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about the journal

The aim of the *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* is to offer postgraduates interested in aesthetics a space to exchange ideas, and also to foster a resource that will promote high quality essays relevant to postgraduates' interests. