leaving these matters aside during this investigation, we might justifiably reduce the aesthetic terms ‘beautiful’ and ‘sublime’ to the single term ‘aesthetic excellence’, and describe this in terms of the experiential effects which Kant ascribes to aesthetic value. Let us say then that both aesthetic values concern our subjective purposivity, albeit in terms of a different direction of approach. Referring to Savile’s proposal and to the ambiguous role of the free play addressed above we may view our use of these ‘grand’ categories as expressing the transcendental legitimation of the judgement of taste: i.e. when uttering a judgement of taste that has one of these terms at the predicate position we thereby merely specify from which direction the regulative ideal of the aesthetic experience is supposed to be approached: either from the harmonious aspect of the dialectic interplay between the cognitive faculties (beauty), or from its conflictory aspect (sublime).

In explaining his thesis that beauty’s purposiveness without purpose can be understood as beauty’s functionality, Savile proposes we compare ‘beautiful’ with ‘edible’. He argues that the edibility of food is not a property of these things that we eat, but is part of their functionality.<sup>30</sup> Knowing that some piece of bread is edible does not tell us anything about what kind of bread it is, what colour or form it possesses, et cetera. As such, the terms ‘beautiful’ and ‘edible’ can indeed be compared: neither is very informative about the natural properties of the thing in question, and both merely specify what kind of functionality the thing can be expected to perform. The comparison is illuminating in that it explains why it is wrongheaded to ask exactly which natural property a thing’s beauty is. I should like to out-Savile this by asking just how far the comparison can be taken. Apparently once we know that a certain kind of lemonade or bread is edible we will have identified the class of this kind as ‘food’, but there seems to be no analogue to this class-related

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<sup>29</sup> I understand from present day philosophical fashion that the temptation to nevertheless apply it to art is immense, but resist on grounds that may be apparent from—among others—my discussion in Chapter 1 of the definition of art. Things or events that do not exist as an aesthetically informed, creative manipulation of sensuous material may be very apt to be judged sublime, but they may as well not be art at all. For this reason I take Kant’s remark to apply to art: “... the concept of the sublime in nature is far less important and rich in consequences than that of its beauty.” §23:5; CJ M92-93, KU, B78, S167.

<sup>30</sup> In Savile, *op.cit.*, Chapter V, ‘The Idealism of Purposiveness’.

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identification in the case of aesthetic value. Finding that a certain painting is beautiful is of its essence without consequence for paintings that do or do not resemble it. The identification of a beautiful thing is individualistic, not class-related. This is instructive for a good understanding of the functionality involved. Aesthetic functionality is entangled with the individuality of the beautiful thing and of the person experiencing this functionality in far deeper ways than edibility is. Normally what is edible for one person will be edible for all others, bar those who suffer from evident deprivations or illnesses—in the case of aesthetic value we have far more trouble in specifying which kinds of deprivations should be excluded for a person to correctly recognize some thing's beauty. Put differently: what is beautiful for one person is not necessarily beautiful for all (or a majority of) others, even though we are inclined to demand of everyone that they value the beautiful thing (but this is a different matter—connected with the regulative role that is played by the ideal of aesthetic experience). This again expresses the principle of acquaintance, which can now be understood as ensuing from the predominance of imagination in appreciative activities. Imagination's central role explains why the functionality of beauty is of an idiosyncratic variety.

Apart from this matter, in case a conflict of minds arises between two 'judges', we shall have to resort not to grand aesthetic categories, but to more descriptive terms with which to explain the legitimation of our judgement. We then refer to seemingly straightforward properties of the aesthetic object with the help of categories whose application appears not to pose too many problems. Indeed, Sibley analyzed such aesthetic categories as descriptive terms that refer to the things we appreciate following criteria that can easily be cultivated, for example in education, or by television, advertising, fashion, et cetera. These categories are applied on the basis of publicly accessible criteria and therefore there are rules involved. Kant would not want categories such as these to form the substance of aesthetic judgements' legitimation, even though we might want to use them to specify the reasons we willingly provide in defence of some specific judgement. However, they do prove our awareness of aesthetics' analogy with the moral.

Kant has already referred to such 'empirically applicable' aesthetic categories in his dismissal of the agreeable—that which pleases in the senses directly, and not in the reflection. Kant views the distinction between the beautiful and the agreeable as reducible to the measure of interest in the existence of the relevant object. But there is more to this distinction. The proximity senses of taste (of the tongue), touch and smell work in ways different from the distasteful senses. For taste, touch and smell an appropriate physiological contact with the relevant senses is presupposed. These are

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tactile senses. Eyesight and hearing do not presuppose such bodily contact with their objects, but some relevantly causal connection is needed here as well: for an object of sight (or, beauty) to be perceptible, it must be visible, i.e. it must exist before the senses. We are interested in the existence of the beautiful object in exactly this sense: if we were caught judging an hallucination we would be sincerely disappointed. So perceptual judgements presuppose some interest in the existence of the object seen. However, the distantial senses also allow for conventional 'systems', and the data they 'produce' are operationalizable thanks to the communicability resulting from such systems. These systems seem to be based on the possibility of scales of tones and colours. There are no analogues to such scales on the level of the proximity senses. This ought to explain why the free play of the cognitive faculties has the distantial senses as the paradigmatic senses of input. Kant puts more sophistication in his distinction—between beauty and the agreeable—by identifying a distantial analogue with the—tactile—agreeable: we ought not like a painting, say, for its use of some specific colour without taking into account the formal role of this colour in the whole of the painting. However, contrary to Kant, we may wonder whether tactile taste is reductively causal, and the same question goes for the perception of a colour. Do not the proximity senses too presuppose the cognitive workings of reproductive imagination? As we have it, with regard to these distinctions Kant seems to have put the cart before the horse. We should rather understand it the other way around: due to the distantial senses being less intricately connected with their objects than the tactile senses are, we are able to use these distantial senses not merely for establishing the existence of some property or thing, but as evidence of much more complex statements. The comparison, of course, is much more complicated than this, but what is specifically important for us here, is that the argument against our interests in the existence of the valued object is more complicated than Kant took it to be. Thus, demanding an absence of interest in the existence of the object under consideration boils down to the demand that we 'surround' the object with reasonable and imaginative considerations—such as those pertaining to the object's form or meaning. Reversely, this demand proves the obvious fact that we have built the aesthetic domain around the distantial senses, instead of the tactile ones. We, i.e. modern Western culture, are the ones to have picked the regulative, ideal aesthetic experience that Kant analyzed so effectively. It is not the import of an interest in the existence of the object sensed, but the close, physiological link with it, and the lack of scales, that make the data of tactile senses so much less capable of occasioning a complex

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re-experiencing of some experiential aspect of an event, person or thing (represented). Or, in terms of the distinctions developed in Chapter 2: touch, taste and smell (with the help of imagination) structure the world in ways inimitable by works of art. Indeed demanding the lack of interest in the object's existence in the end is motivated by some such aim as this: because art is to provide a means for communicating such complex matters as experiences we cannot leave it to the tactile senses. Put negatively, this part of art's experiential dimension depends on the measure of the 'lack of strictly physiological arousal'. The more physiological some thing's effects are, and the less it engages our conscious (productive) imagination, the less its aesthetic value can ever hope to be. The distinction which Kant makes between what pleases in reflection and what pleases directly in the senses must be explained in terms of the need for imaginative processing of aesthetically rewarding things and events—and we need such imaginative processing to make available the moral expression inherent in beautiful works of art.

## Chapter Six

### Indexicalizing Representation

#### 1. Introduction

In Section 58 of *Critique of Judgement* Kant specifies what he takes to be the empiricist and rationalist answers to the critique of taste.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the empiricist claims that judgements of taste are based upon a posteriori sensuous considerations, the rationalist allegedly thinks that we judge according to some a priori principle. As a consequence, the empiricist lacks the means to distinguish between judgements of taste and of the agreeable, and the rationalist fails to specify the distinction between judgements of taste and of the good. The rationalist “[supposes] that the judgement of taste is in fact a disguised judgement of reason on the perfection discovered in a thing and the reference of the manifold in it to an end, and [...] it is consequently only called aesthetic on account of the confusion that here besets our reflection, although fundamentally it is teleological.”<sup>2</sup> This evaluation is unjust. Baumgarten, to whom Kant was referring in his remark, did define beauty as the perfection of sense knowledge, but I shall make a point of explaining that this perfection must not be understood in the light of the notions of internal and external objective purposivity that Kant contrasted with that of the subjective purposivity (purposeless purposivity) of aesthetic judgement. In Chapters 1 and 2 I hinted at the thesis to be defended in the Part III, that the truncation of perception’s embodiment in works of art corresponds to art’s task of having to make up for a loss of experientiality. The aesthetic terms with which we ‘describe’ the expression of works of art, and our experiential assessment of the representational success of certain works of art, point at such works’ success in addressing this task. I call this the success of the ‘indexicalization’ of representation: depicting persons or events and inducing in the audience some sense of second-person imaginative empathizing. Kant may have pointed at the ability of art to achieve such

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<sup>1</sup> Kant CJ, M215ff, KU B246, S289.

<sup>2</sup> Kant CJ, M214-15, KU B245, S288.

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‘indexicalization’ when in Section 49 and subsequent sections he wrote about aesthetic ideas, but he did not make this ability as central to his aesthetics as Baumgarten did. I will now show how and why Baumgarten made art’s ‘indexicalizing power’ the core of his ‘science of perceptual knowledge’. My approach is not historical here in that I shall not try to establish the roots of Kant’s notions in Baumgarten’s. I am interested, rather, in arguments and explications Baumgarten himself provides for his position: Baumgarten meant his aesthetics to be a science of phenomenal knowledge and of art, explicitly blending these two. He wrote art theory from the broader philosophical perspective of rationalist epistemology, but above all he struggled to find a way to understand art’s phenomenality in the light of its complicated experiential effects.<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, Baumgarten connected aesthetic evaluation to what I called above the overdetermination of (pictorial) representation. According to Baumgarten, beauty is the perfection of the extensive clarity of this overdetermination. I will show how this ‘perfection’ relates representation to its experiential effects.

### 2. Leibniz’s ‘Individual’

As an introduction to Baumgarten’s contribution to aesthetics we must grasp the most crucial strains within Leibniz’s rationalist metaphysical epistemology—or should one say: epistemological metaphysics? According to Leibniz the world consists of individuals, monads, which are spiritual entities that derive their identities from their interrelations. Each individual is non-extended, does not interact physically or causally with other individuals, but merely ‘mirrors’ what happens in other monads by being in some relation to these. Every monad thus forms a unique perspective on the rest of the world. Knowing a monad implies knowing the whole world. Each individual, therefore, can be equated with the realization in time of the full concept which ‘states’ this individual perspective. God has such full concepts of monadic perspectives, but finite creatures such as we humans cannot obtain them because of the cognitive limitations pertaining to our souls. However, there is hope for mankind because from each separate moment in this process of monadic realization many others can be deduced. The world is as rational as the knowledge we successfully construe by such deduction,

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<sup>3</sup> We, from our seemingly more advanced point of view, will find flaws in his aesthetics; but these are highly interesting flaws, or so I will demonstrate.

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because God has made the world as, logically, the best of possible worlds.

Leibniz's metaphysico-epistemological theories of concepts and events are of relevance here. Metaphysically, every event has of necessity a sufficient ground in other events. Epistemologically, these grounds can be known, as is reflected in the Predicate-in-subject Principle, according to which in true sentences something is predicated of a subject that was already contained in it. We know this goes for so-called analytical truths, like "The bachelor is unmarried", but according to the Principle contingent truths too derive from the predicate being pre-contained in the subject concept. Contingency is apparent only, and derives from our lacking the perfect, divine survey. Contingent truths in themselves are as necessarily true as any analytical statement. According to Leibniz, therefore, conceptual analysis and deductive inference are among our best means for building the knowledge needed to fully understand things and events. This doctrine, and the anti-essentialism going with it, reflect Leibniz's consciousness of the theoretical significance, and elusiveness, of individuality. An individual escapes comprehension by our finite minds, and each of its singular marks is as essential to its individuality as any other.

Deductive determination of individuality derives its universal validity from its third-person perspective, which is based on inference from conceptual links. In favour of deduction Leibniz dismissed our allegedly confused, and dark, perceptions, because they form an inadequate means for comprehending individuality. Thus, Leibniz dismissed our first-person acquaintance with individuality. Apparently Baumgarten thought this move too hasty, since he presented his aesthetics as a scientific discipline regarding the perfection of perception, arguing that perception—due to our temporal limitations—is no more limited in scope and method than deductive knowledge. Leibniz based his depreciation of phenomenality on a—hard to grasp—negative assessment of the foundational role attributed to subconscious, monadic, 'dull' perceptions for conscious phenomenal perception. Monadic, dull perception provides an exhaustive albeit unconscious view of reality, which founds our conscious, but confused, phenomenal perceptions. The world as we know it phenomenally is unreal, shattered, confused, vague, dark, et cetera. In this, however, Leibniz falls short of an adequate account of the exact relation between our perceptions and our concepts, as we find ourselves confronted with this phenomenal world and our knowledge seems to start from it. Baumgarten thought that the Leibnizian deductive project reduces to inferential knowledge the phenomenality of perceivable, individual events and objects. To know what is there implies

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knowledge of its sufficient ground, and to this effect we should break up phenomenal data into nameable segments that sustain relational understanding which cannot be perceived as such. Contrary to this, Baumgarten thinks it worth our while to acknowledge phenomenality in its own right: as an extensive wealth of marks. Phenomenal knowledge is extensive knowledge, and it alone will provide us with a view of some phenomenal event or situation: a view of its here and now. It provides us with an experiential acquaintance with individuality—not a full deductive determination of this individual's inherent relationality. It is the artist's task to achieve such experiential effects. Baumgarten's theory of art is not a simplistic realism, not some straightforward copy theory. In compliance then with this—art's—functionality of 'indexicalizing' phenomenality, aesthetic experience may lie in the recognition of one's own haecceity (one's here-and-nowness). In Baumgarten's aesthetics Leibnizian rationalism finds the subjective supplement that a purely deductive approach to knowledge attempted to overcome by understanding the individual monad solely in its relational aspect.

In identifying (artistic) beauty with the perfection of extensive, perceptual knowledge, Baumgarten transposes the rationalist idea of the beauty of divine knowledge to art. However, the beauty of God's knowledge is as unattainable for us as its completeness is. As a consequence Baumgarten risks making beauty unattainable as well. Can full perception of phenomena ever be realized? What exactly is needed for an answer to this question to be satisfactory for us? As is shown by our everyday success in recognizing people whom we know by sharing a history with them, we appear to be far better equipped for such a conscious perception of individuals than for a deductive determination of their monadic, relational aspects. This success may not be absolute though. As we saw in Chapter 1, two aspects are involved in the perception of the expression in a face or gesture. First, there are the relevant contents of the mental events and states, and then there is the experiential acquaintance with these contents by the person having them. The latter aspect is by definition inaccessible to onlookers: we are just not the person who has the mental state that we perceive as expressed in someone's face. In the light of Baumgarten's endeavours, now the time has come to repeat one of the questions we ended Chapter 1 with: how can the act of representation—or in our present case, perception—be perfected to such a degree that it includes an experiential awareness of the mental events the person perceived is going through? If, per analogy with God's knowledge, the beauty of perfected perception resides in its completeness, then—however this is to be achieved—beauty must include this experiential aspect. Two

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questions confront Baumgarten. How can one account philosophically for the possibility of a third-person access to experience? Secondly, how can the conveyance of experiences be secured in a work of art, and how is it to be identified by the subject beholding it?<sup>4</sup>

In establishing Baumgarten's ideas of art's functionality I hope to voice the relevance of his aesthetics. I propose in the present chapter to understand Baumgarten's equating of beauty with the perfection of sense knowledge as the thesis that in a beautiful work of art the individuality of the subject matter is presented for phenomenal acquaintance. Such individuality is of its essence bound up with the human predicament, of being a finite creature in a seemingly infinite world, who has to communicate about it, without ever being sufficiently able to fully reconcile his own individuality with that task. However, because of the absolute singularity both of our presentations of the individual and of our subsequent experiences of these presentations, beauty in art cannot possibly be a subject matter for science, crucial though it may be for modern man. My first aim in this chapter is to argue for a positive appraisal of Baumgarten's apparent neglect of the subject-object distinction.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, Baumgarten may also prove to have answered certain questions that Kant left hanging after construing matters of taste as essentially subjective in nature. My argument will consist in establishing that Baumgarten developed a 'kind' of subjectivism that doesn't entail the irrelevance of conceptually determined, objective properties. Baumgarten writes interchangeably about perception and its products—about mental as well as artistic representations. He thus illustrates how in aesthetic theory the opposition as we know it between the subjective and the objective sphere is less pertinent than we may think it is. I am not contending that Baumgarten has done well in neglecting the opposition, nor that he has explicitly argued for some account of the response-dependent nature of aesthetic properties—I merely think that the distinction's notability is accepted too easily and that Baumgarten's remarks form an illustration of that fact. His alleged

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<sup>4</sup> Representational success in this region must as it were relate what is represented to our innermost dull perceptions, to our monadic perspective onto the world; it must incorporate the portrayed into our world view. Due to the sheer grandeur of this task it must be defective to even try to fulfil such a demand. So, instead of relegating beauty to the perfection of perception, Baumgarten would have done better to link it with the distinctness of the experiential from the perceptually cognitive perspective.

<sup>5</sup> Cf, for example, Poppe's critique, in Poppe, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: seine Bedeutung und Stellung in der Leibniz-Wolffischen Philosophie und seine Beziehungen zu Kant, 1907, p. 44-46. This alleged confusion may be among the most important reasons for the lack of attention Baumgarten's aesthetics have received.

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'confusion' of subject and object is doubly symptomized; first, by a rather vague definition of 'the aesthetician', and secondly by his mixing up the experience and the creation of beauty. Baumgarten may have had a point, but he may have had it unwittingly. In Part I I proposed we take our perceptual access to a person's expressions (and to the world at large) as polymodal and as including an empathetic understanding of the experience he is going through. Next, I established that there are two experiential moments to works of art: one is that of the representation or expression of experience which was understood as restricted qua required number of sense modalities; the other is that of our experiential (imaginative) awareness of such representations or expressions of experience (and of our subsequent reflective aesthetic judgement thereof). Against this background, Baumgarten's analysis leads to two important theses: first, the artist needs experiential, even psychological, arguments to be able to decide whether his work of art is 'finished', in much the same way as the beholder needs these for his subsequent evaluation of the work.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, in a sense stronger than with secondary qualities, the existence of the work of art, and of its properties, cannot be accounted for without allegiance to the experience of the beholder. Aesthetic properties are response-dependent in a special sense.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Human Finiteness and Perception

Baumgarten takes the law of non-contradiction to form a logical constraint on aesthetic truth as it is on deductive truth: if parts of a representation are in mutual contradiction, this depreciates the truth of the representation.<sup>8</sup> The third-person approach of perception is embedded in Baumgarten's aesthetics of the perfection of sense knowledge. However, the subjective aspects of

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Poppe, *op. cit.*, §1.

<sup>7</sup> In my treatment of Baumgarten can be heard the echo of Ingarden's dictum: that works of art are not by themselves aesthetic objects, but contain some schematic form for building such aesthetic objects. Ingarden, 'Artistic and Aesthetic Values', 1985. I will return to this matter (not to Ingarden) in Part III.

Response-dependence is the 'property of things of not being specifiable without reference to some phenomenal response. Primary qualities supposedly can be specified without such reference, whereas secondary qualities cannot—due the unimodality of our access to them. I have argued that the phenomenality of both these kinds of property is response-dependent, whereas the establishment of either kind's existence is not. The existence of primary as much as secondary qualities can be proven polymodally. (II:3). In Chapter 7 I argue that only tertiary qualities are response-dependent in both senses.

<sup>8</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, in Schweizer, 1973, *Ästhetik als Philosophie der sinnlichen Erkenntnis*. § 431, p. 165.

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perception, the dull perceptions of the—monadic—‘subconscious’ and the phenomenal apperceptions of the monadic consciousness play a crucial role as well.<sup>9</sup> Following Leibniz’ *Monadology* the monad’s nature is one of perception and representation, but concerning remote parts monads tend to be confused, whereas with regard to nearer or more prominent parts the perceptions and representations tend to be more distinct.<sup>10</sup> Monads are not deities, they are in time and as a consequence reflect a temporal cross section of the world only: merely a moment in the realization of the full concept stating the monad’s essence. Nothing seems wrong with understanding such a momentous cross section of the world as an experience of the monad’s individuality. The soul, however, can only read in itself what is represented distinctly there; “it is unable to develop all at once all the things that are folded within it, for they stretch to infinity.”<sup>11</sup> In *Monadology* Leibniz is rather unclear about the relation between, on the one hand, the monadic distinct perceptions, and on the other, the conscious perceptions of the body the monad is the entelechy of. Thus if we perceive chaos we can attribute this only to conscious perceptions, not to the monadic perspective.<sup>12</sup> This problem of observation from without touches upon the phenomenality of such observations, arguing from the strong implication of the definition of the individual as a thing which is fully determined: full determination cannot possibly be perceived. We perceive ‘bodies’ and talk in terms of them merely because we are unsuccessful in grasping singular monads in the totality of their perspective onto the world. Leibniz’s project of a deductive science

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<sup>9</sup> According to Baumgarten’s *Metaphysics*, “In the soul there exist dark representations, the totality of which is called the ground of the soul”. Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung ...*, *Metaphysik*, § 511, p. 5. “A totality of representations in the soul is a whole representation, its parts are called partial representations, and the totality of the dark ones among these are the field of darkness: this is the ground of the soul. The totality of clear representations is the field of clarity (of light) which contains the fields of confusedness, of distinctness and adequacy.” Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung ...*, *Metaphysik*, § 514, p. 7. This ground of the soul is said to be the origin of the aesthetic impetus.

<sup>10</sup> “For God in regulating the whole has had regard to each part, and in particular to each Monad, whose nature being to represent, nothing can confine it to the representing of only one part of things; though it is true that this representation is merely confused as regards the variety of particular things [le detail] in the whole universe, and can be distinct only as regards a small part of things, namely, those which are either nearest or greatest in relation to each of the Monads; otherwise each Monad would be a deity.” Leibniz, *Monadologie*, 1960-61 (1714), § 60.

<sup>11</sup> Leibniz, *op. cit.*, § 61.

<sup>12</sup> Looking at a pond from a distance we discern swarming fishes without detecting individual ones. Leibniz, *op.cit.*, §§ 62, 68, 69. Ideas like these are inspired by the then recent invention of the microscope.

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entails that monadic substances can in principle be described exhaustively by deduction from our concepts, following logical laws of inference. It may seem problematic to demand that we use all the concepts of the world to describe one single monad, but because we will then have described the whole world with it, as an ideal notion this demand is intelligible.<sup>13</sup> Baumgarten, however, stresses the elusiveness of the ideal: human understanding cannot reach it 'due to a metaphysical imperfection', and we must satisfy ourselves with what part of the highest, logical truth we are capable of achieving.<sup>14</sup>

Only analogously may Leibniz's ideal be of interest to aesthetics, in that it is a common aesthetic claim that part of an object's beauty should lie in the—unattainable—perfection of its perception. This points to a paradox in the rationalist project that will prove crucial for Baumgarten's contribution. First, consciousness itself is guided by an individual substance, or monad: it is our soul that supposedly perceives and reflects the monadic tiny perceptions and reflections that somehow form the bodies of perception; this is how consciousness perceives the world. However, secondly, even though perception is some kind of effect of monadic 'petites perceptions', it does not coincide with a monadic perspective on the world, but is, instead, confused and delimited to a high degree. Let us return for the moment to epistemology. The huge dimension of the rationalist project testifies to the danger of being a floating raft with no connection at all to the world. Apparently, due to the confusedness of perception the world of perception cannot function as the aim of cognitive activities. Neither, however, can God's world, because it is the mere acceptance of God's creation of a pre-established harmony that created the problem in the first place, by having us hope that we will be able to reach our cognitive goals by deduction. Only if one accepts that some real culmination of knowledge is possible does the problem of its criterion arise. Leibniz's realism comes in the guise of nominalism, as he also alleges that it is solely by conceptual analysis that we may in the end reach full knowledge of reality.<sup>15</sup>

But there may as well exist a psychological, experiential route to this aim, consisting in the scrutiny of a single monad's point of view. We might realize this by understanding our conscious 'apperception' as an effect of

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<sup>13</sup> This notion of some ideal totality of knowledge the coherence of which guarantees –in the end– the truth of individual knowledge cannot possibly do without the experimental interventions proving the existence of the entities postulated theoretically. (Cf. Hacking, *Representing and Intervening...*)

<sup>14</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 557, p. 239.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Burkhardt, *Logik und Semiotik in der Philosophie von Leibniz*, 1980, pp. 412 ff.

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monadic tiny perceptions. Surely, it is curious to find that Leibniz so willingly dismisses everyday perception. Baumgarten seeks to correct this rationalist flaw. If Baumgarten took beauty to approximate a singular monad's perspective, he took it as a cognitive instrument analogous to God's total knowledge. We must be cautious with our conclusion that Baumgarten tries to reduce beauty cognitively. He did propose aesthetics to be a science but, as Benjamin Tilghman recently remarked, this may not have been his most significant contribution to aesthetic thought.<sup>16</sup> I will argue that he took beauty as a phenomenal awareness on behalf of the experiencing subject. An analysis of this experiential awareness may have been the goal of Baumgarten's aesthetics, or it may have been its contingent outcome. Either way, I will show that Baumgarten has contributed an important insight to aesthetics, even if he may have done so in spite of himself.

A single monad's concept entails knowledge of the whole world from the single perspective of this individual. Now, from the perspective of the individual's own perception of the world, ideally the same goes, because each monad perceives all aspects of all other monads from a singular perspective. However, this is metaphysics and it certainly does not imply that my soul, for instance, will ever be able to perceive or know the whole rest of the world. Reason is our most reliable ally here, according to Leibniz, in contradistinction to our conscious perceptions, which are dark and confused and which should be analyzed conceptually if they are to contribute to science. Leibniz in *Monadology* doesn't think that perception is causally related to our 'petites perceptions'. Instead, he thinks of monadic perception as windowless, as conceptual rather than phenomenal. Baumgarten, however, explicitly takes these dull perceptions as part of the phenomenal perception whose perfection is beautiful.<sup>17</sup> We seem to have no means to ameliorate monadic dull perceptions, because we are not conscious of them, and we certainly appear not to be able to influence them head on. However, our conscious perceptions are supposed to be grounded in them. Therefore, the education of conscious perception must be a means to make clear and conscious these dark dull perceptions, thus enabling us to improve them indirectly. Baumgarten differs from Leibniz concerning the assessment of perception. Analogous to the beauty of the divine conceptual perspective upon an individual, he argues that if a perceptive perspective could ever be perfected it would be beautiful as well. Art supposedly helps us in perfecting

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<sup>16</sup> Tilghman, *But is it Art?* 1984, p. 122.

<sup>17</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 482.

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our senses, so Baumgarten's thesis that beauty lies in the perfection of sense knowledge can be understood as the thesis that art's aim lies in the provision of a perfected perceptive perspective upon individuality: our finite perceptual perspective onto the phenomenal world has its own reward. Baumgarten observes the irrelevance of scientific knowledge for people's everyday experience: if one thinks as a mathematical astronomer about the eclipse of the sun, the effect will be very different from thinking about it as a shepherd or from the standpoint of a friend or your girlfriend: "Oh, how many truthfulness you thought first, that can now be left alone."<sup>18</sup>

According to some theoreticians, Baumgarten's aesthetics aims at providing room for such scientific apparatuses as induction and empirical investigation.<sup>19</sup> This certainly was Baumgarten's intention at an earlier stage. In his second Philosophical Letter from Aletheophilus (1741), Baumgarten mentions microscopes and other newly invented optical instruments as a means for ameliorating our perceptual access to the world. In this letter Baumgarten speaks of aesthetic 'empirics' and aesthetic art of experience.<sup>20</sup> However, nowhere does he work out in a philosophically satisfactory manner how or even why such 'weapons of sense' as the microscope and looking glass should contribute to such experience. Jäger comments that these means ameliorate the senses, but he thus makes aesthetics into a species of optics, or auditory theory.<sup>21</sup> He thus alters the scope of aesthetics unnecessarily to what is measurable quantifiably, instead of to the philosophical problem of the phenomenal quality of perception. Moreover, *Aesthetica* does not seem in this way to provide a supplement to—deductive—science. Instead, in *Aesthetica* Baumgarten alleges that our senses form an independent faculty—of knowing individuality. Now, according to Hans Rudolf Schweizer, Baumgarten diverts from Wolff's empirical

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<sup>18</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 429..

<sup>19</sup> Not coincidentally the kind of knowledge provided by the arts need not be logically true but may be fictional to a degree, and this would have to be excluded unambiguously from the subject matter of an empirical science of perception and its means. So I object to Jäger's assessment. Giorgio Tonelli too has put the stress wrongly. According to him typical aesthetic elements of the cognitive process are inductions and examples. (Tonelli, *Encycl. of Phil.*, vol. 1, p. 256.). I agree with the great importance of examples, but this derives from their singularity, not from the general knowledge they sustain or generate. For these very reasons I object to the idea that induction would be an important subject matter for Baumgarten's aesthetics.

<sup>20</sup> The letter is reprinted in Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung* ....

<sup>21</sup> Baumgarten in this letter also refers to similar, possible, instruments for enhancing our hearing. Jäger's assessment of the *Aesthetica* is in: Jäger, *Die Ästhetik als Antwort auf das kopernikanische Weltbild: die Beziehungen zwischen den Naturwissenschaften und der Ästhetik Alexander Gottlieb Baumgartens und Georg Friedrich Meiers*, 1984

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psychology in that he supplements the faculties that make out the ‘lower part of the cognitive faculty’ (as it is still called in *Metaphysica* and the dissertation), or the ‘lower cognitive faculty’ (in *Aesthetica*) as follows: Wolff speaks of ‘sense’, ‘imagination’, ‘fantasy’ and ‘memory’, and Baumgarten supplements these faculties with ‘perspicacity’, ‘presight’, ‘judgement’, and the faculty of ‘characterization’ (the art of signification).<sup>22</sup> Baumgarten highlights the temporal dimension of the lower faculties, and he links the epistemological with the poetical. Let us take a closer look now and see how this is done.

### 4. Aesthetic Truth(-likeness)

Without specifying what makes a thing into a representation, Baumgarten merely starts from representations and asks after their subject matter and whether and in what way they are true.<sup>23</sup> The poetic faculty (*facultas fingendi*) grasps the parts of a phantasm as a whole and produces representations that may be called ‘figments’ (*Erdichtungen*) if they are true and ‘chimeras’ or ‘empty images’ if they are false.<sup>24</sup> Baumgarten thinks that chimeras stem from several kinds of mistakes, such as linking what cannot be linked, leaving out properties that would be essential for the image, or, lastly, leaving out certain individual traits without replacing them and yet presenting the image as that of an individual. These faults are the result of neglecting similarities between things.<sup>25</sup> True images are true in an epistemological sense, but they are aesthetically true only in as far as this can be perceived by the senses—either directly, through sense impressions, or indirectly, through images of a future based on premonition.<sup>26</sup> To be sure, aesthetic truth may be an instance of fantasy and premonition, but it remains to be based on what is obvious within an image—aesthetic truth is obvious truth. Thus, aesthetic truth may imply falsity but only if this remains

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<sup>22</sup> Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung ...: ‘Einführung’*, I.

<sup>23</sup> According to Mary Gregor Baumgarten takes taste to be the faculty with which we decide about the truth of an image—but without a clear analysis of ‘taste’ little is gained by this. Gregor, ‘Baumgarten’s *Aesthetica*’, 1983.

<sup>24</sup> Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung ...*, *Metaphysica*, § 590, p. 45

<sup>25</sup> Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung ...*, *Metaphysica*, § 591

<sup>26</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 444, p. 177. Premonitions evidently are thoughts and for Baumgarten who wants to separate the perceptual from the intellectual this may be problematic. However, he puts the stress on the images involved with these premonitions. This may be consequential for Baumgarten’s contention that art must show moral dignity, which seems to be based on our powers of empathy, and not merely on our powers to form images in our minds.

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invisible.<sup>27</sup> Though it is the perceivable which provides the standard for our appreciations, Baumgarten thinks it is difficult not to make use of philosophical and scientific truth in our assessment of what is supposed to be so obvious in a work of art. Baumgarten therefore sees fit to regularly warn us not to confuse deductive knowledge with artistic knowledge.<sup>28</sup> To sum up, artistic knowledge is true either obviously when it presents itself directly to the senses, or covertly when it is based on images of fantasy and anticipation. Baumgarten further distinguishes between aestheticological truth and falsity on the one hand, and aesthetic truth and falsity on the other—these are his terms. The former regards the subjective aspect of all of a person's representations, whose truth derives from logical principles only. The latter regards the subjective state of sensuous intuition. Aestheticological truth cannot but be aesthetically true as well, since it must show itself in perception as fitting together rightly. Aesthetic truth on the contrary, i.e. the truth of the perceptual, does not have to be aestheticologically true, as long as the falsities involved do not show.<sup>29</sup> According to Poppe Baumgarten in his (lectures on) aesthetics thus gives higher priority to fictional truth than to real truth.<sup>30</sup> There are aestheticological falsities which even when we perceive them remain unimportant for the aesthetic truth, such as a description of an animal running in the woods at night when it is supposed to be fast asleep.<sup>31</sup> As long as the inferences proving its truth are not explicitly taken into account, some aestheticological truth can be presented to the senses as an aesthetic truth.

“Of the general aestheticological truths only those are aesthetic which can be represented sensuously by intuitive thought, and only in so far as they can be thus represented, without damaging the law of beauty. I.e. either obviously and overtly; or covertly, without, however, explicitly naming the rhetorical inference; or in examples in which this abstract knowledge can be found in the actual.”<sup>32</sup>

Baumgarten's notion of aesthetic truth, if it refers to representation, is problematic, as we saw in the first chapter above. Pictures do not state matters of fact and cannot therefore be true or false in any strict sense—only our interpretations can. Indeed, Baumgarten refers to pictures that are “wrong

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<sup>27</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, Chapter 28.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 576, 583.

<sup>29</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, Chapters 27 and 28.

<sup>30</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 477, p. 209

<sup>31</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 454

<sup>32</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 443, p. 177

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relative to a specific sentence”.<sup>33</sup> So it is not the representation itself that is supposed to be false, but some specific sentence describing it. However, we cannot simply spot an interpretation in the picture—it must be constructed. However, they can be verified in it, and such verification can indeed be obvious. Baumgarten has a point in taking images with impossible combinations of properties to be false, in that they cannot possibly be pictures of real objects or events. Atlas, who supposedly carries the world, cannot possibly be without such aesthetic falsity, and therefore, without ugliness. Indeed this impossibility is an obvious one. However, this is a falsity qualifiedly different from that of a false proposition, since it must first be grammatically correct to be false. Baumgarten’s aesthetic falsity is the analogue of the nonsense produced by grammatical incorrectness. That is, if ever we could make sense of a pictorial syntax, which, following the argument of the first part, we cannot. So there can be no epistemological falsity with pictures. There is an alternative view of the matter, according to which what Baumgarten is looking for is: how to understand the subjective correlate of an image. It is not the truth or falsity of the image itself that is at stake, but: what perceived falsity would amount to in the subject. Such phenomenal falsity must reside in a logical contradiction that cannot be missed if one looks at the image, and which prevents one from attributing meaning to the representation.

In referring to the phenomenal aspect of our knowledge Baumgarten takes the monadic perspective of the perceiving individual as the focus point for artistic truth. The aestheticological truth of the sum total of monadic perceptions—monadic development viewed from the perspective of its experience—forms the goal of extensive, perceptual knowledge. ‘Extensive knowledge’ refers to what was described in Chapter 1 as the ‘overdetermination’ involved in depiction. In pictures many of the visual properties of some scene recur, without being pointed at. Baumgarten’s aesthetic theory aims at the assessment of the means with which we can reach such extensivity’s beauty. In contrast to deductive science, however, aesthetics does not develop inferential means for reaching this goal but experiential ones.

What then does aesthetic truth consist of, supposing it fully confronts our intuition with certainty and conviction?<sup>34</sup> First, it consists of our daily common sense, comprising important and general principles of human

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<sup>33</sup> Poppe, *op.cit.*, p. 227

<sup>34</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 481, p. 213. Cf. also Baumgarten, *Metaphysica*, 1963 (1779), § 531.

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knowledge implanted in us by nature. However, because common sense 'goes without saying' it is very difficult to put it into words or images in its full richness of arguments and thoughts. This is why most people are hardly aware of its role in aesthetic truth. Secondly, the small, and smallest, intuitive perceptions form part of it, but only in as far as they are perceived immediately without being misplaced by hidden faults.<sup>35</sup> On the point of including monadic dull perceptions, Baumgarten appears to contradict himself. In Sections 15, 16 and 430 he explicitly denies that the smallest perceptions of the soul are the artist's concern. Yet, in Section 482 he includes them in 'aesthetic truth', and in Section 80 he finds the aesthetic impetus in them. Here he refers to what he calls the ground of the soul, those hidden and dark perceptions that hook up with whatever conscious thoughts or perceptions we have, thus providing us with some principle of association.<sup>36</sup> According to Baumgarten we are never really certain of aesthetic truth; it's more like not having perceived any falsities. To indicate this appearance Baumgarten uses the notion 'verisimilitude', mostly co-extensive with the English 'probability', rather than with 'truth'. The German word 'Wahrscheinlichkeit', however, indicates that such aesthetic truth has little to do with the aspect of 'possibility' implied in the English term 'probability', in suggesting that the truth involved is apparent, phenomenal. What is aesthetically true merely contains no evident logical contradictions, and has the appearance of being natural by referring to representations that the listener or beholder already possesses.<sup>37</sup> As such aesthetic truth is not critical, but confirmatory, it is plausible both logically and aesthetically inasmuch as experience sustains it.<sup>38</sup>

The more general a truth is, whether metaphysical or aesthetic, the less detailed the truths it contains. The aesthetician aiming at the highest possible aesthetic truth will for reason of its detailedness give preference most of all to particular truths over the more general ones. This follows also from his task of representing the richness of a thing's attributes. The richer these attributes are the more individual the thing will be and the more obvious its

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<sup>35</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 482, p. 213.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Gregor: "... this realm of darkness ... has the positive value of a principle of association. The obscure notes that cling to our clear ideas serve to bind them together below the level of full consciousness, by introducing into our present perceptions echoes of what has disappeared from memory. They constitute "the base of the soul" (*fundus animae*), which has generally been overlooked, even by philosophers." Gregor, 'Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*', 1983, p. 367.

<sup>37</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 483, p. 215.

<sup>38</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, p. 217.

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representation. His task is to produce as much grandeur, significance, fullness, and dignity as possible.<sup>39</sup> The aestheticological truth, the subjective aspect of one's representations, is enhanced accordingly.<sup>40</sup> A truth that is richer is for that reason more significant, more appropriate, more exact, clearer and more distinct; it is more reliable and thorough. Also, the richer and more significant a representation is, the better its details fit together, and lastly, the more enlightening its aestheticological truth.<sup>41</sup> The perfection of such 'truths' as pertain to pictorial representation is either formal or material, but both are equally important,<sup>42</sup> the goal being the determination of as many details as possible.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the individual, aestheticological perspective onto the world contains a lot that is not yet determined by the concepts we use. Examples are, therefore, more crucial for aesthetic thinking than metaphysical abstractions.<sup>44</sup> If we were to use general concepts to describe a thing's individual details, we might acquire a great formal perfection in our knowledge, but would lose the material perfection inherent in the details. Moreover, there are aspects to a detail that may not form part of its—general—essence, or which are proven not to exist in reality, and which will therefore be neglected when described formally. Lastly, such aspects of details that might cause repulsion or horror in the subject will also have to be neglected from a formal point of view.<sup>45</sup> In short, aestheticological truth embraces more than logical, deduced, knowledge, and art's task lies in reproducing the material perfection of phenomena. Art must show a phenomenon's grandeur and importance, and all of its aspects—the insignificant as much as the essential, the nice as much as the repulsive, and the certain as much as the debatable ones. So the beauty of the perfection involved is not based on what Kant would call and dismiss as objective purposiveness, whether this is taken as internal or external.<sup>46</sup> However, the aesthetician is limited in his powers,

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<sup>39</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., p. 173.

<sup>40</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., § 441.

<sup>41</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., § 557, p. 239.

<sup>42</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., § 558.

<sup>43</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., § 561.

<sup>44</sup> Poppe, op.cit, § 64

<sup>45</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., § 559, p. 241.

<sup>46</sup> Guyer (*Kant and the Experience of Freedom: Essays on Aesthetics and Morality*, 1993, p. 231-32) seems to think otherwise. He thinks that the rationalist idea of beauty as the unity within the pluriform is a case of basing beauty on internal objective finality. My argument rests on the interpretation that such unity with Baumgarten is meant to be a phenomenal, i.e. experienced unity, not a unity derivable from the specifications implied in the concept describing the object—which is how Kant describes this species of purposiveness. In *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, sections 10 and 11, CJM61ff, KU B32ff, S134ff.

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as are the time and space available to him; so some things are bound to remain hidden.<sup>47</sup> We just cannot catch each relevant detail nor can we automatically induce in the beholder the wanted effect, and affect.<sup>48</sup> The means used will, therefore, always be ‘underdetermined’ by the given aestheticological data of individuality.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the artist produces a sensuous form which cannot be perfectly true to the individual—but in trying to leave out as few material ingredients as possible he does produce beauty. As a solution to the dilemma between rigid loyalty to the phenomenal on the one hand, and the artist’s limited capacities on the other, one may use a theme to construe a coherence relevant to the represented individual. A theme is not a general concept but may rather be as singular as the coherence it constructs—nevertheless it is an instrument for introducing order within the details,<sup>50</sup> and the artist must be warned not to let the theme overrule the individual traits that legitimize its application. If we understand the theme as relating to the phenomenal perspective of an individual, we remain close to the third answer—an option sustained also by Ernst Cassirer, who thinks that Baumgarten wanted art to provide a vivid, lively, and lifelike understanding.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, criteria that should help the artist in his decisions in this area are “the fullness, [...] dignity, tasteful liveliness (*Lebhaftigkeit*), brightness, and the glow indispensable for beautiful thought, the persuasiveness that intrudes the inward, and especially the vividness (*Lebendigkeit*) and the rejoicing and shocking effect on the beholder.”<sup>52</sup> If we are to accede to this ‘standard’ of aesthetic quality, we must first determine how aesthetic truth relates to the aestheticological truth of our inner mental representations.

Baumgarten’s argument that the beauty of a representation lies in perceptual knowledge of individuality qualifies the caricatured mimesis theory which understands representation as a unimodal copying of the aspect of an individual that is accessible solely to the relevant sense organ. Baumgarten’s position implies that to represent an individual in the visual medium of depiction or sculpture one needs more than mere copying of

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<sup>47</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 561, p. 243.

<sup>48</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 561, p. 243-244.

<sup>49</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 564, p. 245.

<sup>50</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 565, p. 247.

<sup>51</sup> Cassirer, ‘Die Grundlegung der Systematischen Ästhetik - Baumgarten’, 1932

<sup>52</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 565, p. 247.

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what is visual two- or, respectively, three-dimensionally. What is needed on top of such copying is an affection of the beholder, an intimation of some specific, relevant experience. Interestingly, in his dissertation Baumgarten defines poetry as perceived discourse of perceived representations, and treats poetry as a compilation of images.<sup>53</sup> At first sight this may seem rather odd, since there are no pictures in the discursive arts, but only words. However, literature can also be seen as the most ‘imaging’ of all the arts, in that it alone makes us form the relevant images in our consciousness without being restricted by ‘image properties’ perceivable in the work.<sup>54</sup> If knowledge of the individual phenomenon is the aim of art then a good work of art ought also to represent the mental life of the represented individual. There are two arguments in favour of this implication. First, that we want the experiential to be included is evidenced in the value we place upon that in our everyday appreciation of art: we are most happy when finding ways to identify ourselves with the antagonists in a work of art. Secondly, individuals conceived rationalistically—monads—are mental, so leaving out their internal, experiential aspect would be doing injustice to their individuality.

### 5. Art Must Show Moral Dignity

According to Baumgarten, “It will often be necessary to search for characteristics which do not reflect history, in order not to commit a moral falsity.”<sup>55</sup> This remark expresses that, next to being aesthetically true, the work of art should also be morally right. This confronts us again with the question of the criterion for a successful work: should we now look for it in prior ethical knowledge as well, or is it to be located in the aesthetic constituents of the work, its aesthetic truthlikeness? Exemplifying the first of these options, according to Baumgarten, the artist may not depict the clothes of a whore, as these cannot be morally dignified,<sup>56</sup> nor should one portray obscene parts or acts, because this would hurt the more noble part of one’s audience.<sup>57</sup> This suggestion presents an argument *ex negativo*. Baumgarten

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<sup>53</sup> In: Aschenbrenner and Holther, *Reflections on Poetry*. (A.G. Baumgarten’s: *Meditationes de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus*, 1954 (1735), §§ 4-9).

<sup>54</sup> Tilghman might agree with my view of the matter: “If the aesthetic character of poetry is to be one with that of the visual arts, the connection is going to have to be made in more subtle and unexpected ways.” (Tilghman, *But is it Art?* 1984, p. 123).

<sup>55</sup> Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 586, p. 253

<sup>56</sup> Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 184

<sup>57</sup> “Beautiful thinking is meant for noble people, not just for making money, nor for railing at people.” Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 196, p. 160.

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is not very explicit about the positive answer he has in mind to the question of the ethical resonance of beautiful art.<sup>58</sup> Instead, he summons us—rather non-specifically—not to leave the real world too much behind in our fantasies. Baumgarten demands also that we occupy ourselves more closely with the truth of the actual, singular life.<sup>59</sup> It makes quite a difference whether we are confronted with an old or a young person, with a person or a thing. Representations should be adequate to their subject matter. In aesthetics, moral possibility is the proper moral truth of beauty. Also, the representation being ‘of’ an individual should involve an agreement of the expression with the intention if it is to possess moral dignity.<sup>60</sup> However, moral dignity involves some transgression of the spectator’s expectancies as well. The moral dignity of a representation should surprise the spectator: one should depict a character in ways spectators might not have thought out for themselves. For example, a farmer should not talk like a minister about the common wealth of the nation; instead he should deliberate about the state of farming, but in surprising ways. Reversely, generally accepted virtues may be violated as long as this is in line with the morality of a singular character, as long as this is done for the sake of the consistency of the character’s portrayal. Moral dignity in representation is a function of aesthetic consistency. We must mind, however, that aesthetic dignity regards not only the properties of the beautiful object, but also the effect upon the audience. To have a murderer rave and rant is beautiful and worthy only if it morally elevates the beholder. So, first, the artist must pick morally good actions to represent, but, secondly, these actions’ representation must accord with their inner narrative rather than with some more broad moral consideration—as long as this broader moral consideration is not the one generating the narrative. Thirdly, the standard of success lies in the moral elevation of the public—an elevation that is not based upon the moral contents, but rather on the narrative coherence. Remarkably, this is the way in which an individual can exhibit his specificity. The surprise involved in all this has the effect of intimating a distinct experiential perspective onto the represented.<sup>61</sup> The question is whether according to Baumgarten such intimation is an evocative effect following upon the representation of the individual or an integral part of the representation itself—representing the experience of the represented. This

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, §§ 590, 592

<sup>59</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 433, p. 167

<sup>60</sup> If this agreement expresses a virtue it deserves the name of honour ‘sincerity’, whereas if it does not it is nonsense. Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, §§ 431-437

<sup>61</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 434, cites Horace approvingly as recommending an empathetic philosophy.

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question thrives on the distinction between subject and object,<sup>62</sup> in that, as a representational element embodied in the representation, the named intimation appears not to presuppose such a sharp contrast between subject and object: the experience represented is supposedly in the work as much as it is in the mind of the beholder. Evocation, on the contrary, quite evidently does presuppose the subject-object split: what is evoked is evoked by the object in the subject, and the ‘evoker’ need not be of the same nature as the ‘evoked’—‘pity’ is evoked, not by pity, but by the perception of loss, death, sadness, et cetera. I shall return to the subject-object distinction in the next section.

Baumgarten explicitly adheres to the thesis that all representations should relate to some human’s perspective (they all should possess a moral magnitude, in Baumgarten’s terminology). At one place Baumgarten ascribes moral magnitude only to representations of freedom and human activities,<sup>63</sup> denying such dignity of representations of things only. The moral dignity involved would then have to lie in some rational assessment of the—moral—content. However, elsewhere Baumgarten perceives moral dignity wherever a thing is represented in such a way as to forcibly occasion some free mind to occupy himself with it.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, all beautiful things are morally dignified.<sup>65</sup> The aimed at moral dignity of a work of art equals from an ethical point of view the extensive clarity and aesthetic truth which are supposed to be art’s standard of success. So according to Baumgarten, it is not artistic naturalism (realism or materialism) that is at stake in art, but experiential intimation of phenomenal effects. In the beholding individual the represented phenomenon’s haecceity recurs. Alexander Baumgarten has introduced the notion of extensive knowledge to explain our perception and artistic re-creation of the ‘indexicality’ of phenomenality. ‘Extensivity’ points to the irreducible totality of the aspects of an individual at some particular here and now and we may certainly secure better the individuality of a depicted individual if we also succeed in representing the experiential—moral—aspect of his mental life. So according to Baumgarten mere recurrence of the visual aspect does not of itself make great representation. If there is a standard of aesthetic quality, Baumgarten thinks it lies in the aesthetic, and moral, truth about a phenomenal individual, or, which ought to amount to the very same, the truth about some

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<sup>62</sup> This distinction is alleged by later writers to have been forged in Baumgarten’s time.

<sup>63</sup> Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 181

<sup>64</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 182.

<sup>65</sup> The artist’s aesthetic thoughts must be morally right. Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 183.

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individual's phenomena. Thus, aesthetic truth depends on the beholding subject's individuality in a morally deep sense.

### 6. Mutual Dependence Between Subject and Object

From the very start of *Aesthetica* Baumgarten does not distinguish sharply, if at all, between the aesthetician as a philosopher and the aesthetician as an artist.<sup>66</sup> Although in later chapters he goes to much trouble to explain the tasks ascribed specifically to the artist, in § 12, for example, he uses the term 'aesthetician' to refer to the philosopher. The same ambiguity is found with Baumgarten's use of the term 'beautiful thinking': because of the implication of 'thinking' one might surmise Baumgarten is referring to the philosopher, but the artist is not excluded, and explicitly so: both types of aesthetician should think and write 'in style' and 'convincingly'. The philosopher is to be distinguished from the artist, because what he writes is theoretically justified, but regarding the presentation of their thoughts there should be no difference.<sup>67</sup> Scientists too should present their ideas in beautiful manner and should interlard them with sensuously accessible materials, such as examples and illustrations. Of course, the thoughts presented in this manner must continue to be understood intellectually, whereas with art this is not necessarily the case.<sup>68</sup> Evidently, the *Aesthetica* itself is not a work of art, but is a work of scientific theory wherein the aesthetician is speaking philosophically, not as an artist.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, in the end, Baumgarten must have wanted the various meanings of 'aesthetician' and 'aesthetic thinking' to be distinguished. Primary is a scientific discipline of philosophical aesthetics, whose beauty is merely the by-product (neutral regarding contents) of having convinced the readership. The artistic meaning of 'aesthetic', however, has beauty as its sole aim and purpose. Next, and what is more important, Baumgarten does not distinguish explicitly between the three phases of the work of art: its production, its properties, and its

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<sup>66</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., §§ 11, 12.

<sup>67</sup> "the truth insofar as it can be grasped intellectually is not exactly the business of the aesthetician. If this truth reveals itself indirectly on the basis of various aesthetic truths as their totality or if it coincides with the aesthetically true, then the scientifically thinking aesthetician can only congratulate himself." Baumgarten, op.cit., § 428, p. 163.

<sup>68</sup> Baumgarten, op.cit., § 38.

<sup>69</sup> Baumgarten in his lectures: "... our book ... ought not be taken as an example of aesthetic writing, but is ... the scientific presentation of aesthetics ..." Baumgarten in Poppe, op.cit., p. 130.

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reception<sup>70</sup>—he appears to see them all in the sole light of man’s psychology. All three are viewed in terms of the artist’s seven concerns, most prominently, his tasks of wealth, shortness, magnitude, dignity, and the care for his own mental abilities. His own nature, his abilities, and their ‘horizons’, he must relate to the theme and his public. In the same manner the beholder should relate the appreciation of the work to these points of view, but, also, primarily, to his own abilities and their limitations.<sup>71</sup> Without this psychological embeddedness of the relevant aesthetic considerations, art and beauty are dispensable—art is valued for its experiential dimension. Illustrating this experiential dimension of ‘beauty’ Baumgarten describes the aesthetician (artist and beholder alike!) as walking inside the subject matter.<sup>72</sup>

The ‘aesthetician’ possesses mental faculties deserving the name of ‘analogon rationis’, because they form an analogue to reason.<sup>73</sup> These faculties comprise certain inborn faculties, which we might also call an ‘innate natural talent’, or a ‘beautiful and delicate mind’, which comprises the lower and the higher cognitive faculties.<sup>74</sup> Also, the aesthetician supposedly possesses an innate aesthetic temperament consisting of certain desires, enthusiasm and the will to exercise.<sup>75</sup> The analogon rationis is a

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<sup>70</sup> How we are to imitate nature we read in §§ 104 and 128. (Also: Poppe, *op.cit.*, p. 136-37). Again we find intermingled the three aspects of aesthetic thinking: artist, work, and appreciation: not mere naturalistic copying, but recurrence of the experience of the artist in his individuality with regard to the subject matter, within the perspective of the beholder. (Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, p. 319).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. various sections in the lectures: Poppe, *op.cit.*, § 167 (p. 154), § 104.

<sup>72</sup> “The richer the vast fullness of aesthetic truth and truthfulness of poetic inventions and narratives are—a forest for the beautifully thinking aesthetician to stroll in—the more a delicately built personality shall be aroused to strive for truth.” Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*. § 555, p. 235-36.

<sup>73</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, Chapter 2, §§ 28 through 38.

<sup>74</sup> Among the lower cognitive faculties we find, first, the ability to perceive accurately with the outer and inner senses; the latter consisting of the power of introspection, the power of probing the inner sense. The second part of the relevant lower faculties is our imagination (fantasy), our ability to represent memories, the now, and the future (and to construct and invent images thereof). Next, the artist should possess wit, or spirit. He should be able to easily recognize real facts or memories. He should possess a poetical talent, good taste (which Baumgarten here conceives of as a kind of precursor of the understanding). He should be able to foresee and forecast, and, as the last of the lower cognitive faculties, he should have the powers to express these representations. Next, his higher cognitive faculties are of relevance as well, mostly because these stimulate the lower ones, and because often reason and understanding are needed to prevent the production of incoherent representations. (Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, §§ 30 through 38).

<sup>75</sup> He should have certain desires (which Baumgarten spells out hierarchically), and an enthusiasm for the significant (cf. also chapter 5 in the *Aesthetica*) which enables him

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necessary condition for the production of good art, but it is not a sufficient one.<sup>76</sup> What else the aesthete needs Baumgarten describes as ‘the artist’s tasks’: to produce works that possess certain artistic properties, such as aesthetic wealth,<sup>77</sup> aesthetic magnitude, aesthetic truth, and aesthetic light. The artist should apply his enthusiasm rather than pre-ordained rules. He should use those figures, styles, and representations that provide the work with the richest material, and it is up to his judgement to decide about this.<sup>78</sup>

The second major task for the artist is the production of aesthetic magnitude, containing on the objective side: weight, significance, and fruitfulness concerning the objects and the thoughts allegedly appropriate to these.<sup>79</sup> Magnitude comes in relative and absolute guises, both of which can be natural or moral. They are moral, as we saw above, when they are connected to human freedom. Moral magnitude, aesthetic dignity, is hooked up with the virtues of free persons, and is vital for every beautiful work of

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to produce convincing works. Secondly, he ought to possess the will to exercise by repeating the relevant activities, which is supposed to lead the aesthete’s mind into a harmony of his faculties and feelings. According to the *Metaphysica* exercise leads into ‘habitus’. (Schweizer, *Texte zur Grundlegung ... Metaphysica*, § 577): The ‘aesthete’ ought to improvise (with or without following the rules of the art). He ought to be perceptive as to the similarities between things, he ought to be playful, take other writers’ books as examples, apply the doctrines of one’s art, et cetera.

<sup>76</sup> Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, § 60.

<sup>77</sup> Baumgarten, *op.cit.*, § 115; material wealth, the objective meaning of ‘ubertas’ (chapter 9); spiritual wealth, the subjective meaning of ‘ubertas’ (chapter 12). The subjective aspects should all keep the means between flying high and flying low (§§ 352, 364). With the exception of the notions of vividness (§ 119), theme (§ 135), and enthusiasm (§ 141). Baumgarten’s allusion to aesthetic wealth contains no theoretical analysis but amounts to an art theory specifying what the artist should and should not do.

<sup>78</sup> The spiritual wealth, ‘ubertas’ in its subjective meaning, is not a fixed property of the successful work, because certain thoughts may always remain hidden to the aesthete. Therefore he must do a good job in psychological analysis (*Aesthetica*, § 140): do his faculties suffice for the production of the work he intends to produce; does he have the proper talents; did he exercise enough? Can he produce enough enthusiasm, does he have enough time to spare? Also, the artist should try not to be too self-assured, nor to be unsteady. (*op.cit.*, § 150-157). This conforms to the idea that for aesthetic truth there are limits to the richness involved in beauty. There must be some absolute brevity, a correction meant to exclude details which might disturb the coherence of the whole. (*op.cit.*, chapter 13). Then he must comply with a relative brevity as well, which relates this apparent coherence to the demands of the fully determined object of beautiful thought, i.e., of the individual represented, or to the narrative demands of the work.

<sup>79</sup> *Op.cit.*, chapter 15.

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art.<sup>80</sup> The noble aesthetic soul should contemplate bad situations as much and as thoroughly as good ones, because of which the highest aesthetic generosity can be found in the soul who leaves the dignity and grace of things as they are.<sup>81</sup>

These two concerns of the aesthetician—wealth and magnitude—prove efficient in producing the aspects of beauty outlined above. Both concerns are intrinsically connected with the nature of the aesthetician and his specific kind of awareness. ‘Poppe’s’ report of § 29 is illustrative for Baumgarten’s position regarding the artist’s individuality. Here Baumgarten explains how inner sense can be spoiled by the outer senses, and how the artist must have strong feelings, and a strong introspective awareness. However, since Rationalism thinks that one is consciously aware of only a small part of what one’s soul reflects, there are reflections too small to be obvious at all to inner sense, and the existence of which only reason can derive. Nevertheless, aesthetic thought must take them into account as much as possible because of the central role of the artist’s own psychology. For the assessment of a representation’s beauty this is crucial too.<sup>82</sup> Notwithstanding Baumgarten’s thesis that a dynamic aesthetics should explain what knowing one’s own and other people’s abilities amounts to, he does not mean that an adequate aesthetics should be a psychological theory rather than anything else: “One should base the judgement of one’s abilities upon his products...”<sup>83</sup>

Baumgarten thus has identified the tasks of the aesthetician, locating them either in the subject or in the object, but are these ‘tasks’ subjective faculties and talents, or objective properties—or do they rather form the two sides of a single coin in each specific case? The third and fourth major tasks for the aesthetician comprise aesthetic truth, to which we have paid attention

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<sup>80</sup> Op.cit., § 181-183. There are objective and subjective varieties to aesthetic dignity, the subjective variety comprises generosity and virtuous seriousness; the objective variety comprises the absolute magnitude of the material. (op.cit., chapter 16). Certain things, for example, are ‘not done’, for the simple reason of being too trivial. Aesthetic dignity further comprises the relative magnitude, related again to the coherence of the individual, that is, one must reckon with the virtues only insofar as they actually occur. (op.cit., chapter 17). The subjective aspect of aesthetic magnitude consists in an absolute seriousness on behalf of mind and heart, in the absence of which one produces glibberishness and nonsense. (op.cit., chapter 24). One ought to be sincere, and comparatively aesthetically generous. (op.cit., chapter 25).

<sup>81</sup> Op.cit., chapter 26. Cf. also Poppe, op.cit., 213

<sup>82</sup> As is confirmed in § 30 of the *Aesthetica*.

<sup>83</sup> “If one wants to investigate the powers of beautiful thinking, one should determine, each individually, the subject who is doing the thinking, the object of this thinking, and the theme, or else one cannot judge about them or assess the powers.” (Poppe, op.cit., § 60, p. 104-05).

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already, and aesthetic light. The latter shall provide some interesting hints as to how Baumgarten would want us to understand the so-called aesthetic properties which Frank Sibley recently gave himself the task of defining.

### 7. Aesthetic Qualities

In Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* there appears to be some confusion concerning the distinction between subject and object. Schweizer attributes this confusion to the fact that Baumgarten was among the first to introduce this distinction, but I am not sure whether it is the consequence of a distinction not yet elaborated or of a distinction that is out of place in the theoretical framework it is supposed to serve.<sup>84</sup> In the aesthetic domain the mutual interdependence of the subjective and the objective has the appearance of being natural to the domain, rather than being the expression of confusion. With Baumgarten and indeed many of his contemporaries the non-distinction is an instance of unreflected fusion, but, I will now argue, we must account for it with the essentially response-dependent nature of aesthetic properties. Concerning certain central aesthetic categories what happens in the work of art cannot possibly be separated from what happens in the subject beholding it—compare for example, the artistic task of 'light',<sup>85</sup> the essential temporality of certain arts, and the auditory event of music. I am not merely referring to the fact that art must be perceived to be appreciated, but that we must perceive it in certain imaginative ways. We cannot cast the explanation for this specificity in secondary quality terms, because seeing colours, or hearing sound is insufficient (although necessary) for an aesthetic appreciation of a painting or a musical work. Baumgarten does not separate aesthetic truth from its presentation: the aesthetic aims at aestheticological truth firstly: at truth's experiential awareness. The 'light' and 'shadow' of works of art are not meant literally. Light as emanating from the sun, and accountable in terms of physical science or secondary quality terms, is not the aesthetic matter Baumgarten takes it to be. Instead, with the term 'light' Baumgarten refers to the force of appearance of some phenomenon. Thus, it cannot be seen as merely an objective property of the work of art, but must be related to the beholder's experience, and the aesthetician's tasks. Such aesthetic 'properties'

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<sup>84</sup> Schweizer (*Vom ursprünglichen Sinn der Ästhetik*, 1976).

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, chapter 37.

## Art and Experience – Part II

as these cannot be equated with what empiricist contemporaries have named secondary qualities. Light is an atypical phenomenon in that it is not there in the object nor solely in the beholding subject, but is in both at the same instant, and involves their mutual connection. All there is to the ‘light’, ‘shadow’, and ‘shade’, of works of art must be understood in terms of experiential awareness. The light of a painting, say, is a relational property—the painting’s convincingness or some such valuable effect. This is at once an objective and a subjective aspect of a work, and for the legitimate attribution of ‘light’ to a work one must have experienced the work for oneself: without an acquaintance of some imaginative sort with the work no such attributions are allowed.

If reproductive resemblance provides part of the foundation of (pictorial) representation, as I argued it does, then this non-distinction will prove essential. We learned this from Baumgarten’s locating beauty in the individual perspective upon phenomenality. In Schweizer’s words:

[Works of art] concentrate on the aesthetic present that renews itself each instant in time, and they open the horizon to the richness and the depth, but also ... to the unavailability of phenomenality.<sup>86</sup>

Thus art presents us with the human outlook of the world. How does this explain Baumgarten’s failure to distinguish the aesthetic philosopher from the artist? Their aim of ameliorating sense perception does not seem to imply that sense knowledge shall be best when it coincides with what enters the mind phenomenally. What is peculiar of a recurrence in the subject of what is there objectively, is that it presupposes the token-reflexive context of aesthetic appreciation. Alexander Baumgarten, who two centuries ago introduced the notion of extensive knowledge to explain this, also insisted that what an extensively rich work supposedly does is intimate the experience regarding its subject that the artist wants us to have. I ignore the intentional fallacy that may be implied in this point of view in favour of an important insight of Baumgarten’s: a beautiful work of art must represent the extensively coherent, and therefore morally dignified, phenomenality of a perceptual experience. Extensivity, moral magnitude, aesthetic light, and wealth, all point to the thesis that the individuality of a depicted event or person can be secured only if we also succeed in representing the

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<sup>86</sup> “Sie konzentrieren sich auf die von Augenblick zu Augenblick sich erneuernde sinnlich-ästhetische Gegenwart und öffnen den Horizont für den Reichtum und die Tiefendimension, aber auch ... für die Unverfügbarkeit der Erscheinung.” Schweizer, ‘Sinnlich-ästhetische Erkenntnis als Beziehungsfeld von Welt und Mensch bei H. Barth, A.G. Baumgarten und I.P.V. Troxler’, 1990, p. 203

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experiential aspect of the relevant mental life. It is not artistic naturalism (realism or materialism) that is at stake in art, but, rather, intimation of the experiential dimension of some phenomenon. Baumgarten had the intuition that mere reproduction of the visual aspect does not make great representation (yet). What noticeably recurs in our aesthetic experience of a beautiful work of art then is the individuality of the work's subject matter as presented. Recognizing a successful representation presupposes the same kind of mental conduct that aesthetic evaluation seems to call for. By not clearly distinguishing his 'science' of sense knowledge from his philosophy of art—by explicitly identifying these two theoretical undertakings—Baumgarten has done us a service. This service is traceable in the tenets Baumgarten developed throughout his thoughts.

### 8. Conclusions to Part II

In the two chapters on Kant I argued how Kant's claims regarding the judgement of taste might best be understood by taking the free play of the cognitive faculties which functions in its centre as playing a dual role. Transcendentally it grounds the judgement of taste by referring to some ideal experience; empirically it may be understood as providing the reasons with which we might want to convince other people of the correctness of our judgements. The regulative ideal of aesthetic experience involves a reference to some *sensus communis*, to the suggestion of the existence of a principle which universally connects people. The aesthetic experience is supposed to provide us with a feeling of this awareness of 'solidarity'. However, evidently, this principle is a construct of reason, one which we cannot possibly have an experience of. Apart from this objection, however, in everyday practice we appear to be able to communicate successfully without any considerable difficulty. Empirically, aesthetic, appreciative experiences seem sufficient proof of that. As such there is no big gap between addressing the regulative ideal while starting from some contingent empirical experience. We do need a theoretical explanation though, and this reference to everyday practice may merely show us the way—it is not conclusive. To that avail I analyzed Kant's puzzling remarks about aesthetic ideas and the moral relevance of aesthetic excellence. Here we found that Kant meant aesthetic ideas to be the correlates of free plays of the cognitive faculties that exemplify the ideal aesthetic experience. Aesthetic ideas, I argued, must be understood as correlating to this free play in its empirical use. I argued that this approach helps explain the role within this free play of our imagination. It also helped uncover the distinction Kant proposed between the reproductive

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and the productive imagination, which helped to devise an instrument for understanding Kant's remarks about how an aesthetic idea animates the mind (propels it into a free play), and how it endows the beautiful object with soul. Soul can only be introduced in the beautiful object by empathetic imagination: by imaginatively acting as though the object were going through some experience. This, like any other act of empathy, involves the re-enactment of this experience, only now in a free play of the beholder. Appealing to the regulative ideal can normally be traced to the claim that this re-enactment was successful. This explains why such reference is to an ideal instead of to some real event for the obvious reason that no-one can possibly have another person's experience.<sup>87</sup> Lastly, these views we found sustained in Kant's remarks on the ideal, and moral relevance, of beauty. We must of course distinguish between objects whose beauty is merely attributed and which for that reason seem to be more substantial proof of our autonomy; and objects made for such attribution, art works. With art works we may be less secure about the purity of our attributions. However, since nothing in my argument derives from the negligence of this distinction there seems no reason not to stop at this point and to conclude that Kant has analyzed beauty as a quality attributed to the world by empathetic imagination, which for reason of the unattainability of the truth of such attributions involves reference to a regulative ideal. Savile's distinction between the ground and contents of the judgement of taste can now be understood in terms of reference to the ideal, and, respectively, actual imaginative empathy with the beautiful object. It is the empathetic imagination which ought to provide us with the reasons we need to convince someone else of the legitimacy and appropriateness of our own judgement of taste.

In Chapter 6 I elaborated upon this conclusion by excavating certain theses implied in Baumgarten's aesthetics. Baumgarten was read as filling in Kant's 'attribution of soul' to the beautiful object. However, Baumgarten's theory is explicitly about art and how in art beauty is produced, so we cannot fall back on the innocence with which I disregarded the distinction between artistic and natural beauty in the chapters on Kant. In Chapter 6 then the domain of natural beauty has been left behind explicitly. Our reading of Baumgarten's aesthetics may not have produced thorough arguments for

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<sup>87</sup> This position does not necessarily lead to solipsism, in that it does not deny the possibility of third person understanding of other persons' experiences, nor does it specifically entail the impossibility of even attributing experiences to other people. It involves the claim that we cannot ever really claim 'to know what it is like for another person to go through some experience'.

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tackling the problems that remained after the first part of this study, but it did show how he took beauty in an art work to be the product of an artist's perfected phenomenal awareness resulting in the beholder's perfected phenomenal awareness, and what aspects this 'perfected phenomenal awareness' should radiate. Implied in an object's beauty are aesthetic truth, consisting of 'the obvious': a coherent narrative containing no obvious inconsistencies, an extensive, irreducible wealth of perceptual marks, a moral magnitude—or dignity, and an illuminating 'light'. That is, beauty convinces the beholder of what is contained in the representation. These marks of beauty all point in one direction: that in beauty an individual is presented in his individuality, and that this is achieved phenomenally, in the experience of beholding. One important conclusion drawn from this reading regards the response-dependent nature of aesthetic properties: aesthetic truth, extensive wealth, moral dignity, and aesthetic light, are all in the mind of the beholder as much as they are in the object, and no account can suffice without explaining both in the same move. Argumentatively, the harvest of this chapter may be meagre. However, it did show us how Kant's remarks about aesthetic ideas, empathetic imagination, and the ideal of beauty must have fallen upon ground already fertilized by Baumgarten. In this chapter, the Baumgarten who—according to Kant—proposed a principled account of beauty appears to have been a subjectivist of the type Kant ought instead to have agreed with. The most important conclusion to be drawn from Baumgarten's aesthetics is that beauty indexicalizes whatever is represented in the work of art, and it achieves this by affecting the beholder in certain ways. In the next part of this study I will cash in on these reassessments by developing them into notions that are relevant to the contemporary argument as identified in the first part of this study.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> I thank dr. Hans-Rudolf Schweizer for providing me with translations of chapters from Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* that were not available in publication.

## PART III

### ART'S EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION

#### Introduction to Part III

Before finally conceptualizing art's experiential dimension and explaining why it should form the core problem in aesthetics, allow me to summarize the argument so far. I argued in Chapter 1 that pictorial representation might best be understood as grounded in reproductive exemplification (as in photography), in that the understanding of representations makes ample use of (anticipations of) noticed resemblances. I diagnosed, among others things, that there exist no analogues to discursive negation, or indexicals in pictorial representation. No picture can deny that something is the case, nor can it mean 'I' or 'you' or 'say' something in the past tense in the same token-reflexive manner that the relevant pronouns or verb phrases can. There holds no conventionally regulated relation between the meaning of a picture and the occasion of its utterance. Of course, we can construct a history of production which supposedly led to the picture one is confronted with, and this history will eventually lead back to the occasion of the picture's 'utterance'. However, this context of creation is contingent on the picture's representational significance. Also we found a general convention D, which specifies how we should treat such things as are recognized to be instances of depiction, but which does nothing to fix just what such pictures represent—we saw how D resembles the convention which supposedly rules over exemplification, and which is also strictly general. Specifications of what is represented in a picture are amassed by noticing resemblances<sub>a</sub>. This conclusion posed no problems to my position since the sting was taken out of Nelson Goodman's semi-logical deflation of resemblance. We reinstalled the beholder's attempts to reconstruct the 'something' in the world that the picture is anticipated to resemble as theoretically the most basic element of depiction. It is of secondary importance whether this entity actually exists or has existed. Representation is not a species of denotation—but nor is it a species of reference, because it lacks the ability to situate its subject matter, to indexically point us to its spatio-temporal context of production. Being a representation means 'inducing the beholder to the mental action of noticing (anticipated) resemblances'. After having restored resemblance's necessity

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for depiction we confronted the last threshold of Goodman's rigid conventionalism: can anything whatsoever be depicted? We think not. Some resemblance must be noticed. However, Goodman was certainly right in dismissing this reply as vacuous. Resemblance may be a necessary condition for depiction, but it certainly isn't sufficient. We side-step this problem of definition, because depiction confronts a more serious problem once it is understood in terms of resemblance. This problem relates to the primary function of discursive indexicals of linking discourse to persons and their individuality. If indexically situating cannot be achieved by depiction we may have to conclude that depiction is unable to represent experience. Resemblance consists of unimodal reproduction of phenomenal properties—secondary qualities—and having an experience is not among these. If we say of some painting that it represents the experience of the sad person who is depicted on it, we do not mean to say that the painting produces this person's sadness in us, nor a pitying response to it, nor do we attribute an (artistic) expression of sadness to the painting. Instead, we claim that a sad experience is itself represented in the painting (just like the person is—and then some). How might we produce a claim to this effect and deny (as we do) that works of art possess a mental life of their own, and at the same time respect that the mental life of some depicted person actually is unavailable to the beholder? In short, if there exists no pictorial equivalent to discursive indexicality, the question surfaces how much of a person's 'haecceity' can be depicted.

Several notions developed in the aesthetic tradition—such as 'evocation' or 'expression'—might come close to answering this question. I will now argue that answers which make use of these notions are on a wrong footing. 'Evocation' is unhelpful because it does nothing to demolish the threat of local pictorial impotence by sustaining, or even fortifying, the distinction between the object and the beholding subject, and, moreover, it allows for a work of art to occasion an emotion in the beholder that is not in any way represented in the work, even though this response may be adequate to the representation, such as pitying a character's misfortune. 'Evocation' sustains an incongruity between the emotionality in art and its experiential effects. The question evocation poses is what psychological responses a beholder ought to have when confronted with such and such an understanding of events. Seeing sadness, loss, or death, for instance, ought to evoke in one who is psychologically normal a feeling of pity towards the sad person. The question, however, whether some scene also succeeds in intimating the experiential aspect of the main character's anger or sadness is a different one

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altogether: it is a question about representation, not one of psychology. We must, therefore, distinguish between the psychology of evocation and the aesthetics of the representation of experience. 'Expression' fails because it points in one of two wrong directions: either 'expression' puts us on the trail of the artist's intentions, which, as Beardsley and Wimsatt rightly argued, is irrelevant to an art work's representational meaning<sup>1</sup>—or we are referred to the artistic treatment of the material the art work consists of. Pointing at the expressive way in which some person or thing or event has been pictured disconnects the affective from what is represented in the picture. So it seems that neither 'evocation' nor 'expression' can help us understand the extent to which depiction is able to represent experience.

Sibley treats aesthetic properties as descriptive, and understands the judgements containing aesthetic property-terms as truth-valuational, but our comparison in Chapter 2 of aesthetic properties with primary and secondary qualities has taught us the irreducible uniqueness of aesthetic properties and the irrelevance of truth values to our aesthetic ascriptions. The phenomenal awareness of aesthetic properties depends upon the subject's input in ways essentially different from that of primary or secondary qualities. This I argued on the basis of the arguments Locke provided for the very distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Some measure of projection is needed for the perception of aesthetic properties. Richard Wollheim made the promising suggestion that we should understand expressive properties as being projective properties. This suggestion seems to explain the severe limitations of a cognitivist approach to the representation of experience.

I used the concept of 'art' as a primitive throughout the first two chapters in order to stress certain effects of art works without having to answer the question of definition. In chapter 3 my theoretical reluctance made way for an account of art in terms of its production, ontology, and exhibition. 'Art' was divided into four specifiably distinct types of artistically relevant choices which were taken each in their own right to be more or less relevant for making a thing or event into art. I proposed that a thing or event is art if and only if it is built from material exhibiting second order choices made on behalf of third order, aesthetic, evaluative, choices. In themselves, the procedures of museums do nothing to change this—pace Dickie. Secondary choices typically generate primary and secondary qualities—but more is needed for these primary and secondary qualities to form the basis upon

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<sup>1</sup> Wimsatt jr. and Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy', 1954.

## Introduction

which aesthetic properties supervene. The crucial question is whether the artist's secondary choices were made in the light of aesthetic choices. This reintroduces the questions we ended Chapter 2 with regarding the experiential dimension and the projective nature of aesthetic properties. But we then took it one step further: in order to adequately understand aesthetic properties we found that an account of aesthetic evaluation must be developed, one that meets the principle of acquaintance, next to reconciling the idea that aesthetic properties are irreducible to primary or secondary qualities. So we must account for at least two aspects of art's experiential dimension: first, we must account for art's ability to represent experience (which seems to presuppose the projective impact of the beholder's own experiences), and, secondly, we must account for art's internal intentional structure: how do a work's primary and secondary qualities relate to its aesthetic properties and, ultimately, to aesthetic evaluation?

To bring these problems together one might want to devise a theory relating aesthetic evaluation to the indexical depiction of experience. As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, Kant's aesthetic subjectivism is of special significance in relation to these questions. The answers found were rather complex. First, we found that the aesthetic experience which supposedly founds our aesthetic judgements must be understood as an ideal of aesthetic discourse, rather than as an empirical event. Secondly, the aesthetic experience understood empirically seemed to refer within the Kantian theory to our moral make-up. How this reference must be understood, however, remained an open-ended question. We reconstructed a possibly Kantian approach to this question, which started from his notion of aesthetic ideas, but new questions emerged: how do we—or aesthetic ideas, for that matter—animate the represented world; how do we introduce soul in the world? And what is the relevance of this for the free play of the cognitive faculties which is alleged to transcendently found our aesthetic judgements? We stopped short at the central role of imagination in all this.

Reassessing in Chapter 6 Kant's critique of rationalist aesthetics, Baumgarten's aesthetics was seen to provide a better formulation of a mix of our problems (of representation of the experiential, aesthetic properties, and aesthetic evaluation). Baumgarten's answer: aesthetic evaluation (preferably in terms of beauty) is based on the perfection of phenomenal awareness. And Baumgarten's specifications proved illuminating: such perfection of phenomenal awareness shows itself in the aesthetic qualities of the representation that it is the awareness of—such as its moral magnitude, its extensive wealth (which provides the representation with a kind of

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indexicality), its moral dignity (which incorporates the moral implications of the beholder's experience into the aesthetic value), and aesthetic light (the work's rhetorical abilities, which too must be understood in terms of experiential effect). These aesthetic qualities are all based on a subject-object interdependence. As such these notions are typical instances of the aesthetic properties that—at the ending of Chapter 2—we characterized as projective.

It is time now to use the arguments assembled in previous chapters to develop a theory that accounts for the experiential workings of art works starting from the contemporary aesthetic arguments. In Chapter 7 I will introduce the—technical—notion of 'intimation' to specify exactly what distinguishes representation from exemplificatory reproduction. If ever an experience was represented then this must have been an effect of intimation, not of pictorial recurrence<sub>a</sub> of the visual—not of reproduction. Intimation typically works where the strictly causally reproduced visual is absent: in style, framing, editing, metaphor, etc. I will elaborate this argument into an account of aesthetic properties, and explain why aesthetic properties differ ontologically from primary and secondary qualities. I propose to call them tertiary qualities, and argue that these tertiary qualities explain why we can refer to aesthetic properties when explaining our aesthetic evaluation, notwithstanding the fact that the so-called grand aesthetic terms, such as beauty, are not informative about the works they are used to evaluate. One might conclude from this lack of information that any and all reference to properties in the object would be irrelevant to aesthetic evaluation, which is plainly absurd. The consequent, conceptual question regarding the relevance of tertiary qualities for aesthetic evaluation will be the subject matter for Chapter 8.

Because strictly causally reproduced visuality is insufficient to represent an experience (of the represented), we need more than our natural input of the senses to appreciate it accordingly. We need a mental faculty distinct from our senses, and this faculty, I will suggest in Chapter 8, is the imagination. In order to specify exactly what type of imaginative activity is needed I will distinguish perceptual from empathetic imagination. Because works of art address a restricted number of sense modalities we need empathetic imagination to adequately establish whether in some work of art 'experience' is represented: empathetic imagination is necessary to perceive the tertiary qualities involved. However, following Kant, I will argue that in aesthetic evaluation it is the activities of the imagination themselves that are judged reflectively. Thus it is the animation of empathy which is valued aesthetically, which, secondly, explains the moral relevance of the aesthetic

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domain. Art may be morally relevant—irrespective of the explicit moral justness of some representation. Instead, its moral relevance lies in its activating our empathy. Lastly, in this chapter I will look into the problem of what theory of aesthetic evaluation must be developed. I argue for the acceptance of a subjectivism, but one that doesn't base all evaluation on our feelings, but on the reflective judgement of empathetic imagination, and call it: Imaginativist Subjectivism.

# Chapter Seven

## Intimation of Tertiary Qualities

### 1. Introduction

Against the background of an argument between conventionalists like Goodman, and naturalists, in Chapter 1 I defended the embedded naturalist thesis that depiction, unlike discourse, is conventional on a general level only, not throughout. Instantiations of convention D depict on the basis of resemblances<sub>a</sub>, and to recognize these, indeed, only natural powers are needed. I will now introduce a few concepts to fill in this thesis. To get these concepts right I will at first limit my concerns to pictures—painted, photographic or filmic—that represent persons, their facial expressions, their actions and reactions, and, more narrowly, to pictures that also profess to render the experience of these persons. Later on I will expand my findings to some of the other arts. I am interested, first, in pictures that pretend to inform the spectator about what it is like to have some particular experience.

Two wrong terms to account for this rendering of the experiential, ‘evocation’ and ‘expression’, make use of the problematic idea that we can and should conceptually separate the affective impact of a representation from its representational contents.<sup>2</sup> But can we? This separation of representation from its affective impact has not been questioned adequately in analytical aesthetics, due to the neat ways in which it is laid out. The outdated idea that emotions are private and subjective might seem to imply that we cannot represent it in the first place, or, quite the reverse, that such representation unproblematical because we can represent its publicly accessible outlook, which is all we are ever going to get—even in real-life situations. Perhaps there are better arguments than the privacy of the

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<sup>2</sup> Typically, Nelson Goodman (LA, chapters 1 and 2) opposes representation—as a denoting reference relation between a symbol and a matter of fact, to expression—as a reference from a symbol to emotion labels, i.e. from a symbol to something denoting. He has no answer on offer to the question of why we use the emotion terms that we use is ascribing artistic expression.

## Chapter Seven – Intimation and Tertiary Qualities

emotional for the aesthetic impetus to analyze the problem of representation without reference to the affective. I agree that we can account for representation without reference to an evoked emotional response, and also, that a picture of a woman can be said to depict the woman irrespective of the question of the exact expression involved. These remarks pertain to pictures in general, including caricatures and children's drawings. Nevertheless, here I will argue that in representational works of art the affective is more narrowly connected with the pictorial. Representing the experiential is not at all unproblematic—due mostly to the non-cognitive experiential privilege of the person having the experience. In terms of intimation I will now propose an account of such representation of the experiential.

### 2. Intimation of Experience

My proposal here is, that we distinguish what I call an 'intimation of experience' from an assertion of matters of fact or a unimodal reproducing of an event's merely visual outlook. All three are forms of bringing to mind something absent by way of something present which complies at least with some general convention, and sometimes, as in the case of (discursive) assertion, with specific conventions as well, which regulate individual characters' meanings. Intimation can be an effect of assertions or of visually showing but it remains per se irreducible to these. Intimation is of a person's experience, not of this experience's intentional object. When the experience of the hunted is intimated we are not merely concerned with his fear for the tiger, but with what it amounts to to be this person experiencing this fear in this specific context. Intimation produces a concern with the haecceity of a person's experience. Like representational depiction is based on reproduced<sub>a</sub> visuality, intimation too is based on recurrence<sub>a</sub>: the recurrence within the spectator of the experience supposedly being lived through by the represented person. Thus an object or event intimates an experiential aspect if and only if it makes us—anticipatively—experience this aspect for ourselves. To achieve such a recurrence, it is my thesis, the spectator must actively bring in relevant personal memories, and therefore intimation is a side-effect of more literally shown or asserted events or states of affairs. Pictorial intimation then is not a case of showing, but of not-showing—discursive intimation is a case of suggesting and implying, not of saying.

Let me give two examples, one accidental, the other intentional: the first one is of a television news footage about a race riot in South Africa. I take it as part of the meaning of television news broadcasts that they try to evoke

### Art and Experience – Part III

remorse in us while we are watching what is happening to other people—such evocation starts from intimation. I once watched people stoning a young man, but was fairly confident that he would escape: surely they were merely overreacting and wouldn't go on with this once they'd realize that he was wounded, et cetera. Next, other events were shown and I had already forgotten the young man when, out of the blue, one single shot was shown with the young man lying on the deserted street: he had been killed. Devastatingly, the newsreader didn't even notice.<sup>3</sup> Had they shown the man being stoned to death this wouldn't have had the impact that the not-showing did. It would have had some impact, but a consoling evocative one rather than a representational one. Now, however, this young man's death nearly grew into an experience of my own. That this profound effect was not merely a function of the event being real may become clear from the other—fictional—example, of a scene taken from a film by Robert Bresson, *L'Argent*. In this film, a criminal hides out in a shack on an elderly couple's farm. The wife takes care of the criminal, the husband thinks he should be taken to prison. In the relevant scene the wife is taking the criminal a cup of coffee when she is stopped by her husband. They exchange irritated glances, and then, just as the husband moves to slap his wife's face, the camera moves downward, to show the coffee cup shaking in her hand. Instead of supplying sufficient information about the relevant scene—by showing the man hit his wife—we are shown the dancing cup and saucer: an event so evidently insufficient to show what is important that it forces us to fill in the event's full meaning.<sup>4</sup> The shock thus occasioned derives not so much from watching a man slap his wife, but from the sheer moral depth of this event—and this depth we the audience, have created for ourselves. As a consequence, I—as a member of this audience—am concerned with what it would be like to be this elderly woman being slapped by a husband with whom, presumably, I have had a fairly regular marriage—up until now. That is, I am forced to imagine what it would mean to go through this very event as though I were this very person or persons; not just any man or woman having a fight, but these two persons with their unique history, having this fight. This is why not showing what can be expected on the basis of the narrative and of the images that are presented should morally deepen the event; it intimates the event's moral narrative. How to understand this phenomenon? This moral narrative is not pictorially reproduced, yet it is an effect of what is depicted.

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<sup>3</sup> The situation reminds one of Pieter Brueghel's 'Fall of Icarus'.

<sup>4</sup> This, one might say, is the working principle of Robert Bresson's 'cinematographic' films, of his direction of actors, and editing, but space precludes their discussion.

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An account in terms of expression, suggestive though it may be, seems to give way under the load of what it is supposed to explain. A dancing cup of coffee is shown and intimates the moral depth of an event in two persons' lives. The view of a cup can never achieve this in itself; it cannot possibly be expressive of such complexities, although its shaking may 'express' the force of the blow by being causally related to it. Another explanation might be given in terms of evocation: the whole sequence in the film, that which is shown, and that which isn't, evokes in us a response of shock from witnessing something of great implication for these people. Such evocation, however, would have to be explained in terms of our response to something comprehended, but it does not show how we came to comprehend. It does not explain, in other words, why not showing the event should be significantly different from showing it. It merely explains psychologically how we may be expected to respond if we did comprehend. My thesis is twofold: first, the experiential, which is invested with the moral depth relating it to the life of the person having the experience,<sup>5</sup> cannot be pictorially reproduced, but, secondly, it can be represented.

We cannot fully explain the difference between reproductive depiction and intimation as long as we adhere to the exclusive disjunction between representation and expression. We must understand why there can be a discrepancy between the affective aspects of representation and expression, and what this discrepancy amounts to. The traditional distinction leaves us with the sole possibility for explaining artistic communication of the experiential in terms of expression, in terms, that is, of a reference relation somehow antipodal to the one of representation. Indeed, we cannot communicate the experiential by any 'literal' depiction—we can make it understood, but not empathized with—but this does not preclude its being representable altogether. To dissipate the traditional separation of representation from expression I propose we distinguish three kinds of representation: assertion (in arbitrary discourse—of matters of fact), showing (reproductive depiction of the world on the basis of unimodal resemblance<sub>a</sub>), and intimation (occasioning associations which enable one to relive the involved experiential aspect). Before I elaborate on the issue of expression, it is of great importance to repeat the thesis developed in chapter One that depiction differs from assertive description in that pictures cannot assert nor

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<sup>5</sup> If there is a cognitive element in the experiential privilege outlined in the concluding section of chapter 1, then it is this personal, moral, narrative, as it is surveyed experientially by the agent.

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deny matters of fact, and do not employ analogues to indexicals. This proved of great importance for an assessment of the role played by resemblance<sub>a</sub> in an adequate theory of depiction. We saw how this difference between the pictorial and the discursive relates to the measure of thoroughness of the conventions involved. The absence of a pictorial analogue to discursive indexicals explains why a description can be of itself whereas no picture can. The lack of pictorial indexicals is of the utmost importance for the question we are addressing in this chapter of the pictorial representation of experience. First I will address this problem in terms of the distinction proposed in Chapter 1 between pictorial representation (as in painting) and pictorial reproduction (as in photography). Then I will concentrate on traditional answers given, in terms of evocation and expression.

### 3. Pictorial Reproduction and Representation

I argued in Chapter 1 that ‘depiction’ is a genus term and that both pictorial representation and pictorial reproduction are its species. Whereas reproduction is “the making present to a single mode of perception”, as if the subject represented is being perceived on the spot, representation is “the making present of experience”, as if the subject represented is being experienced on the spot—suggesting a polymodal access to the represented. Recurrence<sub>a</sub> I take to be a stronger variety of resemblance<sub>a</sub>; if the outlook of my father’s moustache recurs<sub>a</sub> in a photograph then it most certainly also is resembled<sub>a</sub> by this picture, whereas if, for example, some highly stylized form in a caricature resembles<sub>a</sub> my father’s moustache there is no need for properties of this moustache to recur<sub>a</sub> in the picture. The idea that resemblance<sub>a</sub>—let alone recurrence<sub>a</sub>—might also be polymodal is unintelligible. If we are to make sense of a resemblance<sub>a</sub> between, for instance, certain sounds and visions such resemblance<sub>a</sub> needs ample qualification. This brings us back to my critique of the thesis that we know for sure what nature primary qualities supposedly have due to their polymodal accessibility (Ch. II:3). If, for example, one claimed that some specific composition in music is about people dancing spring rites, this aboutness would need qualifying. I intend to provide such qualification in what follows, but for now conclude that both representation and reproduction are somehow based in unimodal resemblance<sub>a</sub>, and that this resemblance<sub>a</sub> will be stronger in the case of reproduction because this implies a causally generated recurrence<sub>a</sub>. Whether what is reproduced is also represented—in the sense of supplying the beholder with a relevant experience—is a matter independent of the

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unimodal recurrence<sub>a</sub> involved in 'reproduction'. Representational depiction is distinguished from reproductive depiction because it implies spontaneous imagination on top of perception thus introducing a special kind of (restored) polymodality. As imagination is presupposed in each and every perception this remark needs further qualification. I will return to this in the last chapter. If we were to position a photographic camera on a driving device and have it produce a photograph following some rigid—non-intentional—temporal rule (every ten seconds, for example), the result would consist of a great many reproductions and few representations. Either way, it is not the camera that decides which among these photographs are the representations and which merely reproduce. It is human beings that decide, and they use aesthetic considerations for this—applied imaginatively.

The distinction between representation and reproduction is an especially appropriate instrument for an account of the representation of experience. Murray Smith compares the description of the ship wrecking in *Moby Dick* (which demands much imagination) with the experience of riding on "a large mechanical swing made to resemble a Viking ship" on a fairground.<sup>6</sup> The latter asks us to imagine being on a ship too but the swing itself already reproduces certain of the movements involved in a ship dancing on the waves—and thus inhibits us imagining otherwise. Reproduction in itself—or, ideally, reproduction—rather works against the imagination. Of course, one can use one's imagination to create any dimension whatsoever, but in the absence of objective triggers in the work the incentive to do so merely comes from within, and not from the object under consideration. Film too contains reproduced images and reproduced sounds, but most importantly: films are edited, which means that films contain spaces between—between reproduced images and sounds. Spaces that allow the imagination to fill in the events that are not reproduced, whether these consist of the long walk towards the station implied between a person's leaving the room and boarding a train, or of the experiential aspect of the visual or audible. Editing is a technique especially apt for activating the imagination, and thus for representation. Two species of time are involved in film: the presentation of reproduced images (and sounds) has exactly the same duration as the scenes reproduced in them; editing, however, creates a narrative time based on ellipses and the contributions of imaginative activities on behalf of the audience. This friction between the time needed to reproduce and the time

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, 'Film Spectatorship and the Institution of Fiction', 1995, p. 119.

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involved in representation is typical for what Wollheim has named the twofoldness of depiction.<sup>7</sup> In photography (ideally) there is a total lack of this twofoldness, or, as I have called them in Chapter 3, of second-order choices.

One might want to look at these distinctions in terms of Goodman's semantic density. Not that Goodman has had much to say about differences in semantic density between the various symbol 'systems' he is treating. He was preoccupied first and foremost with understanding and establishing the emancipatory effect of notationality with regard to the authenticity of works of art.<sup>8</sup> Goodman was satisfied with alleging the semantic density of discourse, as distinguished from the semantic disjointness of musical notation. If, only for the sake of the argument, we were to understand photography in terms of goodmanian syntax and semantics, then there would be a sense in which the 'referents' of photographs are not only finitely differentiated but very easily at that. A (photographic) reproduction of my face is 'semantically' finitely differentiable, in that we would seem to have little trouble in deciding which exact person is reproduced in the picture: me, at some specific moment in time, seen from some specific angle. We saw, in other terms, that description will always be underdetermined by its subject, whereas pictorial representation will—in a sense—be as overdetermined as its subject matter.<sup>9</sup> In itself a picture brings to mind one singular event, by recurrence<sub>a</sub> of this event's perceptual aspects. We established in Chapter 1 that pictures are impotent to assert matters of fact—notwithstanding their powers to verify assertions. Let us be clear that only reproducing images can verify some such assertions, i.e. only images whose outlook has come about by specifiable mechanical and chemical processes which connect them causally—in the relevant sense—with the depicted scene can prove that this has once 'been the case'. Hence follows that, secondly, if ever there is representation involved in a photograph it must be due to the assertions the images are made to verify—or some other device external to the reproduction. Such is the status of the news on television. This is not merely a nuisance, but has a remarkable effect on the ontological commitments involved. The images may prove whatever the newsreader reports, but it is her report that makes the image true, that makes the world as we seem to

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<sup>7</sup> Wollheim, 'Seeing-As, Seeing-In, and Pictorial Representation', 1980. Cf. also Michael Podro, 'Depiction and the Golden Calf', 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Goodman alleges regarding this semantic demand: "...in a notational system, the compliance-classes must be disjoint." LA, p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> Now one might want to object that proper names have this potency as well. However, these do not show the named, but arbitrarily denote them. They do not have the power to verify or falsify statements of fact; pictures do.

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‘find’ it in the reproduction. The representation of the experiential seems to share this fate. Experience too cannot easily be depicted without intimated suggestions external to the merely visually reproduced. The conceptual difference between reproductive and representational (intimated) depiction is that in the case of reproduction the spectator’s activity is one of perceptual noticing what is there in the picture, whereas in the case of representation the spectator supplements his perceptions with the associations he needs to fill in what cannot ostensibly be pointed at but is intimated nevertheless: the experiential dimension, the moral narrative. This subjective supplement is the recurrence<sub>a</sub> requisite for intimation of the experiential to be an instance of representation rather than of evocation or expression.

### 4. Art’s Threefoldness

It is a consequence of my position that there can be abstract paintings which, while being non-figurative, nevertheless represent, because they occasion a specific experience in the beholder. For example, what I call ‘painterly’ paintings (such as some of Max Ernst’s experimental paintings, or Gerhard Richter’s coloured ones, but also paintings by Frans Hals, or Cézanne, or self-portraits by Rembrandt) induce us to re-experience the ways in which the painter has applied the paint to the canvas, and thus induce us to undergo a specifically active imaginative experience that outweighs the purely cognitive content of the figuration (or lack thereof). Here the beholder follows the ways in which the artist constructed his subject; the act of appreciation follows the acts of appreciation which may have guided the creative act. This illustrates what Wollheim called painting’s twofoldness: its representing abilities derive from its presentation.

Following suggestions made earlier, I want to expand these aspects relevant to representation to three.<sup>10</sup> In a figurative representational painting there is an element of reproductive exemplification which specifies what the picture supposedly resembles<sub>a</sub>; next there is the element of style: the presentation of whatever is in the painting; and lastly, there is the intimation as an effect of the cooperation between the reproduction and the presentation. Presentational elements induce our imagination, but it is the reproductive elements which give the imagination its guidance. Thus representational art

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<sup>10</sup> Not because I am especially fond of tripartite distinctions. My only reason to introduce ‘tertiary’ qualities lay in the traditional distinction between primary and secondary qualities which I find rather troublesome, but which has been too established to merely neglect it and to ‘redefine’ secondary qualities in my terms.

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is threefold. Allow me to only provide a few examples illustrating this threefoldness—without providing any further arguments and elaborations of it. Lucian Freud, in his self-portrait *Painter Working, Reflection* (oil on canvas, 1993)—which depicts an old, naked painter holding his palette—shows how the flesh and body that are depicted consist of the very same material that depicts the palette. One may think of the palette that in real life it looks exactly the same as it is depicted here—consisting of arbitrarily placed daubs of paint. Thus the palette is reproduced exemplificatorily. By being depicted and literally exemplified at the same instant the palette teaches us about art's threefoldness: the style of presentation is used to reproduce an old man's body, and at the same instant to show itself as a style of presentation. Or look at the painting *Bachivilliers* (oil on canvas, 1979) by Avigdor Arikha who appears to have succeeded in turning the tables altogether. The painting depicts a road, but there is no way to make out what material the real-life road is to exist of—rather it seems like the real road has taken on the material of its picture: it is though in this picture the paint isn't used to depict but literally to reproduce by first changing reality into paint. The real-life road is made of paint and thus exemplifies the paint that is on the painting. Yet another example from the history of modern art is Francis Bacon who thematizes the three aspects of representation in yet different ways: his works induce us to anticipate resemblances, but at the same time frustrate these anticipations. It is as though his distorted paintings point us toward this threefoldness instead of making use of it in order to represent.

Due to the 'threefoldness' of art works, the beholder's empathy can be directly with the presentation of the artistic materials—the artist's second-order choices; or indirectly with the represented. We can understand our empathy with the represented as an effect of an empathy with the artist's presenting his second-order choices. Paul Crowther analyzed the artist's choices in terms of the embodiment of his vision in the work of art, and he remarks about our empathizing: "Whether we empathize with a violent work or not will be a function of the relation between the originality of its style and our individual set of values."<sup>11</sup> Some diversion from mere reproduction (I mean: Some presentation) is a necessary ingredient for intimation, but it is insufficient: we can easily think of distortions of unimodal reproduction that do not intimate. The measure of success must be in the imaginative response occasioned by the distortions and which must comply with, or be appropriate to, the descriptions under which we perceive the unimodally reproduced—it

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<sup>11</sup> Crowther, *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism*, 1993, p. 110.

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is the reproductive element which guides the intimation, but it is the distortion which determines its effectiveness. Since artistic presentation should be so important we should now look at it and the term with which we normally refer to it: artistic expression.

### 5. Artistic Expression, and Intimation

The notion of artistic expression originates in that of real-life expression not in the meaning implied in taking expression to be synonymous to ‘statement’ or ‘sentence’. In this latter meaning an expression is a composition obeying strict grammatical rules of elements that obey a rigid syntax. Artistic expression isn’t like this at all: there is no grammar or syntax regulating its efficacy. However, it isn’t totally arbitrary either—indeed, in this, artistic expression resembles real-life facial and gestural expression. So we must start with some preliminary remarks on real-life expression. The expression on a crying face is of the grief the person doing the expressing is supposed to be in. We here somehow distinguish (conceptually) between the visual and the visible, meaning to distinguish between things that are there for the eye to see, such as tears and certain facial traits, and things that are there alright, but which presuppose some mental activity on our behalf other than a mere taking in of visual data.<sup>12</sup> Conceptually, we may seem to have no trouble distinguishing the visual from the visible, but when we set out in practice to describe only what is ‘visual’ in a crying face, this most certainly demands a serious effort of abstraction on our behalf: apparently we see the visible immediately through the visual—in real life at least. In real life we see ‘under a description’—one even that states whether a person is really in grief or is merely acting ‘as if’. A further explanation of this ‘transparency’ of expression can be provided on the basis of the polymodal embodiment of perception (cf. Chapter 8, Sect. 2): real-life expression is ‘transparent’ because of our second-person empathetic acquaintance with the body ‘doing’ the expression. There may be pictorial equivalents of the opposition between the visible and the visual, and being able to account for their relevant differences is crucial for an adequate understanding of the distinction between representation and expression, and, as a consequence, for a good understanding of the role of artistic expression.

The first thing to notice, then, is that there is an obvious difference between the ‘literal’ expression of a real-life face, and the ‘expression’ on a represented face. Real-life expression is embedded in a human context, in a

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<sup>12</sup> I thank Professor Wollheim for bringing this distinction to my attention.

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context, that is, of embodied human activities and responses.<sup>13</sup> This means that real-life expression is directly and causally related to the mental life in question, and that a grieving person not only expresses a sadness on his face, but also acts sadly: the sadness is embodied—spatially and temporally—as is our perception. A sad person is supposed to do things a sad person supposedly does, such as saying sad things, behaving cautiously, refraining from laughing and dancing, et cetera. People have an (educated) natural propensity to recognize the mental life expressed in such human behaviour. No specific interpretative activities are required. The success of the expression on a depicted face, therefore, is far more subject to conventions than real-life expression is. Partly, this is because one's own first-person experiential awareness of some mental event is irreducible to one's expressive outlook, and cannot therefore be fully represented by reproducing this outlook. This problem of representing the mental is a consequence of first-person experiential privilege (cf. Chapter 1, Sect. 7)—the fact that its experiential awareness is bound up with a moral depth embedded in a complex personal history. We must take care of what to conclude at this point, since these remarks do not address the question of artistic expression but that of real-life expression as depicted, which, in the end, is a problem of representation. However, I take artistic expression to reside in the presentation such as will be involved in such representation.

I am not implying that we always fully recognize a person's feelings from his gestural and facial expressions, but in principle we find few difficulties in doing so. Apart from this there is a huge distinction between merely recognizing the mental state someone is in and empathizing with him. Let us propose some clarifications before we go on: it is my thesis, first, that empathy is a more intense way of recognizing someone's mental predicament. Secondly, I do not think that empathy equals sympathy: we can empathize with a person's emotional responses without approving of them—which would be an instance of sympathizing with him. Regarding artistic representation of the experiential the challenge is not to recognizably depict an emotional expression—painting a face with tears on it might easily achieve just that—but to have the audience empathize with it. This is connected with the idea that there is a phenomenological asymmetry between experience and its recognition. The idea that the person experiencing the mental state that his face and behaviour express is somehow in a privileged position appears to collapse under the weight of its

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Stephen Mulhall on Wittgenstein on psychological terms. (On Being in the World. Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects, 1990).

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presupposition—as if I know best what it is that I am experiencing. That is not my point. I agree that my understanding of my own experience to a large extent converges with insights provided by other people: their insights in why I am sad, and their acknowledgement of my sadness might even outdo mine at times. On top, my own insights derive mostly from what I have learned to think about mental states from other people's actions. So I am not stating that the person having the experience is better equipped in a cognitive manner. He does, however, possess a privilege deriving from his having the experience and from his, again, experiential acquaintance with his own individual personal history. Evidently, to understand an experience is a far cry from having it.<sup>14</sup> And to have it is an event more solitary than might be concluded from its public accessibility—which in general also introduces the importance of empathy.

The question concerning the representation of experience which I have been asking ever since we found in Chapter 1 that a cognitivist approach couldn't explain certain affective aspects of art, regards art's empathizing functionality. To repeat, if pictorial representation were to be reduced to pictorial reproduction instead of merely having its basis in it, and if this implies that only a situation's visual aspects recur<sub>a</sub> in a picture, then this would dismiss the capacity of the pictorial to represent an event's or person's experiential aspect. To depict a crying face is merely one way to direct our associations, it certainly does not automatically depict the grievous experience in full depth and induce an empathetic response from the audience.

In this section we are considering the answer that has been provided in terms of artistic expression as an alternative to the answer suggested in the previous sections in terms of intimation. Conceiving of a depicted crying face without this depiction expressing sadness does not involve logical contradiction. In art representation and expression do not have to be in the same mood. This incongruity derives from the way in which we distinguish the concepts of 'representation' and 'expression'. Peter Kivy distinguishes between three accounts of expression.<sup>15</sup> The first takes expression to be self-expression. This applies paradigmatically to real-life expression. Self-expression presupposes that the expressing agent himself possess the emotion he expresses. Secondly, there is an account in terms of arousal: something is said to express emotion *y* if it arouses this emotion in the audience. This Arousal Theory dangerously resembles the ordinary

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<sup>14</sup> I don't mean 'experience' in the sense of knowledge, or skills.

<sup>15</sup> In Kivy, 'Mattheson as Philosopher of Art', 1984 and *The Corded Shell*, 1980.

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notion of evocation. Artistic expression should be sharply distinguished from it. To respond with pity to a picture of a person whom just died may be an adequate reaction—but evidently it does not mean that the picture, therefore, expresses pity. Thirdly, there is the possession theory of expression, the most popular among philosophers nowadays: something expresses *y* only if it possesses *y*. Kivy defends the third, possession theory, as does Nelson Goodman, as we saw above.<sup>16</sup> R. K. Elliott, in ‘Aesthetic Theory and the Experience of Art’ does not distinguish these three kinds of account but more generally criticizes the traditional account in terms of the artist’s mental input. I take his formulation of the problem of expression as congenial to my own approach, rather than Kivy’s:

“The exaggerations of Expression Theory, especially the belief that in experiencing a poem aesthetically we reproduce in ourselves the creative activity of the poet, may have obscured its less spectacular but more genuine insight, namely, that some works of art are capable of being experienced as if they were human expression and that we do not experience expression exactly as we perceive objects or ordinary objective qualities.”<sup>17</sup>

Elliott’s formulation is on the mark: indeed, “some works of art are capable of being experienced as if they were human expression”, i.e. in Kivy’s terminology: as if they were instances of self-expression. How are we to understand this? The possession theory gives us little hope of finding an answer, because ‘possession’ notwithstanding its appearance of being an explicit and lucid relation, is very difficult to make sense of when it concerns expression. The sole advantage of the ‘possession’ account seems to lie in its stressing that expression must emanate from the expressing object, instead of the perceiving subject. So: “some works of art are capable of being experienced as if they were human expression”. Watching a represented character die and experiencing sadness over the loss involved differ considerably from re-enacting what this dying person is going through. ‘Watching’ is from a third-person point of view, real-life responding from a second-person point of view, but re-experiencing is from the first person point of view. It may seem curious that I should take intimation as being based upon idiosyncratic associations and nevertheless claim that it should be a form of representation; and a better kind, even, than downright reproductive depiction of the visual aspects of a person’s facial expression. We need the latter kind of depiction to get a hold of the person’s singular history (the

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<sup>16</sup> Goodman, LA, Chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> Elliott, ‘Aesthetic Theory and the Experience of Art’, 1972, p. 146.

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intentional object of his experience), but the first-person perspective of this person's experience can only be conveyed through the singularity of my own first-person experience—assuming that it is conveyable in real life.

### 6. Intimation and Convention

I argued in Chapter 1 that the crucial difference qua measure of conventionality between discourse and depiction lies in discursive conventionality being thorough, whereas pictorial conventionality is supposed to rule on a general level only. We distinguished two levels of conventionality. On a general level we find a rule explaining what to do with relevant things, such as words, sentences, and pictures; this 'rule' more or less enables us to recognize such things as these inasmuch as they comply with this general convention. On the level of the relevant instantiations we may or may not find further specific conventions. We saw how discursive language is arbitrary throughout: discursive instantiations too are regulated by conventions specifying the syntax and semantics of words and sentences. Depiction, however, knows of no lawlike conventions on the level of its instantiations, and merely complies with a convention on the general level, D, which tells us, when we find ourselves confronted with certain two-dimensional entities, to start anticipating resemblances. With regard to its measure of conventionality, intimation resembles discourse more than depiction. I have just argued that representation (of experience) is irreducible to reproductive depiction. This implies that mere looking for resemblances<sub>a</sub> is not going to bring intimation into being. Recognition of intimated efficacy, therefore, cannot be a matter exclusively of our natural powers of perception that suffice for the recognition of resemblance<sub>a</sub>. Instead, as I suggested, the imagination is spurred to provide the idiosyncratic associations that fill in the gaps in what is recognizably reproduced in the picture. This spurring of the imagination is supported by pictorial as well as non-pictorial devices such as subtitles, stylistic citations, and style in general, material techniques, ellipsis, editing, divergence from expectations, et cetera. I have already referred to two examples above. One from 'L'argent' where a man slaps his wife while we are being shown the coffee cup she is holding. The other example involved the news item that accidentally left out a man's dying during race riots in South Africa. In both cases the intimation is an effect of some expected event which is not being shown, as a consequence of which not only does the viewer fill in the visual material that is found lacking, but supplements it with the experiential aspect that could not possibly

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be shown in the first place: these are clear instances of the viewer projecting meaning—instead of merely recognizing things.

Moreover, recognition of a merely visual aspect equals experiential awareness, which, clearly, is what makes them secondary qualities.<sup>18</sup> Here, perception equals (phenomenal) experience. This is why, reversely, in explanation of our visual experience we must resort to “look, it’s like this” (pointing). In the case of secondary qualities what is seen cannot be separated from what recurs phenomenally in our minds. To recognize a represented person or event as expressing an experience, however, does not automatically involve a recurrence of this person’s mental life. Representational intimation of an experience will not automatically take place whenever its ordinary visual expression recurs in the picture. In order to draw the spectator towards a re-experiencing of a mental event a representation must lure him into providing spontaneously a subsidiary subjective activity on top of his perceptions. This distinction calls for the introduction of tertiary qualities along with the secondary qualities that make up the visual. I shall return to this in the sections to come. Here I want to argue further that there is no easy-going natural power of recognition to which a representational artist might want to appeal. Pictorial intimation appears to be subject to conventionality both on the general and the particular level. The comparison with discursive conventionality, however, is too rash, since intimated ‘conventions’ seem incomparably distinct from the lawlike discursive ones laid down in syntax and vocabularies. Although, indeed, intimation proceeds by arbitrary means, it does not comply with any kind of lawlike conventionality. The arbitrary means of intimation rather are of a ‘negative’, dependent kind: they rule specifically over when not to depict, i.e. over where to leave the open spots in a picture so that the spectator can fill them in empathetically with his own associations.<sup>19</sup> Because intimation of the experiential is irreducible to pictorial

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<sup>18</sup> Intimated experience apparently consists of tertiary qualities, i.e. their experience is far less dependent upon the object’s properties than is the case with the secondary ones of depiction. This comparison I cannot develop here any further.

<sup>19</sup> I derive this notion of negativity and its theoretical motivation from what Adorno has at several places argued in terms of negative dialectics: that aesthetic value resides in the otherness of what can be controlled. Cf. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, 1973, pp. 55, 129, 169, and 258. Cf. for Adorno’s analysis of the art-critical consequences: Adorno, ‘Ideen zur Musiksoziologie’, 1978, again Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, pp. 211, 455. My further specifications deviate from Adorno’s in that he ontologizes aesthetic value into aesthetic—or even, The Real—truth. I am interested more in how our perception of aesthetic value(s)—taken negatively as specified—supposedly comes about. I view my analysis as an elaboration of Adorno’s approach which in the end appears to be rather mystical. Paul

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reproduction, it can only be actively conveyed by some significant transgression of available conventions and resemblances<sub>a</sub>: there are no direct ways available.<sup>20</sup> Psychology, aesthetic considerations, art history and culture in general, rather than being specifiable lawlike conventions, enter the production of intimating representations.<sup>21</sup> When looking at a picture one must have a good understanding of the conventions and resemblances<sub>a</sub> that have been transgressed, in order to be able to consider these transgressions meaningful and experience an intimation of the experiential aspect involved. For example, to understand the experiential aspect of a picture of a dying person, we must evidently recognize the picture as being a picture of someone dying, but most of all, we must be induced not to satisfy ourselves with such recognition but to supply whatever is needed to make lifelike the experience of this dying person as such.<sup>22</sup> Creating and recognizing the transgressions of the merely visual is governed by acts of imagination.

We may take both pictorial intimation (or representation) and pictorial reproduction as kinds of recurrence<sub>a</sub> of experiential and, respectively, perceptual aspects. They are opposed, as I have just argued, in their respective implication of measures of non-natural arbitrariness. In discursive language, however, due to its thorough conventionality, these distinctions must be relocated. Here we rather find a continuity between the assertive use of the medium—which might be compared with pictorial reproduction in being ‘literal’—and the intimatory use of discourse. The words we use to describe a matter of fact already activate our imagination as a consequence of the arbitrariness of language and the underdetermination of our descriptions that is related with language’s thorough conventionality. This seems to suggest

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Crowther (*Critical Aesthetics ...*), professes a more down-to-earth approach in terms of embodiment.

<sup>20</sup> Thus it is intimation as a representational power which motivates creativity. Cf. David Goldblatt, ‘Self-Plagiarism’, 1984, and Paul Crowther, ‘Creativity and Originality in Art’, 1991.

<sup>21</sup> The fact that such negative ‘conventions’ are at work even with a seemingly straightforward event like ‘being in love’, for example, is aptly illustrated in the movie ‘Betrayal’ (directed by David Jones on a script by Harold Pinter). In this movie the story of the origin and crisis of the love between a man and a woman is being told in reversed chronological order. Even though the images used in the film would standardly provoke instant understanding of love, lust, and trust, at the end of the picture when we are shown the first exchanges of looks and mutual interest, we have a hard time imagining these two people falling in love, because of our ‘hindsight’. By the way this movie illustrates the adolescent nature of most of the themes filmed in Hollywood.

<sup>22</sup> This is what Kant meant when he stressed the non-cognitive nature of aesthetic judgements.

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that to writers of prose and poetry the representation of experience does not pose any special problems. The analogy with the pictorial, however, points in a different direction, namely, that intimation in discourse is achieved by metaphorical use of terms. I cannot follow up on this due to the massive problems with which a theory of metaphor is confronted.

The comparison does bring up the distinction between the underdetermination of our descriptions, and what I have called the overdetermination involved in reproductive depiction. Bar the reduction of three to two dimensions, reproductive pictures are as overdetermined as perceptual reality itself is. Intimated experience, however, exists in a rather active 'zooming in' to the psychological acts of the represented. The arbitrary transgressions of the reproduced appear to introduce an element of underdetermination into intimation. However, the relativism resulting from this underdetermination is mere appearance: although it is the viewer who idiosyncratically fills in the experiential with his own associations from past and anticipated events it does not follow that each and every person in the audience will, relativistically, produce his own singular experience. We are able to make out intersubjectively whether what was intimated applies to the representation or not. That is, the intimating effect appears to involve recurrence<sub>a</sub> as does reproductive depiction, and, therefore, criteria should be available. The recurrence<sub>a</sub>, however, now is of experience, not of phenomenal data, and establishing the appropriateness of the attributions consequent upon intimation is difficult for the very same reason that mere reproductive depiction is not among the possibilities for rendering the experiential; the experiential as such is accessible by first-person awareness only. This explains why, as I argued in Chapter 2, Section 3, aesthetic properties unlike secondary qualities cannot be polymodally proven to exist. There may then be a sense to indexicality in depiction after all. It is just that priorities seem reversed: only through the first-person experiential awareness of the viewer does the representation appear in a second-person perspective.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> I was inspired to adopt this thesis by a paper by Charles Altieri, without, however, wanting to take over the difficult intricacies that he introduces and that appear to be based in a speculative framework that is unprecise. Compare, for example a sentence such as this: "The 'you' engages us concretely in what the 'he' or 'she' opens for us because it becomes our way of adapting the various roles our mastery of the 'as' enables us to play." Altieri, 'Life After Difference: the Positions of the Interpreter and the Positionings of the Interpreted', 1990, p. 282. I suspect my theoretical aim is comparable to that of Altieri's, but I follow a different methodology. I argue for the cognitive access to most aspects of the subjective solely excluding the experiential. His argument is based on a speculation regarding personal pronouns leading into distinct attitudes that supposedly can be

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Artistic indexicality is anticipated in character. The indexical context of the representation is an effect of the empathetic imagination of the viewer who empowers the representation's intimating effect. Thus, pictorial token-reflexivity—poor though it may be by being restricted to an I, a you, and the present tense of appreciation—must be accounted for in terms of intimation, and because intimation does not consist in an elaborate conventional system of definite rules the overall analogy with discursive indexicality breaks down. However, like linguistic indexicals, pictorial intimation brings a narrative to the people. One last aside pops up. If intimation, as I have been arguing, deserves to be called a representational effect, then there may be a glimmer of hope for musical representation. Let us look into that before going on to the tertiary qualities that form the correlate of intimated experience.

### 7. Musical representation

To repeat, something is a representation if intentionally it brings to the mind of its beholder the experiential aspect of whatever is reproduced in it. Reproduction addresses a restricted number of sense modalities—in contradistinction with real-life perception which involves all our senses. It is intimated presentation which makes up for what experientiality is left out due to the incompleteness of the work's sensuous dimension. This definition rules out none of the arts as potentially representational. If there is going to be representation in music the relevant unimodal recurrence<sub>a</sub> is going to have to be of the intimated kind. Indeed, as in discourse, unimodal perceptual recurrence<sub>a</sub> plays no role of importance—I refer here to ordinary sounds of thunder, trains, et cetera. Without some sort of transcription (cf. Messiaen) real-life sounds appear to be of little interest. If they are included literally they will help guiding our associations. The sirens in the Edgar Varèse composition 'Amériques' are reminiscent of our everyday context, however much they are reduced to their musical functionality. They help us experience the music as a vehicle for the mental aspect of everyday, modern-city life. In general, however, we need to take recourse to some idea of cross-modal translation—and thus: to certain non-natural devices—if we are to make sense of music as a medium for the conveyance of anything relating to one of the senses apart from our hearing. Musical representation is a case

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adopted actively. Another 'second person approach' was developed by Neapolitan, 'Art as Quality of Interaction Experiences', 1983.

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of intimation, and it is the reproduction of everyday sounds or the title of the musical work or the ballet accompanying it which should put the audience on the right track. However, once this ‘track’ has been chosen the music does seem to possess the ability to steer our associations. This, as we saw above, is exactly what intimation does. Through the detour of pictorial intimation we have found a way to understand claims such as those made by Arthur Schopenhauer that music mirrors the movements of mental life.<sup>24</sup> It does so, I contend, not so much by being based on an isomorphism of sound structure and emotion—because there seems to be no way to translate the relevant mental ‘movements’ into musical changes or to compare them, unless in some imaginative way, because of the music and emotion’s distinct sensuous natures. However, if we take emotions to be imaginative in structure, involving idiosyncratic associations of past and foreseeable events, we may characterize musical representation by understanding it in terms of such imaginative, empathetic associations. Along this route I think we can indeed make sense of ‘musical representation’. I shall return to empathetic imagination in the next chapter.

Let us, however, look more closely at the possibility of musical reproduction. John Cage seems to have made a serious effort to reintroduce the unimodal reproduction of audible aspects of the world. However, he has done little to make it sound attractive, or, for that matter, to make music with it. Put in terms of the conception of art developed in Chapter 3 above, Cage’s works are not based on second-order material and third-order aesthetic choices, but exist of first- and fourth-order choices only—at least a ‘work’ like 4’33’’ does.<sup>25</sup> There are other arguments to deny 4’33’’ the status of being a work of art. For this, let us look more closely at the option suggested just now, that Cage has possibly introduced a reproductive functionality in music. Evidently the sounds 4’33’’ is made up of have a causal, non-intentional origin comparable to that of the ideal photograph. One may wonder whether these sounds are produced in the first place, but let us leave this matter aside. There is a more important difference with photography in that the sounds of 4’33’’ lack the cognitive abilities that are inherent to photography. Cage is not asking his audience to understand what produced the sounds that are heard; instead, he

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<sup>24</sup> Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 1977, (Pt. I: 1819; Pt. II: 1844), esp. section 52.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. my discussion in Chapter 3, Section 3 above.

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asks us to listen to them as the sounds that they are.<sup>26</sup> Compare this with a photographer asking us not to understand the photograph as making present the event or entities reproduced in it, but to exclusively watch the colours under the abstraction of their resemblances or other cognitive aspects. In case of photography such a request calls for an act of abstraction and is utterly inappropriate as a way to appreciate photographs. The act of abstraction called upon by John Cage may, however, be a little more appropriate in the case of our audible access to the world. The productive aspect of the sounds of music are much more elaborated than are those of painting: using different instruments to produce a note leads to recognizably different sounds, in ways vastly more significant than the use of different brushes in painting. Depiction signifies on the basis of resemblance<sub>a</sub>, we argued, whereas music does not. Musical meaning comes about in a vastly different way, on the basis of complex connections of sounds—that is, without explicitly asking (through something analogous to convention D) the audience to think of music as bringing something to mind other than the music itself. John Cage goes further: he even wants to strip music of whatever musical structure we put into it, and invites us to listen to the sounds themselves. All Cage wants to make use of, or so it seems in the case of 4'33'', are art's fourth-order choices. With these he brings people into the right mood to listen to his 'work'. Cage sponges on our art practice to make his 'point' against art. There is no middle way out of this dilemma. The second-order structuring of artistic material issuing in secondary qualities sustaining the supervenience of aesthetic qualities is of the essence of art. Incapacitating this structuring would inevitably make Cage's experiments impossible too.

Cage's approach, however, has a great deal of appeal, and one wonders where this appeal stems from, if not from the presuppositions that have us appreciate art.<sup>27</sup> It certainly does not originate in his 'music' being attractive of itself, because, at least as far as I am concerned, it isn't by far. We appreciate art because of its experiential functionality: it makes us pay better attention to the world and our lives in it. But in comes John Cage and argues that we do not even listen to the sounds of music—so how could art possibly do to us what we expect it to do? The premise missing from Cage's argument is that listening to sound, or watching colour, without conceptual constraints is even possible. I don't think it is, and it certainly disconnects the fourth-

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<sup>26</sup> This connects with the impossibility of ontologically identifying this work, and of recording it.

<sup>27</sup> At least there is in Daniel Herwitz's account of Cage's music and thought, in Herwitz, *Making Theory/Constructing Art: On the Authority of the Avant-Garde*, 1993, chapter 5.

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order choices of art world inhabitants from the rationale of the institutionalized cultural practice of art. In short, I do not think Cage's experiments contribute to the question of musical representation. These 'works' do not represent—for lack of intentional (second- and third-order) intervention in musical material—nor do they reproduce, for lack of any kind of communicative efficacy. 4'33'' is not a piece of music, because it is not a piece of art, but a philosophical contradiction. The normative force of Cage's theoretical remarks holds for the mystically committed only.<sup>28</sup>

I can think of one musical analogue to reproductive depiction: jazz improvisation, and, more extremely, free jazz. For the sake of the argument I conceive of free jazz as the autonomization of improvisation, by banning all themes, melodies or chord structures involved in compositional structures. Free improvising derives its aesthetic value (if there is any; which many people would deny) from the interplay of the musicians. Hearing one set of notes from one instrument following another set on a different instrument, we understand this as expressing musically a dialogue between musicians.<sup>29</sup> First and foremost in improvisation the relevant musicians' bodily movements recur: their perspiration, their fingering techniques, et cetera. Hence a notion of musical reproduction might be developed which involves a recurrence<sub>a</sub> causally understood, not of sounds but of the bodily movements that produce them. While listening to certain improvisations one can easily imagine seeing the musician act and respond to his fellow musicians—at least the audible aspect of such interaction is available. Contrary to classical music, the metric characteristics of jazz have not been alienated from their origin in human perspiration. In as far as classical music can be notated, it is—in Goodman's words—emancipated from such bodily autography. We, therefore, cannot derive the phenomenon of musical reproduction just outlined from the concept of classical music. Two moments of 'translation' prevent this: the composer of classical music translates sounds into a score, then musicians retranslate this notation into sounds. Notational abstraction is advantageous if one appreciates the lack of physiological transparency involved in it. I am aware that the comparison is more complex than this, but think that this suffices as a suggestion for a possible account of musical reproductive exemplification.

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<sup>28</sup> Art as we know it presupposes the belief in the deficiency of such mystical commitment, and there is, then, no way of including 'Cage' into art history.

<sup>29</sup> This view of the matter is irrespective of there being a monologue rather than a dialogue in some specific musical work. The arguments will remain the same.

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According to Malcolm Budd in his recent *Values of Art*, we can sometimes listen to music as though it were representational, but we needn't do so.<sup>30</sup> Listening to music as abstract, i.e., without taking it to be representational is more basic. All music can be listened to in abstraction, but not all music can be heard to represent. Budd:

“The truth is that representation in the art of music is distinguished from representation in the art of pictures not by its absence, but by its relative poverty and imprecision.”<sup>31</sup>

Why should musical representation be relatively less precise than depiction? The answer to this is that auditory reproduction in itself already is poor: for example, hearing the sound of dishes being washed, does not inform us of the exact place where this is happening, nor about the sort and amount of dishes that are being washed, nor about the exact ways in which they are being washed. Next, due to the temporal nature of sound we cannot even return to the sounds as we can to something visually there to listen more intently. Sound in itself is a poor means of information. It appears, therefore, to be particularly apt for conventionalized and intimatory production of meaning. It cannot, however, be as precisely regulated in this production of meaning as language. For music the twelve tones form no analogue to the alphabet since music is made by more than pitch alone.

For smells the situation is even worse. There are at least two reasons for our lack of an olfactory art. With sound a tone's length is difficult to master, with smell however this is sheer impossible: smells have no definite location in space, and their behaviour is utterly unpredictable. A smell will stay in the room unless one uses a fan to blow it away, but then there would be wind in the room as well. Then, the differences between distinct smells would be too tiny and subtle to enter some kind of syntactic system—and there is no way to compare them in a single act, because either one smell is in one's nose or another one is. As a consequence it will be difficult to produce samples of smells, let alone to work with them. Next, smell is the object of one of the proximity senses. Unlike depiction or music, an olfactory work of art would need physical contact for its recognition, and therefore hardly allows the kind of abstraction that is needed to have its secondary qualities produce meaning. Taken together with the above considerations, however, there seems little room if any to produce olfactory artistic techniques, or, for that

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<sup>30</sup> Budd, *Values of Art. Pictures, Poetry and Music*, 1995, Chapter IV, Music as an Abstract Art.

<sup>31</sup> Budd, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

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matter, a tradition of olfactory works of art. Let us now introduce tertiary qualities.

### 8. Objective, and Aesthetic Qualities

I argued in Chapter 4 that Kant thought of the grand aesthetic categories with which we express our judgements of taste as referring not to the object (at least, not directly) but to the way in which our cognitive faculties are—ideally—cooperating in appreciation of the object. In Chapter 2 we saw that the grand categories that express this subjective purposivity do not inform us about the object nor, for that matter, about the empirical mental state or activities of the appreciating subject. This led to a problem concerning aesthetic arguments. What terms—other than the grand ones—may be used to settle an aesthetic argument, and to what properties of the object do they refer? We have looked at Sibley's answer, and have then seen the beginning of an answer alternative to Sibley's in Chapters 5 and 6, however, without this producing the precision needed for an adequate account. In the present chapter I introduced an answer to a different question in terms of intimation, and the time has come to see whether the problem of critical argument can be brought together with the experiential effect of art explained through 'intimation'—in order to advance our understanding of aesthetic judgement, aesthetic argument, and aesthetic properties. In Chapter 2 I argued that the arguments used by Locke to distinguish between primary and secondary qualities did not establish an unsurmountable difference. Epistemologically, primary qualities stand out as perceivable through several of our senses, but due to the problem of the (imaginative, i.e. not straightforwardly 'objective') translation of the data of either of the senses into those of the other senses involved, this argument reduces to the establishment of a standard for the existential proof of a relevant property. Polymodal access enables us to prove a property's actuality. Next to this, however, polymodal access does little in the name of specifying such property's exact phenomenal nature. Phenomenality is related analytically to unimodality. The phenomenal nature of a primary quality such as an object's form depends on the sense with which it is perceived, just as much as its secondary qualities do. (A form will be structured differently when it is perceived through touch than it would if perceived through sight.) I then argued how the argument from polymodality could be qualified in such manner as to include non-natural ways of perception, such as are developed in science. Polymodal accessibility need not in every instance be sustained by the phenomenal data provided by everyday perceptual acquaintance. In line with Ian Hacking's experimental

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realism of properties (and his anti-realism of theories), I then argued that the distinction between primary and secondary qualities falls apart. What remained was the idea of polymodal access as a means of establishing a property's existence, rather than its phenomenal nature. That we came to understand a property's phenomenality as the access provided to it by a singular sense is not meant as an explanation of phenomenal content, but as a conceptual remark about terms used to specify objective properties. In his second, ontological, argument Locke distinguished primary from secondary properties on account of their distinct ways of belonging to their objects. Primary qualities supposedly are inseparable from their object, whereas secondary qualities are mere dispositions to produce some sensation in the subject. We argued that this notion of a 'disposition' is redundant and has no explanatory capability apart from suggesting that secondary qualities are illusory, which they are not (as I argued on the basis of the polymodality argument). In the end, the demonstration of the actuality of both primary and secondary qualities alike can do without experiential acquaintance, whereas I alleged that in the case aesthetic properties, to return to the subject at hand, such demonstration cannot.

Music and painting are unmixed *qua* mode of perception. Looking at the violinist does not produce a phenomenal awareness of the sounds he produces, however much may be inferred from his gestures. Painting too is perceived unimodally, by sight. Touching a painting's tactile qualities will produce no insight into its colours, and will thus miss out on the painting's significance, which surely is an effect of its colours, not of its relief structure. A blind person cannot possibly appreciate a painting. This, however, does not prove that only the secondary qualities available to sight make up the significant properties of painting—it merely proves that its significance supervenes on these. If we want to appreciate a painting's full artistic significance we must first of all recognize its visual structure—in case of a picture: we must recognize the events depicted as resembling<sub>a</sub>, and lastly, we must look for their experiential dimension. It is from phenomenal clues that we build intimated experiences (and other aesthetic qualities). However, it is this—imaginative—building that distinguishes aesthetic properties from secondary ones.

Making use of a measure and a set of samples we can list the exact hue and place of the colours on the painting without referring to its artistic meaning at all. The existential proof of secondary qualities doesn't have to answer the principle of acquaintance. However, an adequate understanding of their phenomenal quality does. It is this phenomenal quality that tertiary

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qualities supervene upon. The perception of aesthetic qualities is by subjective imagination only.<sup>32</sup> This is why the principle of acquaintance is of the essence for the establishment of aesthetic qualities, while it isn't for secondary qualities. Sheer enumeration of its objective primary and secondary properties would do little, if anything, to explain why we attribute some aesthetic term to a work of art. We do not point at the 'lively' Kandinsky painting saying "Look, it is square, three inches high, it has a red patch over there, and a yellow stripe beneath it, and, there, from left to right this blue diagonal daub of paint".<sup>33</sup> Recognition of the painting's liveliness presupposes that we project certain psychological and behavioral considerations onto the plane of paint; the question is how we succeed in correctly applying such terminology to works of art. The criterion should be found in a work's intimatory effects—these induce us to re-enact an experiential dimension, and it is from such re-enacted experience that we pick the terms that we attribute to the work. The work deserves such attributions because it is what occasioned our imagination to re-enact the relevant experience. As a consequence of my argument we must be realists when it comes to primary and secondary qualities. We cannot, however, be realists when it comes to the experiential dimension of objects and events, because there are no unequivocal means of establishing their actuality, apart from our imaginative first-person re-enactment. For reason of the traditional distinction I propose we call these experiential aspects tertiary qualities, and define them as the object of empathy. Tertiary qualities seem of ethical relevance when judged in relation to their embodied appearance in people; they become aesthetic by being represented in art.

My approach to the matter of aesthetic empathy elaborates on the one Crowther produced in his *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism*. According to Crowther, aesthetic empathy is directed at the style of the work of art, which embodies the artist's vision.<sup>34</sup> This aesthetic empathy he distinguishes from

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<sup>32</sup> We still need an argument for this, but I will provide it in Chapter 8, Sections 2-4.

<sup>33</sup> Berys Gaut, 'Metaphor and the Understanding of Art', 1994 used this in his argument for the necessarily metaphorical character of critical language.

<sup>34</sup> This is how Crowther accounts for the twofoldness that according to Wollheim is essential for a good understanding of painting (or other artworks). It comes near to my suggestion above of musical reproduction residing in jazz improvisation. In jazz improvisation the artist's bodily activities result in the (stylistic) organization of the artwork. If there is meaning in abstract art it mostly resides in this 'embodiment' of artistic choices. I have called this embodiment a representational power because if it works out it intimates the artist's perspective onto his materials. I think, however, that Paul Crowther should have put more stress on the fact that our empathizing with this 'embodiment' is no empathy with the artist, but with the intentionality implied in the

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the everyday empathy with real life persons on the ground of its disinterestedness. In real life empathizing there is an interest in the real existence of the person we empathize with, which is absent with aesthetic empathy. Crowther puts it this way: “if the narrative, expressive, and formal aspects of a ‘work’ cohere in a strikingly original way, the work can present a style of engaging with the visual world that leads us to identify and empathize with it.”<sup>35</sup> In terms of art’s threefoldness Crowther’s aesthetic empathy concerns artistic presentation—mine does too but it also has the represented experiential dimension as its subject matter. I take aesthetic properties to be represented tertiary qualities and this leads to two questions: First, what are tertiary qualities? And second, how do real-life tertiary qualities differ from represented ones? I shall address the first question now; the second will have to wait for the next chapter.

### 9. Tertiary Qualities

The thesis defended here is that aesthetic properties are represented tertiary qualities. Tertiary qualities are the (moral) implications of an event as experienced by this event’s protagonist. Mostly, when we use affective terminology to describe art—as we often do—it is such tertiary qualities that are attributed. Artistic intimation is among the means to induce a recognition of represented tertiary qualities, and is expressed in terms of these. Secondary and primary quality terms describe what is present to one or more of the senses, whereas tertiary quality terms attribute experiential aspects construed by empathy. Compounded ‘properties’ such as a ‘face’, or a ‘hand’ should be classified with the primary qualities since they may be perceived by several of the senses. This is an objection to Roger Scruton who alleged that ‘face’ is among the tertiary qualities, not the primary ones.<sup>36</sup> Contrary to Scruton I see no problem in thinking that animals can recognize faces and hands, as much as they can recognize primary and secondary qualities, but that tertiary qualities are accessible to humans only, that is, to creatures who are able to empathetically project an experiential dimension onto the visual, to look through the visual into the mental awareness that is expressed in it. Dogs can recognize the evocative power of our mental states and may get anxious whenever we are angry, but there are no reasons to assume that they can also

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work—seen, perhaps as emanating from the artist’s intents, but that is merely contingently so.

<sup>35</sup> Crowther, *Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism*, 1993, p. 107

<sup>36</sup> Scruton, ‘Public Text and Common Reader’, 1983.

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empathetically recognize the experiential aspect of our anger. (They may at times avoid making us angry, but only for fear of the consequences—never to do us a favour). Scruton was right in alleging that “A tertiary quality is one that is observable only to beings possessing certain intellectual and emotional capacities.”<sup>37</sup> Next, however, he thought that mere recognition of a depicted face already requires the very same additional capacities. I think he was wrong here as well. Dogs perhaps are unable to recognize a depicted face, but this may be due exclusively to the dog’s inability to recognize convention D. I see in this no decisive argument to equate this inability with the inability to empathize with the experience someone is going through. Convention D, as we saw, is general in nature and understanding its effects may be necessary for empathizing with a depicted person’s experience—but it certainly isn’t sufficient for that. There is, therefore, no reason to think that in both cases the same extra powers are needed. Autistic people seem to be an example of people who are able to make out what is on a picture—up to specifying what emotion a depicted person is supposed to be in—without being able to empathize with it. They ‘teach’ us the difference between the kind of activities needed for recognizing pictures and their subject matter and for empathizing with these.<sup>38</sup>

We wouldn’t, however, want representational depiction to be a matter of relativistic subjectivism, but want the beholder to be able to distinguish between the meaning of a picture and his own personal association. The sadness must be in the music; the melancholy experienced while listening to it possibly isn’t. I will now address two proposals for an account of the fact that the recognition of tertiary qualities introduces subjective elements into the objective—one by Richard Wollheim, the other by Eddy Zemach. According to Wollheim aesthetic properties are ‘projective properties’. These resemble secondary qualities because we identify both through “experiences that are both caused by those properties and of them.”<sup>39</sup> There is, however, a special complexity to the experience of projective properties in that it is not merely perceptual, but affective as well, and involves past objects of experience.<sup>40</sup> In intimating an experiential history projective properties do

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<sup>37</sup> Scruton, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>38</sup> More, again, in Chapter 8, Sections 2-4

<sup>39</sup> Wollheim, ‘Correspondence, Projective Properties, and Expression in the Arts’, 1993, p. 149.

<sup>40</sup> “When a fearful object strikes fear into an observer, as it does, it is not solely fear of that object. On the other hand, the experience reveals or intimates a history.” Wollheim, *op.cit.*, p. 149.

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not merely bring some specific past experience to mind, but rather the way in which comparable experiences have come to bear. To explain this Wollheim refers to the distinction between factual and experiential memory: remembering that an event took place is distinct from remembering experiencing that event.<sup>41</sup> In experiencing a projective property what is remembered then is not some or other fact, but an experience that is qualifiedly independent from any specific factuality. How does this work? Wollheim starts from the psychological presupposition that we ‘project’ to change our minds for the better: in order to feel better when we are sad we tend to project sadness onto other persons, or onto the world we see before us. I am not sure, however, whether this therapeutic role should be part of the theory, since, evidently, in case of a work of art the projection is instigated by the work not by the appreciating subject. I do, however, agree with a weaker claim that we cannot project onto a work of art what we have never before experienced for ourselves, at some or other occasion. The problem with projection on to works of art lies in the criteria with which to establish its appropriateness. According to Wollheim our projections succeed for two reasons: first, there is a specific affinity in the work, and, secondly, we have the capacity to project internal conditions.<sup>42</sup> My problem with this is that we seem to have no ways of establishing the affinity independent of recognizing certain properties in the work which—we find—might best be understood in the affective terms we want to describe them with. I therefore tend, instead, to take ‘projection’ not too actively, but rather in terms of an empathetical recognition, without fully denying the element of projection that is of the essence of such activities, as we will see shortly. This ‘deactivation’ discharges an account of aesthetic properties from having to provide deep psychological facts about human life. I propose we look more closely at imagination, as Scruton wants us to do, and see what activities are involved in it that are put to work in the recognition of the experiential aspect of art.

Eddy Zemach develops a realism regarding tertiary qualities based on this definition: a tertiary quality supervenes on a secondary quality if and only if the impact of the “X being secondary quality” on some assumed system of desires is directly perceived.<sup>43</sup> An ‘Identity’ explanation of aesthetic supervenience fails because of the meaning of aesthetic judgements: the

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<sup>41</sup> Wollheim, *op.cit.*, p. 150. Cf. also Wollheim, *The Thread of Life*, 1984, Lecture IV.

<sup>42</sup> Wollheim, ‘Correspondence ...’, p. 154.

<sup>43</sup> Zemach, ‘The Ontology of Aesthetic Properties’, 1993.

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implicative force<sup>44</sup> of this meaning collapses if it entails reference to non-aesthetic properties instead of aesthetic ones. The opposition between ‘raw’ and ‘tender’ evaporates once they are described in terms of the non-aesthetic properties they supervene upon. According to Zemach aesthetic supervenience is based on conceptual necessity—not on synonymy, or contingent (causal) necessity. Calling some set of secondary qualities ‘dainty’ is done on the basis of linguistic competence not of knowledge of statistical facts.<sup>45</sup> According to Zemach then primary qualities are properties an object actually possesses; secondary qualities are the ways in which the primary ones present themselves to a consciousness; and tertiary qualities are the ways in which secondary qualities present themselves to a consciousness that includes some special faculty. “Aesthetic properties reflect the desirability of those things that exemplify them.”<sup>46</sup> A work, then, is tender if it reflects our desires for things that are typical instances of tenderness. Zemach criticizes Kant for thinking that beauty is a matter of disinterestedness; Kant thus excluded the very ‘things’ that enable our perception of tertiary qualities: our desires.<sup>47</sup> Zemach distinguishes higher, cognitive desires for unity, harmony, and beauty, and with regard to these Kant was certainly right.<sup>48</sup> But certain aesthetic properties rather reflect our lower desires: ‘dainty’, ‘gaudy’, ‘tragic’, ‘coarseful’ are among the ones Zemach mentions. Such properties are perceived by the faculty of desire in addition to the senses. For instance, “a thing looks lovely only if we desire to have it (in some way).”<sup>49</sup> However, much depends on the specifications provided for the “in some way”, because our “desire to have it” may be directed at the thing hanging on the wall—we may want to have the painting to look at it—or at the thing depicted in the painting—which seems to be the normal way with desiring things. The desire to possess the painting in order to be able to look at it more often needs sophistication. Merely taking this as an example of desires informing the perception of tertiary qualities (such as ‘lovely’) is not enough.

The first question to be answered by Eddy Zemach is, what ontological quality this ‘system of desires’ supposedly has. If this system is defined in

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<sup>44</sup> Zemach, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Zemach, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>46</sup> Zemach, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>47</sup> Zemach, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Zemach distinguishes two kinds of desires, not kinds of aesthetic property terms: grand ones and descriptive ones. There is an elegance to this, but in the light of my criticism of his overall position I do not take it as very fruitful.

<sup>49</sup> Zemach, *op.cit.*, pp. 56-57.

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such manner that it assumes a demand for acquaintance with the object then I can agree with it, because then Zemach's position collapses in the imaginativist subjectivism I am about to outline. 'Lovely' then is a tertiary qualities if and only if the experiential dimension of the lovely thing is being re-enacted. If, however, Zemach's 'system of desires' is conceptually disconnected from the principle of acquaintance then there is no way to prevent it from being replaced by a list of the desires that are supposed to be necessary for the perception of some tertiary quality: whoever has these desires will see the relevant tertiary qualities. However, being in possession of the desires on the list does not in itself sufficiently account for the awareness of aesthetic qualities—let alone for our aesthetic evaluation. Aesthetic evaluation appears to become a species of moral evaluation. What if a certain person possesses a significantly different system of desires, as happens all the time? Can we object to a person's aesthetic evaluation by arguing that he desires the wrong things?

We may understand Zemach as claiming that, on the one hand, aesthetic properties are ordinary secondary qualities that, on the other, we find reason to describe in terms that are desire related. But how should we understand this? We may use desire related terminology because we think aesthetic properties differ from secondary qualities—how could we be justified in this if aesthetic properties in reality are secondary qualities? Or, secondly, our desires may form an important ingredient of our acts of perception and it is for this reason that we use desire related terms—but why do our desires play this role? What in the object forces us to bring in our desires? Indeed, what must be specified are the reasons we have for speaking in affective terminology of non-sentient things such as works of art. It is not the painting on the wall as a material object that is called 'tender', but rather its subject matter and the way it is treated. In short, there is something about the semantic dimension of the painting which is 'tender'. We tend to be cautious when confronted with (normal) tender things; however, we are no more cautious with a 'tender' painting than with a 'raw' painting: in both cases we would be cautious with regard to the material object (because of its many values: economic, aesthetic, etc.), but not in any specifiable way regarding their subject matter. At least, I cannot make sense of a beholder watching cautiously a tender painting, and non-cautiously a 'raw' one.

It seems to me that Zemach's proposal has gone one step too far. There is no system of desires; or, if there is, then its systematicity must be structured by way of the properties this system of desires' perceptivity is supposed to explain. Which, evidently, is circular. But desires do presuppose

### Art and Experience – Part III

imagination. They assume that imagination brings in a temporal dimension to what is there for the senses. Imagination is epistemically prior to our desires. Imaginativist subjectivism explains just this introduction of temporality, without bringing in the interests that Kant has—rightly—banned from the aesthetic. We will see how aesthetic disinterestedness relates to the truncated embodiment involved in art's addressing a restricted number of sense modalities. It is for this reason that imagination is activated for the required empathizing. Aesthetic disinterestedness is not a conceptually necessary ingredient of aesthetic evaluation: it is merely an empirically enforced consequence of art as we know it.

In conclusion, for the recognition of represented tertiary qualities one must possess natural perceptual capacities, imagination, the power of empathy, a knowledge of convention D (or its siblings, which regulate the other arts on a general level), and a good understanding of the devices used in works of art that are not instantly available to natural perception. These latter devices intimate tertiary qualities. Whether one is in full possession of his or her natural perceptual capacities can be established fairly easily by testing whether the relevant secondary qualities are being perceived. It cannot be established likewise whether one then also has the right kind of phenomenal qualia at one's disposal—but that is because there isn't even a standard of correctness there, or is there? Whether one possess the power of empathy can be established by testing whether in real life, or in art, the correct tertiary qualities are recognized. Because the exercise of empathy depends very much on personal history and association empathy may not be as constant a power of recognition as the senses are. Surely, a person's ability to empathize successfully may in one or other instance be withheld from him or her. Nevertheless, whether all this, in combination with a sufficient understanding of artistic devices of intimation, results in the right aesthetic evaluations is subject to the regulative ideal of aesthetic experience, as I believe I have demonstrated through an analysis of Kant's views in Chapter 5. Let us now look more closely at the relevant acts of empathy and imagination and their role in aesthetic evaluation.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> I thank Eddy Zemach, Richard Wollheim and an anonymous referee for *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, for commenting on earlier drafts of this Chapter.

# Chapter Eight

## Imaginativist Subjectivism

### 1. Introduction

In this chapter I assume the important distinction between imagining and seeing, say, a chair. First, seeing—unlike imagining—a chair presupposes its existence. Perception stops whenever data stop being taken in. Therefore, secondly, seeing is opened up to continuous inspection of the seen, whereas imagination is not. If one imagines a red chair, one does not necessarily also imagine it to have legs of a certain shape. When seeing a red chair, however, one necessarily also sees its legs—one may not explicitly notice them, but the legs do enter the ‘picture’ one has before one’s eyes, and further inspection normally will bring out the details one is looking for. If, however, one is asked to specify the form of the legs of an imagined chair, one may be baffled and have to actively introduce a form—it may not have been part of the original imagination and we cannot secure from our imaginings what we haven’t before spontaneously provided them with. Up to a point our imagination is voluntary. It does indeed make sense to order someone to “imagine this”.<sup>1</sup> However, this is a relative voluntariness, since one may fail to comply with the order: one cannot imagine everything at will. In contrast, what is perceived is perceived here and now. Sense impressions are acquired in the time and place present to one’s sensuous operations. Perception is embodied. If a problem of translation is connected to our polymodal access to the world then it is solved by the imagination connecting the data of the various senses into the coherent whole that the perceiving body appears to be offering us. Conceptually, the here and now of perceptions derive their ‘presence’ from this embodiment and from dimensions that are not directly available to the senses: ‘there’s and ‘then’s. Interestingly, past and future, and absent places are available to the perceiving mind, introduced into it by memory and anticipation—brought to bear on embodied polymodality by

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Scruton, *Art and Imagination; A Study in the Philosophy of Mind*, 1974, pp. 93-96. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1976, II, xi.

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the imagination. In perception imagination's acts may be less voluntary than they are in fantasy, because of this anchorage in the bodies of perceivers and perceived, and of their respective (personal) identities—through time.

Imagination can then be defined as whatever thoughts or ideas the mind is made to ponder upon that supplement the data of the senses at the moment of their perception. I am not defending the thesis that perception is a species of interpretation—more often than not we do not need any interpretative actions on behalf of what our embodied perception is confronted with, but know immediately what is entailed by it. Perception automatically is 'under a description', but even at this basic level imagination has its go by structuring the data of the senses by applying the concepts that are available to us. In part, this distinction between perceptual and non-perceptual uses of imagination stems from Kant's (and Hume's) epistemologies. Instead of sorting out all the hard problems that are related to these distinctions, I shall look at the role of imagination in our perceptions of tertiary qualities, and of the experiential dimension of represented events—intimation. This imaginative approach to art, I argue, introduces an element of empathy in our perceptions. In the presence of real-life people, the availability of second-person empathy is obvious. However, whenever the polymodal access of perception is given up, as it is in art, that is, when embodied acquaintance is restricted, the first thing to be perverted is empathy. What we need, therefore, is an account of empathy, perceptual versus imaginative empathy.

### 2. Embodied Perception and Art's Restricted Address of the Senses

We saw in Chapter 5 how according to Kant imagination forms the core of aesthetic experience in a double sense. It produces the relevant aesthetic ideas and it guides understanding in the free play of the cognitive faculties. Here, Kant refers to the productive use of imagination, as spontaneously providing representations for the intuition.<sup>2</sup> This is puzzling. We can quite easily view works of art as things produced spontaneously by imagination—the imagination of the artist. However, why should imagination in its leading role within aesthetic experience be spontaneous? Why should, for instance, the perception of a work of art need imagination—why doesn't perception,

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<sup>2</sup> Kant, CJ, M85-86, B68-69, S160-61. For the distinction between the productive and reproductive uses of imagination see: Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1966, CPR, §24:3, B151-52; 192-93.

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guided by understanding, suffice? Surely there is no need for imagination to be productive if all is there in the work of art already? Kant argues that a beautiful object is one which imagination itself—if it had been left to itself—might have designed.<sup>3</sup> So the imagination is not productive in that it does not itself produce the images present in the aesthetic idea. However, it most certainly is not reproductive either, because it does not conform to any specific concept-related laws of understanding—if it did, it would not be free. This analysis of Kant's remarks derives its plausibility from the pictorial arts. However, Kant also refers to poetry as the object of a really free play of imagination. This brings to mind our discussion of the non-natural means with which intimated effects are achieved, and which seem of the essence to poetry: here not even the literal meanings of language—which already is characterized as arbitrary, and not based in reproductive unimodal recurrence—are put to work to induce the reader to build his or her own world of imagination. Viewing Kant's position in terms of intimation explains why he should think that even in the presence of what he calls "a definite form [of the object of sense]"<sup>4</sup>, the imagination is productive and spontaneous.

What interests us here is: in what sense are perception, empathy, imagination and aesthetic evaluation mutually related? In the following I will demonstrate that aesthetic judgements are—reflectively—about the force with which our mind is activated into an imaginative act of empathy. Due to its normativity and directness, real-life (embodied) empathy with persons and their embodied mental processes leaves little room for such reflectivity; aesthetic empathizing, by consisting in a disembodied act of imagination, however, does.

The major challenge is to distinguish imagination conceptually from perception. Perception, however much it must be understood as 'under a description', originates causally—I am not saying perception can be understood in causal terms, but causal processes do form its unthematized presupposition.<sup>5</sup> Also, perception is embodied. That is, we can change a perception—relative to its distance—by moving the relevant body parts relative to the perceptual object so as to view it from a different angle. We see a telephone in front of us if and only if its spatial character will change once we start moving around it. Such movement also changes in specifiably distinct ways the way our other senses perceive the world. This goes for the

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<sup>3</sup> CJ, Loc.cit.

<sup>4</sup> Loc.cit.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Tiles, 'Our Perception of the External World', 1989, pp. 21-22.

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perception of a star—relative to the windowsill, if we are looking through a window. Perception is a form of receptivity—imagination taken as the power to spontaneously make up ‘images’ is productive. Moving one’s body won’t change an imagination—other kinds of intervention are needed for that. For lack of embodiment and of causal conditions, we need a different account for our exertion of imagination. There is another reason for wanting to account for imagination’s role in perception: in line with Kant’s analysis, imagination is central to our aesthetic experiences and evaluations. Let us deal first with perception and its empathetic dimension.

There is a difference between merely perceiving a child in distress and empathizing with it. This difference seems reducible to the accessibility of short-term past, present and future expressions of the relevant distress, of actions, sounds and gestures, et cetera. In short, this difference is understandable in terms of perception’s embodiment. In real life there is principally no reduction of dimensions adherent to bodies and, therefore, no reduction of the polymodal access to the events under consideration—even though here too fiction may enter. Perception is based on reception of sensuous data ‘under a description’. The concepts used in the description express our way of structuring the perception, and it is because the data comply with these concepts that perception informs us. Only conceptually-structured perceptual data are retained in our memories. Therefore, memories contain images only in as far as these are produced consciously: we cannot derive from memory what has not consciously been put into them by the application of concepts at the time of perception. In contradistinction with an image of perception, we cannot inspect an image of memory by looking for new details. Memory shares this fate with imagination—memory is an effect of imagination’s structuring the data of our senses.

Regarding perception I adhere to a direct realism—assuming that perception is embodied. Perception depends on an understood congruity between the data polymodally accessed by the senses—including (unthematized) in this understanding natural causal processes, such as the speeds of light and sound, or the reduction of heat by increasing the distance. One of the traditional ‘representationalist’ objections to direct realism is its alleged inability to distinguish between seeing something directly and seeing a reproduction of it—a slippery slope argument via our perception in mirrors and our perception of long-lost stars. However, assuming normal causal presuppositions, seeing a star that died long ago is still seeing it directly, as is seeing something in a mirror. This should be the case because of perception’s embodiedness: moving our body will evidently change what

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is seen in the mirror. As to the objection that such movement wouldn't change the perception of a star, this can be nullified by reference to the distance involved: the effects of bodily movement on our perceptions are a function of our understanding of the relevant distance. Once we accept our astronomical explanation of the distances in the universe it must be clear that—due to the hugeness of these distances—even bodily movements that normally are relevant to perception cannot possibly change our direct perception of a star. The more interesting puzzle for direct realism is the time lapse between our seeing lightning strike and hearing its thunder. Evidently, the latter perception is at a later moment in time than the former—how can they be 'of' the same event? The answer to this is more complex than the objection itself seems to be. It is about how the different senses structure the world—its temporal and spatial dimensions—in different manners. (Compare this with the argument concerning the problem of translation connected to our polymodal access to primary qualities, in Chapter 2, Section 3). Vision is restricted to what enters the eyes from the front; sound, on the contrary, may come from any direction, et cetera. Since perception is under a description and the concepts in this description discount the relevant relations of time and space, we actually hear the thunder as directly as we see the lightning. An accepted theory of how sight or hearing come about suffices, whether or not this theory is proven throughout 'scientifically'. We may be mistaken when there are many flashes of lightning, but it is in the nature of our concepts of sound and thunder that such confusion might come up. Perception is more complex than it might seem to some, but this does not reduce its directness. Then there is the 'puzzle' of the allegedly indirect perception of our image in the mirror. However, the image in the mirror changes if we move our head, whereas the image in a picture won't change accordingly. We may change our perception of the paper a photograph is printed on (or of its presenting surface), but not the view of the photo's subject. For instance, a woman who is photographed looking straight into the beholder's eye (into the camera's lens) will keep on looking at us, no matter from what angle we view the picture. This is a consequence of the restricted address of sense modalities that characterizes our means of picturing. Such reductions can be found in all art forms—even in theatre and 'performance' modalities of perception are left unaddressed. In effect, these latter two art forms teach us an important facet of art: what is left out in these forms is the real, embodied, first-person experiential privilege which is embedded in the personal identity of the actor or artist. 'Performance art' (I mean the art form that was established as such in the nineteen-seventies) explicitly addresses

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what I will call ‘art’s task’ of representing the experiential dimension—as in all other arts, however, it presupposes that our access to this dimension was truncated by the relevant art form itself. In performance art, the artist somehow uses the limitations of his own body as the artistic material, and the audience is asked to empathize with what happens to this body. However, even here the audience’s empathetic imagination is called upon, because the performer’s experience is detached from his own personal life. The audience is asked to empathize with the specific experience that is internal to the performance, and is occasioned by the things happening to the performer’s body.<sup>6</sup> If it weren’t for the implication of an artistic abstraction of the (personal) experiential such as this, then ‘performance’ might never have entered the domain of art.

The effect of the reductions typical to each of the art forms is most consequential with regard to the possibility of empathy with the represented subject. Depiction thus loses two of four dimensions.<sup>7</sup> The loss of depth is partly made up for by central perspective, but the loss of time, and therefore of movement (of the perceiving body), stands to be compensated by other means. The temporal dimension specific of our perceptions’ overdetermination is left out, but the visual aspect of overdetermination is retained—in a picture the visual is fixed, but only qua sequentia.<sup>8</sup> Time is of the essence for our empathetic perception of the experiential dimension of events—a person in distress is bound to act in specific ways (not others), and our recognition depends on such temporal dimensions, and their memory and anticipation. Therefore, depiction has a problem. A picture’s perception withholds this temporal dimension from the beholder, so the imagination must provide it of itself, occasioned to do just that by intimated elements in the picture.

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<sup>6</sup> Paradigmatic performances are those by Ulay and Abramowicz who stretched their bodies to the limit in interaction with each other. For instance, in one performance they had their waists tied to opposite walls with rubber bands too short to allow them to touch each other in the middle of the room—they tried to touch each other in the middle of the room, taking many hours to see how far the body might go in wanting to achieve this impossible goal. Or compare Joseph Beuys who once caged himself with a wild coyote.

<sup>7</sup> Not—as one might surmise—one out of three: losing depth while retaining width and height.

<sup>8</sup> This answers Hegel’s recognition of the tension between presenting and representing in his analysis of the artwork as the presentation—not representation—of an idea. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, 1970 (1832-1845), pp. 140-42. As regards this point Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 1977, (Pt. I: 1819; Pt. II: 1844), Part II, p. 472, held the wrong views.

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### 3. Perceptual and Imaginative Empathy

In empathy the descriptions one's perceptions are under are in mental terminology, and the perceptual object is the mental life perceived to be expressed by some animate creature. Whenever we perceive a person in real life, we are automatically also aware—to a degree—of the mental state he is in. Here the experiential aspect is embedded in everyday embodied contexts of actions and gestures. Thus empathy normally is an aspect of polymodal, embodied perception. We saw in our discussion of expression how we are able to see through the strictly visual into what we do not perceive but know to be there. In representation (depiction in general), however, dimensions are missing which might have informed us on how exactly to empathize with the creatures depicted. The committal force emanating from actual presence of a person who endures some specific emotion must be supplemented by 'semantical' means. Apart from 'instructing' us to look for unimodal resemblances, convention D (and its 'other-artly' correlates) starts with the recognition of exactly this reduction of the experiential to intimation. D also asks us to introduce an experiential dimension to the events represented. So whereas perception suffices as a means of empathetic recognition with experiential aspects of real-life embodied events, for the empathetic recognition of represented events an additional act of imagination is needed.<sup>9</sup> Now the unimodal, reproductive resembling<sub>a</sub> within a picture is based on perceptual recurrence<sub>a</sub>. The 'asking' for an introduction of the experiential, however, is done exclusively on the level of conventionality; natural unimodal recognition may be a hindrance rather than something which implements the projected insights asked from us. As a consequence, pictorially based empathy is the exclusive product of imagination.

What is especially missing in representations of persons expressing some specific mental event is the normative force of their actions and gestures: in no way are we driven to come to the antagonist's aid. It is bodily presence in the everyday situation that brings people into contact with the relevant experiential events and their normative force. And this goes for the empathizing person: empathy is based in perception which, we argued, is essentially embodied—as much as for the person empathized with. Real life empathizing might, therefore, be described in second- rather than third-person terminology: we do not merely see ourselves as being able to provide

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<sup>9</sup> I thank Graham McFee for pushing me towards this analysis—not for providing it. If there are flaws in it, they are mine.

### Art and Experience – Part III

a correct description of some relevant event, but as wanting to interact with it. Like an 'I' does in communicating with a 'you'. The lack of full bodily presence in art must be made up for by intimation, we just argued. But one major difference remains between real-life and artistic second-person acquaintance. Second-person acquaintance as re-enacted through intimatory representation, remains devoid of the normal normative force. This is a consequence of the general conventions (like D) which regulate the audience's responses to the relevant artistic procedures. Therefore, in representation empathy is activated pro tanto, pre-perceptually one might say—arguing from the embodied nature of perception.

I argued above that aesthetic properties are represented experiential implicatures: represented tertiary qualities. A property is a tertiary quality if its existence and nature is assessed by way of informing the perceptual (primary and secondary) qualities it supervenes upon with experiential associations (memories and anticipations) provided by the beholder's empathizing. The beholder's imagination spontaneously introduces in real-life embodied perception a narrative structure, a temporal order, and experiential implications. Tertiary-quality terms specify the human perspective on the object or event under consideration. To evaluate aesthetic properties aesthetically is to judge—under the acknowledgement of artistic modal restrictions—the ability of represented tertiary qualities to enhance our pre-perceptual, productive, empathetic imagination. The answer to the open question argument held against Sibley in Chapter 2 is that tertiary qualities are aesthetic properties, or reasons, if and only if they are represented, i.e. if they are embedded in partially disembodied contexts, and if, subsequently, it is their 'force' of occasioning our empathetic, imaginative recognition which is being judged by taste.<sup>10</sup> So aesthetic properties are not perceived by taste, but by a species of imagination; taste is what judges these properties' experiential efficacy (pace Sibley). The effect of representation is not a mere recognition of some character's experience—reproduction might easily achieve that. The thesis defended here is that representation intimates the experience. This means: representation has the audience re-enact the experience by projecting his or her own experiential history onto the represented.

I explicitly do not mean to reinstall the cartesian 'myth of the given' which states consciousness' immediacy, unity, self-evidence, self-transparency, infallibility and incorrigibility. We do not have a privileged understanding of our own experiences, nor is the best route to understand an experience a first-person one. However, I do think that we are privileged about

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<sup>10</sup> I developed this idea in Chapter 4 as a Kantian view.

## Chapter Eight – Imaginativist Subjectivism

our own experiences—but this privilege is not cognitive in nature. Most people can readily perceive what experience I am in, but evidently they differ from me in that they do not have the experience—I do. From the point of view of science this remark may be inconsequential, because this experiential privilege cannot be translated into anything approximating public accessibility. However, for persons the difference is crucial. If there is a problem in this it is not the epistemological one of solipsism, which regards the publicity or privacy of cognitive attributions of experience. If experiences were accessible on first-person account only then indeed solipsism would threaten. However, solipsism is about knowledge claims, whereas the privacy of experience is about acquaintance only; about the phenomenological asymmetry of experience: no third-person descriptions—however complete—can replace first-person acquaintance. Let us now return to art and see where our analysis has led us.

### 4. The Task of Art

In Chapter 7 I argued that aesthetic evaluation is a reflective judgement of the ability of a representation to successfully intimate the experiential aspect of the represented or of the presentation. This seems like giving art a purpose. Indeed, I take representation of the experiential to be the task of art. However, neither this task nor its being met with are operationalizable events, so it is nothing resembling objective purposivity. If art has a task in representing experience, it can be said to be ‘purposive without purpose’, as we saw in Chapters 5 and 6, because art’s purpose is the expression of the moral dimension of the represented—either directly as with represented persons, or indirectly, projecting the anthropomorphic perspective onto some event or entity. Kant warns explicitly against taking moral concepts heteronomously as a standard for the aesthetic evaluation of the representation. In this last part I demonstrated why the recognition of artistic success is not rule-governed. This is because it is based on a spontaneous imaginative experience, which is asked for by non-natural means of intimation. The artistic ‘application’ of intimatory means presupposes one or more experiential judgements on behalf of the artist which guide him in the aesthetic choices which rule over his second-order material choices. If there is a purpose involved in artistic creation it will have to be experiential, and, therefore individual.<sup>11</sup> If a work

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<sup>11</sup> Crowther expresses it this way: “Artistic originality is distinct from that which characterizes other modes of artifice in three respects: (i) its full appreciation presupposes direct perceptual and imaginative engagement with the artefact itself; (ii) it logically presupposes the existence of just that unique individual or ensemble who did in fact create

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of art is a solution to a problem, the problem it solves is nothing beyond the work: it cannot be repeated; it is not operationalizable—in contradistinction with more normal inventions. Repeating an artistic ‘solution’ is faking it, or self-plagiarizing.<sup>12</sup> Once-only problems and their ‘solutions’ are mutually defining—which makes the use of the notion of ‘problem-solving’ meaningless. From a reversed point of view: does it really answer the aesthetic value of individual works of art if we treat them as solutions to one single problem? Do a Rembrandt self-portrait (or all his self-portraits) and Vermeer’s ‘View of Delft’ solve the same problem? If so, then why would we hold the principle of acquaintance? There would be no sense in trying to view all the paintings involved, nor, for that matter, in painting them.<sup>13</sup>

In Chapter 3 I provided a characterization of art alleging the importance of the aesthetic considerations guiding the artist as much as the critic and the audience or museum director. I then set out to specify these aesthetic considerations in terms of art’s experiential functionality. This functionality, forming art’s task, is to represent experience by intimating its re-enactment. This characterization of art is not amenable to definition—because the experiential element isn’t. Yet these specifications presuppose that art has a task. Looking for a definition has made analytical aestheticians, such as

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it; (iii) it can give rise to a distinctive aesthetic mode of empathy between the unique creator and audience.” Crowther, ‘Creativity and Originality in Art’, 1991, p. 307.

<sup>12</sup> Goldblatt, ‘Self-Plagiarism’, 1984.

<sup>13</sup> Two publications during the short history of aesthetics suffice to illustrate the debate connected with this, about whether or not aesthetics is an autonomous discipline. First, there is Baumgarten’s *Aesthetica*, which in large part is a defence of the scientific character of aesthetics. And secondly, more recently, John Passmore (‘The Dreariness of Aesthetics’, 1951) argued that aesthetics merely scrounges from rival disciplines. The arguments used in this discussion, I think, can all be traced back to a regret concerning the absence of sufficiently operationalizable problems in art—art being aesthetics’ privileged subject matter. No serious theory can adequately explain how a creative artist should proceed when making an aesthetically excellent work of art, or how one should appreciate some work’s aesthetic value. This deficit isn’t made up for by art historians’ empirical classifications, nor by art criticism which merely follows the facts of art. A critical aesthetics, such as is proposed by Crowther (*Critical Aesthetics and Postmodernism*, 1993) is a different matter. It is quite crucial that we should not take this to be proof of aesthetics’ failure as a theoretical discipline, but as of the essence of its subject matter, art. In this short discussion I have drawn on arguments developed by Ruth Lorand (‘Ethics and Aesthetics are not One: Aesthetics as an Independent Philosophical Discipline’, 1994). I am grateful to her for allowing me to do so.

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George Dickie and Stephen Davies, forget about this task. Paul Crowther described this unfortunate result of contemporary aesthetics by explaining how our art exists solely by virtue of a “‘legitimizing discourse’ of art”—and giving up this discourse would mean giving up art altogether.<sup>14</sup> In the above I have established the rationale of this very ‘legitimizing discourse’.

Works of art that conform to the task of experiential functionality may abound in the future, even though ready-mades, video clips and computer art may still not be among them. All this proves that art’s task is insufficient as a definition of art. Understanding this task provides no clear-cut criteria for establishing when and where it is met. This is due, simply, to the experiential nature of the task. Without acquaintance—and what this amounts to in terms of the role of empathetic imagination—there is no (objective) way to specify a thing or event as art. The task is formulated in terms that do not allow for a translation into objective properties. I have argued this point in defining art’s aesthetic properties as represented tertiary qualities, ‘intimation’ as the means with which the audience is induced to re-enact these qualities, and the threefold tensions between representation, presentation and reproduction.<sup>15</sup> Because of this threefoldness—presentation of embodied materiality, reproduction of unimodal resemblance<sub>a</sub> (exemplification), and representation of experiential dimensions—empathy can be on two of these three levels (not on the level of reproduction, because this level merely produces understanding, rather than empathetic experience). Empathy can be with the presentation of the artistic materials because this introduces the artist’s embodiment, his second-order choices. Paul Crowther expresses this as follows:

“Artistic originality is distinct from that which characterizes other modes of artifice in three respects: (i) its full appreciation presupposes direct perceptual and imaginative engagement with the artefact itself; (ii) it logically presupposes the existence of just that unique individual or ensemble who did in fact create it; (iii) it can give rise to a distinctive aesthetic mode of empathy between the unique creator and audience.”<sup>16</sup>

Or empathy can be with the represented, through presentational intimation, as I argued in the previous chapter. My characterization of art incorporates the notions and arguments that lead to imaginativism: the third-order

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<sup>14</sup> Crowther, *op.cit.* p. 185 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Without specifically addressing arguments from Roman Ingarden I recognize his influence on my analysis. Cf. especially Ingarden, ‘Artistic and Aesthetic Values’, 1985.

<sup>16</sup> Crowther, ‘Creativity and Originality in Art’, 1991, p. 307.

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aesthetic choices that guide the artist in his embodied choices are partly disembodied and aim at a work's experiential functionality; that is, they aim at the work's ability to induce the beholder to spontaneously constitute the relevant tertiary qualities. What kind of theory of aesthetic evaluation comes with this account of art's task of representing the experiential dimension?

### 5. Aesthetic Evaluation—Imaginativist Subjectivism

Following Kant, I take aesthetic values to regard reflectively certain of our mental activities—those involved in the construction of represented tertiary qualities. As such aesthetic evaluation regards the success of empathetic imagination's introducing—into one's phenomenal awareness of a work of art's presentation or reproductive elements—the experiential dimension which is absent due to the art form's reduction of one or more of the sense modalities. I argued how pre-perceptual imagination is needed for the recognition of represented tertiary qualities. This recognition is rigidly response-dependent: there exist no polymodally available instruments such as the scientific quantifications with which we may establish the existence of secondary qualities. There aren't even any samples of tertiary qualities with which to establish the correctness of our attributions. Ostension alone—mere pointing and saying something like “it is like this here”—can never convince a person that misses out on the application of some aesthetic descriptive term to some specific work of art. Tertiary qualities can only be characterized by reference to subjective acts of empathetic imagination, and these involve idiosyncratic associations, extrapolations and expectations. This radical response-dependence explains the ineliminable contestability of aesthetic evaluations. In aesthetic evaluations we claim to be on a par with specifiably similar people—what Kant called the *sensus communis*, turning this claim to agreement into a universal one. However, because the imaginative acts necessary for the perception of tertiary qualities contain moments of public inaccessibility we never refer literally to them in aesthetic argument—which is why the (implicit) reference to aesthetic experience made within aesthetic argument should be a reference to an ideal. Instead, we use metaphors to re-order imaginatively the primary and secondary qualities of the object. Nevertheless, in recognizing a represented tertiary quality, we must also believe that it was the work that made us go through our experience, and we must be right about this. As much as the principle of acquaintance warns us against putting our trust in testimonies of aesthetic value, it warns us against full-fledged projection of idiosyncrasies

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that are inappropriate to the object's properties. The principle of acquaintance is a double demand: first, it is you yourself who must perceive the aesthetic object and, secondly, it is the object itself that you must perceive.

If aesthetic evaluation cannot be based on the success of the achievement of certain goals or of some solution to a problem, then where should we find its justification, and how should we establish our judgements' correctness? David Wiggins, in 'A Sensible Subjectivism?', suggested that our answers to these questions should be subjectivist—though not in a relativistic sense.<sup>17</sup> According to Wiggins, aesthetic values derive their standard of correctness and their measure of appropriateness from the role they play within the context of communication. We more or less fix the correct use of value terms by arguing about art works and their aesthetic properties and about how we respond to these. In such arguments we try to find out how terms, properties and responses are related mutually, or are supposed to be thus related. This account fits in with the one defended here. The recognition of represented tertiary qualities implies experiential responses to non-natural intamatory properties. These responses consist of nothing other than the work of art's intamatory effect on its audience. The non-objectivity follows from represented tertiary qualities depending for their existence on empathetic imagination rather than perception. It seems that notwithstanding the convincing arguments presented by Wiggins, his account is in need of some such further explanation as the one on offer here. Wiggins embeds aesthetic evaluation in the dialogue which is held—or might be held—about the work of art under consideration. Aesthetic evaluation is supposed to be essentially debatable: to understand the meaning of an aesthetic evaluation is to engage in an argument about it and to try to convince the ones you are arguing with—without, however, expecting the ultimate verdict from either discussant, ever. The aim is consent, not truth.<sup>18</sup> The assumption that truth values can be applied to aesthetic evaluations is denied by this or any subjectivism. Instead, we consider the aptness—not truth—of a judgement of taste about a concrete particular object by weighing the arguments, considerations and reasons proposed in favour of the judgement. Since we cannot use any definite standards related to fixed ends that are embedded in a theoretically coherent structure of rules, Wiggins' point of view may

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<sup>17</sup> Wiggins, 'A Sensible Subjectivism?', 1987

<sup>18</sup> Contrary to Savile's proposal, the experiential ground of our aesthetic judgements is crucially relevant for the exact content of our judgements, and, therefore, the idea of a truth-value adhering to aesthetic judgements is inappropriate, since truth is based on third person considerations. Cf. Savile, *Kantian Aesthetics Pursued*, 1993, Chapter One, pp. 1-16.

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indeed be a sensible way to defend subjectivism against the dangers of a lapse into a relativist brand of subjectivism. I agree with the overall picture provided by Wiggins then, but remain in the dark about exactly which kinds of reasons or considerations he assumes to be legitimate in aesthetic discussion. Wiggins provides no specifications. From the point of view professed in this study, Wiggins's explanatory halt can be avoided. Aesthetic experience being a regulative ideal fits with the grounding of aesthetic values in represented tertiary qualities, whose recognition essentially involves personal acquaintance, empathetic imagination and non-natural means of intimation. This theory of aesthetic evaluation I call imaginativist subjectivism.<sup>19</sup>

For imaginativist subjectivism, understanding the 'conditional claim to universal validity'—as Kant calls it—that is linked with aesthetic evaluation, should involve an explanation of why we think our imaginative activities to be shareable in the first place, and why we think it important for other people to share them with us. The awareness of tertiary qualities breeds a normative force comparable to normal, everyday, second-person reciprocity. Imaginativism has it that this force derives not from ostensive properties of the work of art that can be pointed at, but from our own idiosyncratic associative imaginings based on such properties. Kant provided an answer in terms of a 'subjective universality', which I shall not go into specifically, but shall try to make acceptable for our present purposes. His answer to the question why we demand that others agree with a judgement which is so obviously subjective in nature, was that a judgement of taste expresses a pleasant awareness of the interplay between our cognitive faculties (senses, understanding and imagination): the free play of the cognitive faculties. We know now why Kant should think that in this free play, the imagination forces the understanding to follow its lead instead of letting the understanding determine the object with its concepts: this is how tertiary qualities are recognized. This view accounts for Kant's remarks on 'aesthetic ideas' as well. Now, because we hope that certain human beings share our

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<sup>19</sup> Imaginativist subjectivism can accommodate the complexity of aesthetic evaluative discourse better than either cognitivism or emotivism can. As its central act it takes empathy, not solely recognition of what is present, but such recognition combined with a projection of memories, anticipations, and imagined feelings. Cognitivism starts from the implicit views that representation of the experiential dimension can be achieved by mere structuring of primary and secondary qualities, and that its recognition presupposes nothing beyond normal perception. Emotivism assumes that recognition of tertiary qualities (intimation) can be understood fully in terms of evocation alone.

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moral outlook, we want them to agree with us aesthetically as well. Thus our aesthetic pleasure sustains our hope for universal communicability, without objectively forcing such communicability upon us—as happens in the case of knowledge claims. In the aesthetic context, universal communicability merely forms an ideal. What we want to share is our moral perception of the world, our pre-perceptual empathetic imaginings.

To resume, we cannot judge works of art as we might evaluate inventions, i.e. instrumentally, because there are no generalized problems to be solved within the aesthetic domain. Finding some particular painting beautiful has no non-contingent consequences for the evaluation of other paintings, even if they are similar in important respects. We can, however, demand universal agreement about our imaginative activities, albeit for moral rather than aesthetic reasons: a person who is incapable of providing the associations necessary to compare something present to his senses with possible futures and with events from his past, may be an awkward person to communicate with. The importance of aesthetic agreement is grounded in art's experiential functionality; in art's ability to produce a second-person acquaintance without the relevant bodily presence. Represented tertiary qualities—and the empathetic imagining presupposed for their existence and phenomenal quality—provide an explanation for the fact that we find it important to argue about aesthetic matters even if we don't expect any final answers.

Richard Wollheim demanded that an adequate, i.e. subjectivist, account of aesthetic evaluation should somewhere down the line involve a reversal of direction from mere perception towards projection.<sup>20</sup> Imaginativism is a species of such subjectivism. We must be subjectivists in a stronger sense as well: the imagination is constitutive of the tertiary qualities that form the basis of our aesthetic evaluations of works of art. It is the force with which the imagination is induced to such constitution which we judge aesthetically. Spontaneous constitution is a necessary condition for aesthetic evaluation, because it alone furnishes the relevance and significance of the reflection implied in aesthetic evaluation. It is the idiosyncratic construal of tertiary qualities attributed to the object which explains the presence of some—second-person, indexical—normative force. But is it also a sufficient condition? Why not take the constitution of tertiary qualities as value-neutral just like the perception of colours? Put differently, is the subjectivism propounded here with regard to tertiary qualities fatal for the aesthetic domain in that we must conclude that a crucial element of this domain—

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<sup>20</sup> Wollheim, 'Art and Evaluation', 1980, p. 238 ff. Cf. also Chapter 2, Section 4.

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aesthetic evaluation—is left without a clue regarding its standards of correctness? If aesthetic evaluation is taken correctly as the reflective assessment of the force of one’s imaginative expanding of schisms and holes in a work of art, then the actual—unimodal, because exclusively imaginative—constitution of tertiary qualities is sufficient for aesthetic evaluation as well. We are talking here of qualities whose existence cannot be established otherwise. There would be no sense to the arts that we know if they didn’t do just that: induce us to provide second-person, imaginative acquaintance with presented and represented experiential dimensions. Certainly, the essential ambiguity of standards would be fatal for any other domain—with recognizably generalized problems and solutions, and with theories accounting for these—but since the notion of problem-solving is meaningless in the aesthetic domain the quest for the unequivocal itself becomes meaningless. Ultimately, aesthetic values are subjective because the projection needed for our recognition of tertiary qualities is subjective. Aesthetic evaluation, however, is—reflectively—about however forcefully our imagination is induced to constitute the tertiary qualities it actually has constituted. Subjectivism here becomes idealist: reference is made to an ideal experience—if this reference were to an actual experience it would be of no consequence for the aesthetic argument at stake. The ideal experience, however, is presupposed in our understanding of such an argument—it can therefore be said to regulate it.

## Conclusions

Allow me to spell out the elegance of the proposals made in this study. First, in real-life perception all our senses are addressed by the world we perceive. The polymodal and embodied character of our access to the world explains the direct nature of our perception. By polymodal means we prove the existence of things and events. Since, however, each of our senses structures its data in specifiably distinct manner, an element of translation must (transcendentally) be taken to be introduced in order to make our perception into the coherent whole it normally is. Phenomenality by definition—and in actuality—is a matter of unimodality: we cannot translate the auditory into visual data—or reversely. Polymodality does nothing to specify what things sound, look or smell like. The translation needed for the coherence of our perceptions is achieved by (perceptual) imagination. Perceptual imagination forms the mental correlate to perception's embodiment. It is the imagination which brings our perceptions under a description. Secondly, when confronted with—embodied—persons these descriptions involve mental terminology and introduce a degree of normativity relevant to the actions perceived. At the level of the activities of the imagination, therefore, the transition from 'objective' to empathetic perception is unproblematic—that is, in real-life, embodied perception the introduction of empathy is as natural as its 'objective' counterpart. Seeing a person immediately brings to mind the mental events his face and gestures express. Thirdly, however, in all art forms that we recognize as such one or more of the sense modalities is left unaddressed. As a consequence, in art appreciation the transition from perception to empathy forms an issue that demands to be accounted for. Put differently, the initially restricted address of sense modalities by all art forms calls for compensation. Art is supposed to make up for the automatic loss of the experiential dimension—by artistic means.

This specifies art's task: to represent the experiential. The characterization of art provided in this study can be seen as providing an understanding of the way in which art is to answer this task. By analyzing the problems of pictorial representation I found that basically depiction consists of three moments: presentation, reproduction and intimation—which together make up representation. Reproduction was understood—in terms of exemplification—as involving an anticipated unimodal resemblance of properties. Crucially, we recognize reproduction—and the (unimodal)

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resemblance<sub>a</sub> it consists of—by the natural means of vision, hearing, et cetera. Reproduction conveys the perceptual surface marks that emanate from the world—not any of its relevant experiential dimensions. This is not the consequence of experiences being hidden from public access—as there is no such hiddenness. I argued that the experiential privilege that explains this inability of reproduction—to convey the experiential dimension—is our first-person acquaintance with experience. In real-life perception we are acquainted with other people’s—first-person—experiential dimension through empathy—i.e. through being bodily acquainted with the persons having the experience. Such (polymodal!) bodily acquaintance now is absent from all art forms because these do not address all our senses. Because of this restricted addressing of sense modalities imagination must actively make up for what should be privileged anyway, but which is fully absent in art: the experiential dimension of the represented. It is, therefore, conceptually and practically correct to conclude that whatever in real-life presupposes for its recognition an act of imagination which corresponds to a fully embodied second-person acquaintance must be actively constituted in the case of artistic representation. Reversely, representation of this privileged experiential dimension—if that is what one wants to convey—cannot be achieved by natural means of addressing any of the senses singularly. I have coined the term *intimation* to conceptualise this.

Intimation is achieved by artistic means of presentation (not by reproduction). It is the artist’s ‘hand’—his or her stylistic interventions—which induce the beholder of the work of art to imaginatively project an experiential dimension onto what is there in the work to be perceived. That this should be a case of imaginative projection follows from the fact that the art form never is fully embodied: it never addresses all our senses—which by nature include perceptual imagination. Art’s restricted address activates the imagination to start acting as in real-life perceptual empathy, but without being guided exclusively and to the full by the data of the senses. Here imagination up to a point acts independently from the senses—pre-perceptually, or productively, as Kant calls it. The argument so far has led me to introduce a characterization of art that takes ‘the artist’s hand’ as its core item. We can distinguish four orders of artistically relevant questions and corresponding choices. First, in what art form or genre should a specific work of art be? Secondly, what material—‘artistic’ in a strict sense—choices should be made to build the work? Thirdly, to what aesthetic avail should these second-order material choices be made? And fourthly, how and in what circumstances should the work be exhibited? I did not propose a

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definition of art but argued that the second- and third-order artistic and aesthetic choices should form a necessary ingredient of any definition that one might want to propose.

Another major line of argument in this study addressed the introduction of tertiary qualities. I defined these qualities at the level of real-life perceptual acquaintance as the qualities that form the object of empathy, such as the first-person acquaintances with experiences and moral dimensions of actions and events. Tertiary qualities are taken to be transparently available to perceptual imagination through facial and gestural expressions. As such they supervene upon the primary and secondary qualities involved in these expressions. Concerning real-life embodied perception the introduction of tertiary qualities was seen as a matter of conceptual hygiene. Tertiary qualities lack polymodal accessibility and must therefore be taken to be of an ontological class distinct from primary and secondary qualities, which can be so accessed. The 'sense' with which we unimodally perceive tertiary qualities is the imagination, and because it acts on its own we should have problems assessing the truth values of its attributions. We have analyzed this problem of a standard of correctness in terms provided by David Wiggins, which introduced the (imaginative—because in terms of memories and anticipations) narrative that persons uphold regarding their own and other persons' selves next to strictly perceptual reports of unimodally accessed properties of the actions and events that the tertiary qualities are attributed to. The upshot of this analysis was that we should be subjectivists of a realist kind regarding tertiary quality attributions.

The artistic representation of tertiary qualities reminded us of the problem that we have just identified as that of representation of events' experiential dimension. Represented tertiary qualities I argued are what have come to be known in the literature of aesthetics as aesthetic properties. Thus, reversely, aesthetic properties can be understood in terms of the task of art to represent the experiential. An aesthetic property term is one with which we attribute a succeeded intimation. I have proposed that we understand artistic expression along these same lines. Thus what have been viewed as separate problems in the analytical philosophy of art of the last decades—representation, expression, style, aesthetic properties—are being traced back to a single one. Art must make up for its initial loss of the power to represent the experiential that is consequential upon its not addressing all sense modalities.

This is what art should do, and it is, reversely, what we have art for in the first place. This idea—that art has value for mankind—is what founds our

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practice of aesthetic evaluation. Aesthetic evaluations are reflectively about the force with which a work of art succeeds in inducing our empathetic—pre-perceptual—imagination to project the appropriate experiential dimension onto the represented. This account I suggested as an elaboration of Kant's remarks regarding aesthetic ideas and their effect of animating the mind—into a free play guided by (empathetic) imagination—and of introducing soul into the work's subject matter. Borrowing from Baumgarten's aesthetic theory I have understood this effect of art as the introduction of second-person acquaintance with the represented. This second-person acquaintance starts from a restricted address of our senses which is recognized once we start appreciating a work of art as the instantiation of some general convention—such as D, for depiction. Thus it should form no problem to understand so-called fictional emotions' nature—which should be a problem for their lack of normative constraints and relevant interventions (we must not rush onto the stage to save the heroin). The absence of normativity is of a rigidly basic nature in being connected up with the recognition of the general convention at hand. However, fictional entities or emotions have not been the subject matter of this study. We thus found ample arguments to sustain the Kantian thesis that beauty be a symbol of morality. Art induces us to introduce soul and a moral (experiential) dimension where these cannot (literally) be found. If there is ever going to be significance to moral evaluations of works of art it should be based on the intra-aesthetic considerations connected with the correspondent activities of pre-perceptual imagination in the projective constitution of represented tertiary qualities.

Lastly, the implication of pre-perceptual imagination's projective acts is what explains the principle of acquaintance. We must see for ourselves, and we must see the work itself because if we do not meet these demands we cannot succeed in introducing the experiential dimension asked for by the representation. First, intimation is based on what isn't perceptually available and what cannot, therefore, be reported by testimony, or by samples, et cetera. Secondly, intimation derives its success from the introduction of idiosyncracies on behalf of the beholder's imaginative awareness, which projects elements from within his or her own personal narrative onto the represented. Only thus can second-person acquaintance be re-enacted. Because of the realist subjectivism involved in this process of projecting idiosyncracies our reflective evaluation of its measure of success must be inconsequential to other judges: whether they can or cannot follow our attributions of tertiary qualities to what is there for them to perceive may be a matter for discussion, but whether we are or are not fond of 'getting the point'

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should be irrelevant. Nevertheless, 'getting the point' forms the sole aim pertaining to our arguments about works of art: it is what we have art for in the first place: to be successful in representing the experiential dimension. Reflective aesthetic evaluation forms the goal of aesthetic discussion but is not in itself its subject matter. In the end, we must be subjectivists of an idealist kind regarding aesthetic evaluation. Aesthetic experience may be an empirical event: the demand of the principle of acquaintance must be met—but the reflective assessment of the success of aesthetic appreciations can only be a regulative ideal.

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## Glossary to the Main Terms

Entries in this glossary refer to the relevant chapters and sections [(III:4) means Chapter 3, Section 4]. Technical terms within entries more often than not are explained in their own right elsewhere. Please take note that the terminological specifications on offer reflect the point of view of this study—you will only find few full-fledged definitions and no surveys of discussions. (Web-version: <http://www.phil.uu.nl/~rob/glossary.entries/glossary.html>)

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\* **A c q u a i n t a n c e , p r i n c i p l e o f** We may base our knowledge claims on testimony, not our aesthetic judgements. We must be acquainted with a work of art to judge it, because in art appreciation the empathetic imagination actively makes up for a restricted addressing by the work of art of our senses. Only in polymodally embodied coherence do the data of our senses amount to the perception which lies at the basis of our moral agency. Cf. Wollheim; Aesthetic evaluations, aesthetic properties, art, intimation.

\* **A e s t h e t i c e v a l u a t i o n** regards reflectively the power (in the work of art) with which the pre-perceptual empathetic imagination is activated to re-enact the intimated experiential dimension. Kant has called this our pleasant reflective awareness of the free play of the cognitive faculties. The awareness also is one of a *sensus communis*. It, and Kant's 'ideal of beauty' signify the moral dimension of beauty and its cognates. Cf. also aesthetic ideas, and purposivity without purpose. (IV, V).

\* **A e s t h e t i c i d e a** is Kant's term for (represented) tertiary qualities. He defines an aesthetic idea as "... that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. concept, being adequate to it...". Aesthetic ideas are recognized by a free play of the cognitive faculties, i.e. neither the senses nor the understanding suffice to grasp an aesthetic idea—these faculties must be supplemented with an imaginative acquaintance. An aesthetic idea supposedly gives the represented a soul, and animates the mind. I argue that this means that an aesthetic idea activates empathetic imagination. (V:1; VI). Cf. ideal of beauty.

\* **A e s t h e t i c p r o p e r t i e s** are represented tertiary qualities. For their perception we need empathetic imagination. With this position I argue against Frank Sibley—who set the stage for the discussion about aesthetic properties—according to whom aesthetic property terms are descriptive if any

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terms are. They allegedly differ from more normal descriptive terms in that apart from normal perception they presuppose taste for their recognition. Zemach thinks aesthetic properties (which he identifies with tertiary qualities) are secondary qualities sifted through a set of desires; Wollheim thinks they are projective properties. (II:2-3, VII:8-9).

\* **A n t i c i p a t i o n** (like memory, a power of imagination) is of the essence of works of art's external (referential) and internal nature. The internal importance of anticipation is most evident in the temporal arts. However, externally, there is anticipation of resemblance (in case of depiction), or transparency (in case of photographic reproduction; and even exemplification in general is an effect of anticipatory imagination. Reversely, resemblance<sub>a</sub> (the 'a' is short for 'anticipated'), transparency<sub>a</sub>, and exemplification<sub>a</sub> form the natural presupposition for whatever conventionality is involved in depiction. Whether the resemblance, transparency, or exemplification are to real objects is irrelevant from the point of view of depiction—this is why I stress their anticipated nature. (I:3-6).

\* **A r t**. I characterize art as having the task to represent the experiential dimension. This is not a definition of art. Instead of specifying art's necessary and sufficient conditions, I describe works of art in terms of four orders of choices. Only things and events compliant to this characterization may answer to art's task. (III:4, VIII:4). From a different point of view art is threefold, consisting of presentation, reproduction, and representation. Artistic presentation is art's 'answer' to the fact that in every art form a restricted number of sense modalities is addressed. The less than full address of our embodied perception explains why our imagination should be so important in the aesthetic domain: imaginations fills in the holes intentionally left open. (VIII:2-4). Cf. principle of acquaintance; intimation.

\* **B e a u t y** (or 'sublime' or 'aesthetic excellence') is not an aesthetic property, but a term with which we express a positive reflective judgement of the imaginative activities we are engaged in when perceiving an aesthetic property by empathetic imagination. (V:3). Cf. Aesthetic evaluation; Ideal of beauty.

\* **C o n s t i t u t i v e i d e a l**. See: Ideal.

\* **C o n v e n t i o n s** may work on a general level only—as is the case in depiction or exemplification—or they may work on the level of particular instantiations as well—as is the case in discourse. Not all aspects of pictures are conventional, as Goodman alleges: their reproductive aspect isn't.

## Glossary to the Main Terms

Specifically, reproduction is an effect of unimodal resemblance<sub>a</sub> (or the other way around, depending on the belief about pictorial realism adhered to), which is based in natural, embodied perception and presupposes no imaginative activities for its awareness. (In music reproductive elements are more or less banned (VII:7)). Pre-perceptual, spontaneous imagination is activated by non-natural means of style, editing, and ellipsis. Being irreducible to normal perception, however, doesn't turn these non-natural means into conventions. (VII:6). Conventions presuppose some systematic regulations—an elaborate syntax and semantics, but these are absent from the arts (with the evident exception of discursive language, which is conventional throughout, and fully disembodied (I:7)). (Symbolic systems such as medieval depiction form no paradigm). Cf. Goodman's conventionalism (I).

\* **D e p i c t i o n** is achieved by things that answer convention D. This convention does not rule over all aspects of pictures, nor does it apply to pictures in their singularity—it rules in a general sense only. (I:4) D tells us to look for resemblances<sub>a</sub> and to try to imaginatively introduce the modalities that are absent in pictures, and, in the end, the experiential dimension of the presentation or representation. Because pictures involve a restricted address of sense modalities objects in pictures are perceived in a partly disembodied, and indirect way. D does not constitute the resemblances<sub>a</sub> involved—these form a natural (non-conventional) element within pictures without which no picture depicts. (Pace Goodman).

\* **D e s c r i p t i o n , p e r c e p t i o n u n d e r a**: see Perception.

\* **D i r e c t r e a l i s m**, in contrast with representationalism, ascribes direct contact with the objects that are perceived. The most crucial part of the explanation of direct realism should lie in perception's embodied nature. Puzzle cases are: the perception of a long gone star; perception through a mirror; and 'transparent' perception through a photograph. These puzzles are supposed to form a slippery slope argument proving the case that all perception is indirect, i.e. through a representation. To argue head-on against representationalism: supposing all perceptions are of a representation in our heads, then how are we to understand the disembodied nature of our perceptions of them—can we see the representation itself apart from its subject as is of the essence for all normal pictures that we know of. If we cannot—as I am certain that we cannot—then, following Ockham's razor, there is no sense in postulating such things. (VIII:2)

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\* **E m b o d i m e n t ( o f p e r c e p t i o n )** is short-hand for the polymodal nature of our sensuous access to the world. We have five senses and these structure the data of perception in distinct ways. These variously structured data must be ‘translated’ into a coherent whole. Such ‘translation’ is provided by perceptual imagination, which at the level of consciousness corresponds to perception’s embodiment. Changing the position of the perceiving body changes the perception. Regarding polymodality: we expect visual changes to recur by touching what is seen. In this representations differ essentially from our perceptions. This is an additional argument for direct realism concerning perception: the perception of a representation is partly disembodied: it activates the mind but de-activates the body (we ought not run onto the stage to save the threatened heroin—this has little to do with so-called fictional emotions). Cf. also secondary and tertiary qualities.

\* **E m p a t h y** forms an integral part of embodied perception. It is understood most adequately as a re-enactment by the beholder of the first-person acquaintance of the behelded experience. Sympathy is distinguished from empathy by its supplementing the re-enactment with a positive evaluation. Empathy with represented persons or events by being disembodied presupposes pre-perceptual imagination and must be accounted for subjectivistically. (VIII:2 and 4)

\* **E m p a t h e t i c i m a g i n a t i o n .** See: Imagination.

\* **E x e m p l i f i c a t i o n** is what samples do. According to Goodman, who introduced the term into aesthetics, exemplification is possession of a ‘property’ plus reference to the label which denotes this ‘property’. He thinks expression is metaphorical exemplification, and that representation is quite the reverse of it. I argue that the notion of expressive, or metaphorical, samples is an oxymoron. (I:5). If, instead, we understand exemplification as being an anticipation by the imagination—we anticipate the sample to be qualifiedly identical to some other object—then it may serve rather as an explanatory device for the resemblance<sub>a</sub> central to reproduction and depiction (cf. Arrell) (I:5). Expression, on the contrary, is an aspect of the (artistic) presentation. (III:4; VII:4).

\* **E x p e r i e n t i a l d i m e n s i o n .** Meant is the aspect of having an experience, not of understanding one. If Peter is sad and acting like it (we all know how that is) then an onlooker might easily provide an understanding of the sadness that Peter’s acts, gestures and face express that can compete with Peter’s own understanding of it. As such most mental events are available to a third-person, descriptive approach. Nevertheless, Peter is the one

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experiencing the sadness from a first-person point of view. We cannot understand Peter's sadness from a first-person position, because it would then be our sadness, not his. We can, however, empathize with it—that is, in a normal moral context we can be in a second-person communicative acquaintance with Peter. If, however, our perception is of a representation of Peter, and is, therefore, partly disembodied we shall have to constitute the relevant moral dimension by way of our empathetic imagination. Art by representing (intimating) an event's experiential dimension provides us with a second-person acquaintance. Cf. Baumgarten (I:8; V:1; VI; VII:4; VIII).

\* **Expression** is the experiential dimension intimated by an artistic presentation. Everyday mental states 'hiding' behind gestural or facial expressions are accessible to embodied perception. Such expressions, when reproduced, need a supplementary act of empathetic imagination for their constitution. Due to art's restricted address of polymodality a work of art's expression never is reducible to real life expression because it involves the experiential dimension of the artist's manipulations with the material of his work. As such, both the recognition of artistic expression and the recognition of represented experience (on the basis of intimation) are the business of empathetic imagination. Cf. threefoldness; Goodman; Elliott. (I:7; VII:5).

\* **Extensionalism** understands the meaning of a term as its extension class: the meaning of 'red' is not some inconceivable, universal intension like 'redness', but: 'all red things'. Extensionalism forms the semantic theory connected with nominalism, which consists of the ontological thesis that there are no properties in the world but only individual things and their parts. What we call 'properties' come into being by our attributing predicates to individuals. Extensionalism and nominalism, especially in Goodman's variety, are unduly restrictive, as is illustrated by Goodman's treatment of representation, exemplification, expression, and the arts as consisting of symbol systems. (I)

\* **Extensive knowledge** is Baumgarten's term for the knowledge produced by the senses. He thinks beauty forms the perfection of extensive knowledge. This knowledge is extensively clear and wealthy, and is distinguished from the discursive—intensively clear—knowledge of science. Cf. overdetermination.

\* **Ideal of beauty** According to Kant an ideal is the sensuous presentation of an idea. Since beauty is not explainable as an objective purposivity—notwithstanding those who claim that beauty is a case of perfection—beauty is not determinable by concepts of what the object should

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be like (IV:3), and the production of beauty follows no determinate rule (IV:2). Since an ideal follows the determinations inherent in the idea it presents, there cannot be an ideal of the beauty of things determinable by concepts which specify their conformity to external goals. There can only be an ideal of the beauty of an entity which produces its own purposes from within. Only man in being moral creates his own purposes and expresses these in the way he looks and acts. (V:2)

\* **I d e a l , r e g u l a t i v e o r c o n s t i t u t i v e .** Kant distinguishes between regulative and constitutive ideas, or ideals. Constitutive ideals “seek to bring the existence of appearances under rules a priori” As such they constitute these appearances. Regulative ideals offer ‘rules’ “according to which a unity of experience may arise from perception”. When regulative ideals are used constitutively they cause illusions, but if they are used regulatively as they should, they merely guide the mind. I have argued (in IV:6) that aesthetic experience is the regulative ideal of aesthetic evaluation and of aesthetic discussion: it merely guides the argument. Cf. aesthetic properties, tertiary qualities.

\* **I m a g i n a t i o n** is the mental power to present things to the mind even without their presence to the senses. Only those details pertain to an image of imagination that have been put into them by imagination—this stands in sharp contrast with images of perception which can be further detailed by taking in more details through the senses.

\* **I m a g i n a t i o n , p e r c e p t u a l** provides the intermodal translation of the various spatio-temporal structures provided by the sense modalities needed for perception to be a coherent whole. It also introduces a temporal dimension into the experiences at stake, making perception empathetic. For instance, it is perceptual imagination which introduces the idea that some person’s sadness should be ‘tragic’—by introducing memories and anticipations. In all this perceptual imagination forms an integral part of perception and is not spontaneous—which is why Kant calls it reproductive and understands it as part of understanding. (VIII:3).

\* **I m a g i n a t i o n , p r e - p e r c e p t u a l , e m p a t h e t i c ,** is activated by art’s restricted address of sense modalities and relevant intimatory devices. In the arts empathy is an effect of this spontaneous—productive—power of imagination. Therefore, the objects of empathetic imagination, represented tertiary qualities, cannot be proven to exist polymodally, nor even can their phenomenality be explained—there are no samples of tertiary qualities. This is what explains why in the aesthetic domain we hold the principle of acquaintance. (VIII)

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\* **I n d e x i c a l s** are terms whose meaning cannot be determined before one knows who is speaking. Such ‘token-reflexive’ terms include personal pronouns, such as ‘I’, and ‘she’, and pronouns of time and place such as ‘here’ and ‘then’. I demonstrate in Chapter VI how Baumgarten develops the idea that a beautiful work of art introduces second-person reciprocity in our—first-person—appreciative experience. I elaborate on this idea in the third part, in terms of tertiary qualities (VII:9), empathetic imagination (VIII:3), and intimation (VII:2-6). It is the artistically induced imaginative second-person reciprocity which explains the principle of acquaintance: we must become a ‘you’ to a work of art—and empathize with the artistic expression of its presentation or with its represented subject—if we are to fully appreciate it. Cf. response-dependence, subjectivism.

\* **I n t i m a t i o n** is the effect of a work of art upon its beholder of inducing him or her to spontaneously supply the experiential dimension needed for an effective artistic expression or representation. It is irreducible to the unimodal, perceptual awareness of reproductive elements in the representation, but instead, is an effect of the representation’s artistic presentation. It surpasses mere (third-person) recognition of some experience’s perceivable expression, but introduces a second-person, empathetic acquaintance with it. Cf. threefoldness, polymodality, embodiment, moral dimension. (VII:2-6).

\* **M e m o r i e s** may contain images, but only insofar as the original perception that is remembered was consciously under a description. What is remembered is the description, and imagination fills in the images that are supposed to correspond to that description. This is easily checked by asking for details that ought normally to have formed an integral part of a perception (what shoes did he wear, with what latches, etc.). With regard to memory we must be indirect realists about memory (albeit not of the representationalist variety). Cf. Dancy.

\* **M o d a l i t i e s , r e s t r i c t e d a d d r e s s o f .** See: Art, Polymodality.

\* **M o r a l d i m e n s i o n** of art is its experiential dimension, which in everyday contexts is accessible through normal, embodied, perception. It is not as automatically accessible in works of art—due to their restricted address of sense modalities. To recognize a work of art’s experiential dimension first polymodality must be restored and the experiential be re-enacted—which is done by imagination. As a consequence, ethical evaluation of art is not necessarily inappropriate—however, it may not be as straightforward as censors may have us believe. The ethical dimension of art is experiential,

## Art and Experience – Supplements

based on intimated second-person acquaintance. Cf. Baumgarten, (VI; VII:2,5,6,9; VIII:3,4).

\* **N o m i n a l i s m** See: Extensionalism.

\* **O v e r d e t e r m i n a t i o n** is the characteristic of having more than one ‘determining’ factors. Because describing a perception involves a reduction of determinations (rather than a mere reduction of modalities) descriptions are underdetermined by the data of perception (cf. Quine). Pictorial reproduction replaces the overdetermination of polymodal, embodied perception with one that is partly disembodied and reduced to its merely visual aspect. In contrast with description photographic reproduction is not underdetermined because a photograph comes into being entirely causally—mechanical-cum-chemically. Cf. Scruton, extensive knowledge. (I:4-7; VII:3).

\* **P e r c e p t i o n** is the direct and embodied recognition of things and events, under a description. As embodied perception is polymodal and overdetermined, and discounts natural causal effects of relevant distances—the speeds of light and sound are approximately incorporated in the concepts under which we perceive. Seeing a man is seeing something under the description ‘is a man’, which includes a realistic estimate of his height and length relative to the distance from the viewer’s body. Perceptual imagination introduces the ‘description’ by ‘translating’ the variously structured data of the five sense modalities into the coherent whole that answers the description. (II:3; V:3).

\* **P e r c e p t i o n , e m p a t h e t i c**. See: empathy.

\* **P e r c e p t u a l i m a g i n a t i o n**. See: Imagination.

\* **P o l y m o d a l i t y** is the embodied sum of the variously structured ways of sensuous access to the world—perceptual imagination provides the translation necessary for perception’s coherence. We need some measure of polymodality to prove a perceptual object’s existence. However, polymodality does little to specify such object’s phenomenal nature. Phenomenality, but not perception, by definition is restricted to a single sense’s access, unimodality. Cf. secondary qualities, response-dependence. (II:3; VIII:2-3).

\* **P r e - p e r c e p t u a l i m a g i n a t i o n**. See: Imagination.

\* **P r e s e n t a t i o n** is one of the elements of a work of art which together with its reproduction, and representation make up its threefoldness. Artistic presentation forms art’s ‘answer’ to the fact that in every art form a restricted

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number of sense modalities is addressed. Intimation derives its force from artistic presentation.

\* **Primary qualities** See: Secondary qualities.

\* **Productive imagination** Kant's term for pre-perceptual imagination. See: Imagination.

\* **Purpose; purposivity (without purpose)** The idea that art has a task does not go against Kant's analysis of beauty as (subjectively) purposive without purpose, because the task set upon art is an experiential one and there are no rule-governed ways (neither to address it—only intimation. We cannot make sense of an artistic 'objective purposivity' because there are no generalizable, operationalizable aesthetic problems in art. Cf. Ideal of beauty; (III:2; VIII:5).

\* **Regulative ideal**. See: Ideal.

\* **Representation** is one of the elements of a work of art which together with reproduction and presentation make up its threefoldness. A work of art is a representation if and only if through intimation it makes the beholder (or reader, or listener, etc.) re-enact the experiential dimension of whatever is reproduced or presented. Such re-enactment is a disembodied, spontaneous projective act of pre-perceptual empathetic imagination.

\* **Representationalism**. See: Direct realism, Perception.

\* **Reproduction** is one of the elements of a work of art which together with presentation and representation make up its threefoldness. I understand reproduction in terms of an anticipation of unimodal resemblance comparable to that of exemplification—this anticipation is the work of imagination. There is a visually reproductive element in all figurative pictures, and it is optimal—overwriting the presentational and, therefore, representational element—in mechanically reproduced images such as photos and film shots. There is a measure of depth in photography which introduces the element of embodied perception, but when we move our heads the relative position of photographed things—those in the 'front' and those in the 'back'—will not change. Therefore, photographs are not transparent to their object: we do not see them directly—as we do in perception. (I:4-6; VII:3) Cf. anticipation.

\* **Reproductive imagination**. See: Imagination, perceptual

\* **Resemblance**, as anticipated forms a necessary condition for the reproductive element in pictures. (I:3).

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\* **R e s p o n s e - d e p e n d e n c e** is the characteristic of certain properties of being unspecifiable without reference to some phenomenal response. Primary qualities supposedly can be specified without such reference, whereas secondary qualities—due the unimodality of our access to them—cannot. I have argued contrary to this view that the phenomenality of both kinds of property is response-dependent, whereas the establishment of either kind's actuality is not. The existence of primary as much as secondary qualities can be proven polymodally. (II:3). In the double—epistemologico-ontological—sense only tertiary qualities are truly response-dependent. Tertiary qualities can neither be characterized nor proven to exist beyond unimodal acquaintance; they are not polymodally accessible, because for their awareness empathetic imagination (either perceptual or pre-perceptual) is singularly responsible. Because empathetic imagination introduces personal elements from memory and anticipation the recognition of tertiary qualities is 'first-person' only. Cf. indexicals; Wiggins, McDowell.

\* **S e c o n d a r y** qualities, due to their unimodal phenomenality cannot be explained without reference to the relevant mental aspect of perception—this is as tradition has it. Certain philosophers (such as Locke, and Mackie, not McDowell) even argue that secondary qualities are illusory for this reason. I argue that they too are polymodally accessible—with the help of samples and scientific devices—but that this does nothing to explain their phenomenality. However, the polymodal access to primary qualities does little in that area either. Polymodality helps proving a property's existence, and therefore both secondary and primary qualities are on equal footing in the last analysis. Polymodality implies 'translation' by perceptual imagination—due to the fact that the different senses structure the world in distinct ways. Of primary and secondary properties the phenomenality is response-dependent, whereas the establishment of either kind's actuality isn't. Cf. tertiary qualities. (II:2-3; VII:8-9).

\* **S e n s e s**. We recognize five senses: two distastial ones—vision and hearing—and three tactile, or proximity ones—taste, touch and smell. Each of these structure the world (time and space) in specifiably distinct ways. Together they form our polymodal, embodied direct access to the world. (Artistic) representations of whatever kind (pictorial, musical, olfactory ... supposing these can be devised (V:3)) presuppose some restricted addressing of this polymodality. (VII:7; VIII:2).

\* **S e n s u s** **c o m m u n i s** is the term Kant uses to refer to human communicability as such, the shareability of experience. Aesthetic

## Glossary to the Main Terms

experience is supposed to provide a pleasant awareness of it. (IV:1, IV:5) Cf. regulative ideal, aesthetic evaluation.

\* **S u b j e c t i v i s m** as defended here is ‘imaginativist’. It is realist with regard to tertiary qualities, directly so regarding everyday tertiary qualities of actions and persons (because empathy is part of embodied perception), and indirectly so with regard to aesthetic properties, which I take to be represented tertiary qualities (because represented tertiary qualities must be re-enacted spontaneously by imagination). Regarding aesthetic evaluation my brand of subjectivism is idealist. (II:4; IV:7; VIII:5).

\* **S y m b o l**. Goodman has argued that works of art above all are symbols. I argue that this is true only if we do not take symbolism to be based on a set of syntactic and semantic rules. Every art form involves some restricted address of our embodied perception’s polymodality which must be made up for by non-natural means of intimation. However, these means are not conventional in any strictly regulated sense, on the contrary. Cf. Walton. (I:2; VII:6; VIII:2).

\* **T a s t e** is the ‘mental faculty’ with which we judge reflectively our pleasant mental state of having a free play of the cognitive faculties while perceiving imaginatively an aesthetic property, i.e. a represented tertiary quality. Pace Sibley, who saw taste as the faculty with which we perceive aesthetic properties.

\* **T e r t i a r y q u a l i t i e s** are the experiential aspects of persons and their actions structured temporally by imagination. Thanks to perception’s embodiment these qualities are fairly easily recognized under normal circumstances where persons who perceive agents do so from a second-person perspective. Not so in art where due to a restricted address of sense modalities empathetic imagination plays a constitutive (instead of merely a perceptive) role for the awareness of tertiary qualities—call this role pre-perceptual, or, as Kant did, productive. Cf. Zemach, Wollheim, secondary qualities, and aesthetic properties. (II:3; VII:8-9; VIII:3).

\* **T h r e e f o l d n e s s**. Michael Podro has argued that when a picture depicts it does so by artistic techniques of presentation. I enhance the related idea from Richard Wollheim—that (pictorial) art is ‘twofold’—by supplementing it with art’s experiential dimension. A work of art’s characteristic ontology in general is threefold. In a work there is a measure of exemplificatory reproduction that we recognize by anticipating unimodal resemblances. Next, there is the experiential effect of the work’s representational efficacy, which is achieved, thirdly, by the artistic means of

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presenting the resemblances. Presentation is what intimates the experiential dimension of the reproduced. Cf. polymodal. (I:2-6; III:5; VII:3-4)

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## Kunst en Beleving (Samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Deze studie heeft geleid tot de omtrekken van een theorie over de rol van de verbeelding in de kunsten zoals wij die sinds een paar eeuwen erkennen. Deze theorie gaat uit van twee filosofische premissen. Ten eerste neemt ze aan dat we over onze waarneming van de wereld direct realistisch moeten denken—omdat die waarneming polymodaal is en belichaamd. Ten tweede gaat ze uit van een asymmetrie met betrekking tot ervaringen—de beleving van een ervaring is eerste-persoons geprivilegieerd, een privilege dat niet-cognitief begrepen moet worden. Op grond van deze twee aannames is betoogd dat de kunsten die wij als zodanig erkennen gekenmerkt worden door een taak: de taak beleving te representeren, de taak een ‘tweede persoon’ te zijn voor de waarnemer van het werk. Het succes van artistieke representatie vraagt om een filosofische verklaring die ik ‘imaginativistisch subjectivistisch’ noem.

Bezien vanuit de Angelsaksische esthetica is de hier voorgestelde benadering controversieel. Uit dit ‘feit’—en de historische aard van onze kunsten—volgt de strategie die in dit onderzoek gehanteerd is. Dit boek bestaat uit drie delen. In het eerste deel wordt een diagnose geboden van de mate waarin geaccepteerde opvattingen uit de Angelsaksische esthetica (de taak van) kunst vermogen te begrijpen. In het tweede deel worden twee cruciale esthetische theorieën uit de begintijd van onze soort kunst en van de moderne periode gezien op hun relevantie voor de problemen die na het eerste deel resteerden. In het derde deel worden suggesties uit het tweede deel in hedendaagse terminologie ‘vertaald’ om ze relevant te maken voor de huidige situatie in de analytische esthetica. Ik zal nu de details van deze strategie uitwerken en mijn argumentatie voor de theorie en haar aannames verduidelijken.

In deel I worden drie analytische benaderingen besproken die ik ‘cognitivistisch’ noem vanwege hun stellingen, ten eerste, dat de werking van kunst in termen van (het overbrengen van) kennis begrepen kan en moet worden en, ten tweede, dat een derde-persoons benadering van het esthetische domein volledig kan zijn. Ik betoog dat de besproken problemen alle drie een relevante belevingsdimensie kennen en dat—vanwege de reeds genoemde asymmetrie van ervaring—de ‘beleving’ (voor zover relevant voor het esthetische domein) per definitie buiten het derde-persoons standpunt valt. De cognitivistische benadering schiet in alle drie de gevallen ernstig tekort.

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Hoofdstuk Een behandelt de extensionalistisch nominalistische benadering van Nelson Goodman die vanwege zijn elegantie en filosofische consistentie een belangrijke rol gespeeld heeft in de discussie van de afgelopen decennia. Goodmans belangrijkste these is zijn conventionalisme ten aanzien van afbeelding (pictoriale representatie), dat hij baseert op een diskwalificatie van de relevantie van gelijkenis voor afbeelding: dat sommige afbeeldingen wellicht op hun onderwerp lijken maakt ze nog niet tot een afbeelding daarvan; gelijkenis is logisch symmetrisch, reflexief, en ‘overall aanwezig’—representatie niet. Om te argumenteren dat gelijkenis wel noodzakelijk is voor afbeelding en dat we afbeelding naturalistisch moeten begrijpen bekritiseer ik allereerst Goodmans analyse van het begrip ‘gelijkenis’: de gelijkenis die wij noodzakelijk achten voor afbeelding is een geanticipeerde, beleefde gelijkenis die allerminst symmetrisch, reflexief en ‘overall aanwezig’ is; ze is integendeel ‘betekenisvol’.<sup>1</sup> Deze typering van gelijkenis als geanticipeerd maakt gelijkenis geschikt als noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor afbeelding. Om hier ruimte voor te maken wordt gelijkenis—zo begrepen—vervolgens vergeleken met de ‘gelijkheid’ die in het geding is bij exemplificatie: een staaltje is in bepaalde (niet alle) opzichten gelijk aan dat waar het een staaltje voor is, bij voorbeeld het gordijn dat wij gemaakt willen hebben. Conventies bepalen om welke van de eigenschappen van het staaltje het gaat: de textuur en kleur, maar niet het absolute gewicht en het formaat. Die conventionaliteit werkt evenwel niet op alle nivo’s van exemplificatie. Immers, welke exacte kleuren en welke textuur worden geëxemplificeerd wordt uitgemaakt door de eigenschappen van het staaltje zelf en voor de herkenning daarvan zijn onze natuurlijke vermogens nodig en afdoende. ‘Exemplificatie’ vraagt met andere woorden om een in conventionalisme ingebedde naturalistische verklaring. De vergelijking tussen afbeelding en exemplificatie leert dat er een pictoriale conventie D (van ‘depiction’) bestaat—die specificiert dat we op gelijkenissen moeten anticiperen wanneer we met een instantiatie van D geconfronteerd worden—maar niet dat daaruit afgeleid kan worden wat er in een afbeelding gerepresenteerd wordt. Dát kan niet conventionalistisch begrepen worden, integendeel: wat er afgebeeld

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<sup>1</sup> Wat de symmetrie betreft: de vergelijking die de betekenis van gelijkenis illustreert is niet die van auto’s op een lopende band, maar die tussen een zoon en zijn vader: we zeggen dat de zoon op de vader lijkt, niet andersom (tenzij in nader te specificeren gevallen). Reflexiviteit (A lijkt nog het meest op zichzelf) is een eigenschap niet van toepassing op een concept dat per definitie uitgaat van tenminste twee identiteiten: reflexieve zelfgelijkenis heft de betekenis van de analysans op. Ten laatste, voor de herkenning van gelijkenis behoeven we een context als achtergrond en de verbeelding om te bezien in welk aspect twee dingen op elkaar lijken.

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wordt herkennen we met behulp van onze natuurlijke perceptuele vermogens (in het onderhavige geval van pictoriale representatie: met ons visuele vermogen) en ons vermogen tot anticipatie—door mij aan de verbeelding toegeschreven om redenen die later duidelijk zullen worden. In positieve zin wordt een theorie van afbeelding voorgesteld die afbeelding fundeert in reproductieve exemplificatie van een zintuiglijk uiterlijk—zoals we die idealiter in foto's vinden; unimodale herhaling—gelijkheid, vandaar de anticipatie op gelijkenis. De claim dat een foto een gebeurtenis bewijst—omdat ze er een causaal bewerkte weergave van is—is vergelijkbaar met de verhouding tussen de eigenschappen van het staaltje en het gordijn. Dit is een naturalistisch te begrijpen relatie—geen conventionele. Omdat op het nivo van de instantiatie normale zintuiglijke vermogens (ik reken de verbeelding daar ook onder—en argumenteer daar later voor) voldoen en er geen interpretatie (van specifieke conventies) vereist is, verschilt afbeelding essentieel van (discursieve) taal. Het belangrijkste effect van dit verschil in arbitrariteit ligt in twee—verbonden—zaken. Ten eerste zijn onze beschrijvingen onderbepaald door de gegevens die ze beschrijven, terwijl een afbeelding even overbepaald is (zoveel volgt uit haar fundering in reproductieve exemplificatie) als de gegevens die erin afgebeeld zijn (onder abstractie van de gegevens van andere dan de door de algemene conventie aangesproken zintuiglijke modaliteiten). Ten tweede kennen afbeeldingen geen equivalent voor discursieve 'indexicals', zoals de tijden van werkwoorden, persoonlijke voornaamwoorden, zoals 'ik', 'jij', 'zij' en 'hij', of plaatsbepalingen zoals 'hier' en 'daar', 'nu' en 'toen'. Deze verschillen tussen afbeelding en taal zijn gerelateerd aan het naturalistisch te begrijpen belevingsaspect—precies vanwege zijn conventionalisme heeft Goodman hier geen verklaring voor.

In het tweede hoofdstuk wordt de in de analytische esthetica alom geaccepteerde poging behandeld van Frank Sibley om esthetische termen als beschrijvend te beschouwen: zoals een vlek op een Kandinsky waar of onwaar als 'geel' kan worden beschreven, zo ook de 'levendigheid' van het schilderij. Het enige verschil is, volgens Sibley, dat we voor bij voorbeeld de kleurwaarneming alleen ons gezichtszintuig nodig hebben maar voor de waarneming van esthetische kwaliteiten ook nog 'smaak'. Om tot een beter begrip van dit onderscheid te komen, ga ik dieper in op de rol van primaire en secundaire kwaliteiten (zoals door John Locke geïntroduceerd) en hun onderscheid met esthetische kwaliteiten. Locke meende allereerst dat primaire kwaliteiten (zoals vormen en beweging) door meerdere zintuigen worden waargenomen, terwijl secundaire maar voor één zintuig toegankelijk zijn (kleuren, geluiden). Dat is Locke's epistemologische argument voor het onderscheid—het vormt de ondergrond voor zijn tweede, ontologische, argument dat

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secundaire kwaliteiten illusoir zijn en dat hun bestaan niet bewezen kan worden—wat weer niet voor primaire kwaliteiten geldt: die bestaan werkelijk. Ik betoog, allereerst, dat het ontologische argument niet staande gehouden kan worden zonder het epistemologische. Verder toon ik aan dat het epistemologische argument verkeerd opgezet is. Onder verwijzing naar Ian Hacking's 'entiteiten-realisme' betoog ik dat polymodale waarneming (waarneming door meer dan een zintuiglijke modaliteit) het bestaan van het waargenomen vermogen te bewijzen zonder zijn fenomenaliteit te kunnen verduidelijken aangezien fenomenaliteit essentieel een zaak is van unimodale toegang: wat de ogen aan vorm zien is essentieel anders gestructureerd dan wat de tast aan diezelfde vorm ontwaart. Als we willen dat polymodaliteit fenomenaliteitsproblemen oplost behoeven we een uitleg in termen van een vermogen dat de gegevens van het ene zintuig in die van het andere 'vertaalt'. Zonder die 'vertaling' kan er ook geen sprake van zijn dat polymodaliteit 'bestaan' bewijst. Die 'vertaling' wordt geleverd door de perceptuele verbeelding. (Dit zijn transcendentale opmerkingen—geen empirische: ik verdedig geen naïeve 'sense-data' theorie). Qua fenomenaliteit is er geen onderscheid tussen primaire en secundaire kwaliteiten: in beide gevallen moeten we ons op ervaringen beroepen om de fenomenaliteit te duiden. Ik betoog dat het onderscheid ook wat de ontologische verschillen betreft geen stand houdt. Er zijn wetenschappelijke methoden ontwikkeld waarmee 'polymodaal' kan worden aangetoond dat een kleur of toon bestaat (niet: hoe ze eruit ziet of klinkt). Bij primaire én secundaire kwaliteiten zijn de betrokken zintuigen voldoende voor hun waarneming (uitgaande van voor het overige gelijke omstandigheden). Inderdaad, zoals Sibley stelt, voor de waarneming van esthetische eigenschappen is meer nodig dan dat. Echter, het vermogen dat we behoeven als aanvulling op de zintuigen is niet de smaak—die oordeelt, reflexief, over onze mentale activiteiten ten aanzien van een esthetisch object (net als Sibley beroep ik me hierbij op Kant)—maar een projectief vermogen: de empathische verbeelding. In deel III zal ik hierop terugkomen met het voorstel onze ontologie uit te breiden met aan deze empathische verbeelding beantwoordende tertiaire kwaliteiten.

In hoofdstuk Drie bespreek ik de definitie van 'kunst' beginnend bij de extensionele, procedurele 'institutionele definitie' van George Dickie, die stelt dat iets een kunstwerk is als het door leden van de Kunstwereld is voorgedragen als voorwerp ter appreciatie. Twee punten van kritiek. Ten eerste, de 'appreciatie' speelt eigenlijk geen rol in deze definitie (het gaat Dickie slechts om het 'voordragen')—maar zou dat wel moeten. Ten tweede is de definitie strikt classificierend: ze specificeert alleen welke dingen al dan niet een kunstwerk zijn en hoe dat komt—niet: hoe ze het verdienen als kunst te zijn

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voorgedragen. Welke redenen kan een lid van de Kunstwereld aanvoeren om een tot nog toe niet als kunst erkend ding als kunstwerk voor te dragen? Als het enige criterium is 'is door leden van de Kunstwereld voorgedragen' dan kan nieuw werk nooit geïntroduceerd worden: de definitie kan niet beginnen. Het moge evident zijn dat deze definitie uitsluitend is ontwikkeld om zogenaamd lastige kunstwerken te legitimeren: Duchamps Fountain en concept kunstwerken kunnen immers slechts kunstwerken zijn omdat ze als zodanig zijn geaccepteerd. Wie vindt dat kunstwerken hun status ook moeten verdienen kan met dergelijke retoriek niet akkoord gaan. Ik betoog dat deze 'dingen' ('concept art') geen kunstwerken zijn: omdat ze geen relevante primaire en secundaire kwaliteiten bezitten of (in het geval van Fountain) omdat de artistieke betekenis van het object hier niet op superveniëert. Ik stel een karakterisering van 'kunst' voor in termen van vier orden van keuzen die dit bezwaar substantiëren—ik formuleer de elementen waaruit een kunstwerk moet bestaan wil het zijn status van kunstwerk verdienen. Centraal hierin staan de tweede en derde orden van keuzen die de materiële ingrepen door de kunstenaar en, respectievelijk, de esthetische overwegingen die die materiële keuzen instrueren, betreffen. De artistieke presentatie die hier het gevolg van is (en die aan de verbeeldingsactiviteit van de beschouwer voedsel geeft) zal in het derde deel worden aangewend als grond voor de notie van intimatie (representatie van beleving) waar het volgens mij in kunst allemaal om begonnen is.

In het tweede, historische, deel wordt allereerst, in hoofdstuk Vier, de subjectivistische theorie van Kant ten aanzien esthetische evaluatie geanalyseerd als een theorie die esthetische waarden (niet: eigenschappen) correleert aan een vrij spel van onze kenvermogens ten aanzien van het geapprecieerde object. De kantiaanse analyse wordt zo uitgelegd dat dit vrije spel zowel empirisch als transcendentaal begrepen moet worden. Empirisch gezien betreft het onze actuele waarderende activiteit jegens een kunstwerk (of ander esthetisch object) en geldt het de constitutieve herkenning van esthetische eigenschappen. Transcendentaal gezien betreft het vrije spel de legitimatie van ons smaakoordeel die als zodanig geen beslissende rol speelt in actuele esthetische discussies: niemand kan een ander van de schoonheid van een strijkkwartet overtuigen door te claimen een vrij spel ervaren te hebben bij het beluisteren ervan en dientengevolge gelegitimeerd te zijn het mooi te vinden. In plaats hiervan zal men wijzen op de primaire en secundaire kwaliteiten, en op de esthetische die daarop superveniëren. De esthetische ervaring in zijn transcendentale rol fungeert slechts ('slechts'—alsof dit niet heel wat is) als een regulatief ideaal voor onze esthetische discussies. Hierover, zo betoog ik, gaat het grootste deel van Kant's *esthetica*.

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In hoofdstuk Vijf ga ik in op de zeldzame opmerkingen die Kant maakt in verband met het vrije spel in zijn empirische hoedanigheid: de actuele activiteit van het naar een schilderij kijken, naar een concert luisteren, of een boek lezen. Deze opmerkingen van Kant betreffen drie noties: 'esthetische ideeën', het 'ideaal van schoonheid', en 'schoonheid als het symbool van moraliteit'. Een esthetisch idee—waar schoonheid volgens Kant de expressie van is—is de uitbreiding van een voorstelling die aan een begrip beantwoordt met esthetische attributen die de geest animeren. Het is de verbeelding van de kunstenaar die die attributen toevoegt—en de animatie van de geest van de beschouwer is de opwekking van zijn of haar vrije spel der kenvermogens waarin de verbeelding in plaats van het verstand of de zintuigen de 'leiding' heeft. Kant meent dat door dit animerend effect 'ziel' geïntroduceerd wordt in het onderwerp van het esthetisch object (wat er overigens op wijst dat Kant met deze notie 'esthetisch idee' primair op kunstwerken doelt). Waarom door een esthetisch idee ziel geïntroduceerd zou worden kunnen we begrijpen door een analyse van Kants zoektocht naar het ideaal van schoonheid. Kant definieert een ideaal als de verzintuiglijking van een 'idee'. Omdat hij zich eerder al verzette tegen de analyse van schoonheid als een mate van volkomenheid—intern of extern—ten aanzien van een bepaald en bepalend concept kan het idee dat in een schoonheidsideaal verzintuiglijkt is niet zo'n concept zijn. Was het dat wel dan zouden we de schoonheid van zo'n ideaal kunnen bewijzen aan de hand van de mate waarin het aan de conceptuele specificaties (die extern aan het object zijn) tegemoet komt. Het enige 'idee' dat zich voor een schoonheidsideaal leent moet daarom een idee zijn dat zijn specificaties autonoom, intern genereert. Alleen het idee van de 'mens' voldoet aan deze eis. Het uiterlijk van een mens wordt geacht de expressie van zijn of haar morele visie te zijn. Daarom staat alleen de mens een schoonheidsideaal toe. Daarom ook, zo werk ik deze these uit, kunnen we schoonheid beschouwen als een bezieling; naar analogie met de manier waarop de mens zijn eigen schoonheid bepaalt. Je morele visie in je uiterlijk uitdrukken doe je door bezielde je leven te leiden. De stap van deze argumentatie naar Kants idee dat schoonheid het symbool van moraliteit is is een geringe. Wat Kant niet heeft uitgewerkt is hoe we dit alles empirisch moeten begrijpen.

Hierin ligt de motivatie van dit onderzoek om terug te grijpen in hoofdstuk Zes naar een estheticus die niet gekeken heeft door een door kantiaans transcendentalisme gekleurde bril—de estheticus die door Kant bekritiseerd is met argumenten vergelijkbaar met die welke ik in het eerste deel tegen het hedendaagse cognitivisme heb ingebracht: Alexander Baumgarten. Baumgarten start vanuit Leibniz' theorie van de monade en die moet eerst

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geschetst worden vooraleer de esthetische theorie van Baumgarten uitgewerkt kan worden. Leibniz betoogt dat de wereld uit individuen bestaat, monaden, die niet lichamelijk maar geestelijk van aard zijn—zoals onze ‘ziel’. Een monade wordt getypeerd door zijn relaties tot alle andere monaden. Wetenschappelijke kennis wordt door Leibniz geacht deductief opgebouwd te kunnen worden en dit is in overeenstemming met deze opvatting van ‘individu’. Mensen zijn evenwel gewend om lichamen waar te nemen, met bewegingen die causale effecten hebben—op andere lichamen. Dit zijn volgens Leibniz evenwel slechts fenomenen die, willen ze aan de deductieve wetenschap bijdragen, op hun monadische aspecten teruggevoerd moeten worden. Baumgarten verzet zich tegen Leibniz’ diskwalificatie van de fenomenale gewaarwording van objecten en hun werkingen. Hij stelt een wetenschappelijke discipline voor die onze bewuste waarneming moet onderzoeken en perfectioneren: de esthetica. Perfecte zintuiglijke kennis is, zo Baumgarten, gelijk aan schoonheid. Het zijn onze kunstenaars die onze waarnemingen perfectioneren, en ze doen dat in de kunstwerken die ze maken. Vandaar dat in deze discipline de fenomenaliteit van onze waarneming en de esthetische kwaliteit van kunst een en hetzelfde onderwerp vormen. De specificaties die Baumgarten geeft van de taken en zorgen die de kunstenaar bij het perfectioneren van de zintuiglijkheid ontmoet, zijn illustratief voor twee van de hier te verdedigen thesen: ten eerste, dat esthetische eigenschappen een morele dimensie bezitten (Kants ‘bezieling’), en ten tweede, dat deze eigenschappen voor hun constitutie sterk afhankelijk zijn van de mentale activiteiten van de beschouwer (wat bij Kant tamelijk ongespecificeerd aan de rol van de verbeelding wordt toegeschreven). Baumgarten ziet (artistieke) schoonheid als de perfectie niet van een naturalistische copie van de werkelijkheid, maar als die van de representatie van fenomenaliteit, inclusief de daarbij behorende eerste-persoons ervaringsdimensie. De beschouwer treedt door schoonheid in een tweede-persoons interactie met het kunstwerk. Baumgarten indexicaliseert artistieke representatie.

Uitgaande van de situatie in de hedendaagse analytische esthetica zoals in het eerste deel gediagnosticeerd, worden in het derde deel de argumenten uit voorgaande hoofdstukken gebruikt terwille van een theorie die een adequaat begrip levert van de belevingseffecten van kunstwerken. In hoofdstuk Zeven introduceer ik de—technische—notie van ‘intimatie’ om er dat mee te specificeren wat representatie van exemplificerende reproductie onderscheidt. Als er ooit een beleving gerepresenteerd is, dan moet dit een effect van intimatie geweest zijn en niet van het unimodaal (geanticipeerd) terugkeren van het visuele—niet van reproductie. Intimatie werkt daar waar het gereproduceerde unimodale afwezig is: door stijl, kadrering, montage,

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metafoor, etc. Artistieke belevings-functionaliteit bestaat aldus uit drie elementen: reproductie, als de basis die het publiek cognitief informeert over de inhoud van het werk; presentatie, ofwel artistieke expressie; en intimatie, die een afbeelding (bij voorbeeld) tot een representatie maakt. Ik noem dat de drievoud van kunst (vgl. Podro, Wollheim). In termen van deze drievoud kunnen we artistieke expressie beter begrijpen en hem beter onderscheiden van evocatie. De niet-natuurlijkheid van intimatie wordt vastgesteld door een analyse van de relatie van intimatie tot conventie en de natuurlijke—zintuiglijke—vermogens. Ter illustratie wordt het probleem van muzikale representatie opgevoerd: in muziek vinden we ternauwernood een analoog van pictoriale exemplificatoire reproductie. Dit verklaart waarom we zo'n moeite hebben (zwak uitgedrukt) met het vaststellen van het precieze onderwerp van een muziekstuk. Omdat de reproductieve basis van muziek zo mager is (als ze al niet volledig afwezig is—zoals in de meeste gevallen) zijn de intimoire effecten van muziek doorgaans vaag of van een algemene aard. Hierna werk ik de notie van intimatie uit tot een begrip van esthetische eigenschappen en leg ik uit waarom esthetische eigenschappen ontologisch verschillen van zowel primaire als secundaire kwaliteiten. Ik stel voor esthetische eigenschappen 'gerepresenteerde tertiaire kwaliteiten' te noemen en ik betoog dat hun aard verklaart waarom we bij het verdedigen van onze esthetische evaluaties naar dergelijke tertiaire kwaliteiten kunnen verwijzen ook al moeten we aannemen dat 'grootse' esthetische termen, zoals schoonheid en verhevenheid niet informatief over het esthetische object zijn. Uit deze niet-informativiteit zou men kunnen concluderen dat iedere verwijzing naar eigenschappen in de wereld overbodig moet zijn voor esthetische discussies, maar een dergelijk relativistisch idealisme is evident absurd.

De hierop volgende, conceptuele vraag omtrent de relevantie van tertiaire kwaliteiten voor esthetische evaluatie is het onderwerp van hoofdstuk Acht. Omdat strikt causaal gereproduceerde (of als zodanig te begrijpen) visualiteit onvoldoende is om een beleving (van het weergegeven onderwerp) te presenteren behoeven we iets naast onze natuurlijke perceptieve vermogens om het adequaat te waarderen. We behoeven een vermogen naast de zintuigen en ik stel voor dat dit de verbeelding is. Om te verduidelijken welk specifieke type verbeeldingsactiviteit we behoeven maak ik onderscheid tussen perceptuele en empathische verbeelding. Dit doe ik door middel van een analyse van waarneming in termen van haar polymodale belichaming—en ik betrek hierbij argumenten gebezigd bij de bespreking van het onderscheid tussen primaire en secundaire kwaliteiten. In tegenstelling tot bij normale waarneming spreken kunstwerken slechts een beperkte hoeveelheid zintuiglijke modaliteiten aan. Als gevolg hiervan wordt de empathische ver-

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beelding actief aan het werk gezet om datgene wat door deze beperkte aanspraak als eerste lijkt te moeten sneuvelen—de belevingsdimensie, en de tertiaire kwaliteiten—actief te constitueren. In navolging van Kant betoog ik dan dat in een esthetische evaluatie deze activiteiten van de verbeelding zelf reflexief beoordeeld worden. Zodoende is het de animatie van empathie die esthetisch gewaardeerd wordt, wat, ten tweede, de morele relevantie van het esthetische domein verklaart. Vanwege deze ‘omweg’ kunnen kunstwerken moreel relevant zijn zelfs wanneer ze een expliciet moreel onjuist onderwerp presenteren. Artistieke morele relevantie ligt in het activeren van onze empathie. Ten laatste beschouw ik in dit achtste hoofdstuk het probleem van welke theorie van esthetische evaluatie we moeten ontwikkelen. Ik verdedig een subjectivisme, maar één dat esthetische waardering niet op gevoelens terugvoert (geen emotivisme), maar op de reflexieve beoordeling van empathische verbeelding. Ik noem deze positie: imaginativistisch subjectivisme.

## Curriculum Vitae

Rob van Gerwen werd op 22 oktober 1957 in Tilburg geboren. Hij studeerde daar na zijn VWO-opleiding enige tijd psychologie, werkte vervolgens enkele jaren en begon in 1981 aan een studie Wijsbegeerte in Utrecht. Deze studie duurde tot 1988 en werd in de eindfase geflankeerd door een tweede studie—Film en Opvoeringskunsten in Nijmegen. Sinds 1986 doceert hij filosofie aan de faculteiten Wijsbegeerte en Letteren van de Universiteit Utrecht in de disciplines epistemologie en wetenschapsfilosofie, maar vooral in de filosofie van de kunst. In 1992, reeds begonnen aan een baan als onderzoeksmedewerker voor NWO, publiceerde hij een historisch overzicht van de moderne esthetica, geschreven vanuit het systematisch perspectief van de verhouding tussen esthetische en epistemologische aanspraken ten aanzien van kunst. Dit boek verscheen bij uitgeverij Boom, Meppel. Naast zijn onderwijs- en onderzoeksactiviteiten heeft hij lezingen gehouden voor een gespecialiseerd internationaal publiek in London, Amsterdam en Oxford. Hij publiceert in Nederlandse en internationale tijdschriften. De onderhavige dissertatie schreef hij in contract voor NWO. Zijn volgende onderzoek zal de rol van de verbeelding in perceptie en empathie betreffen.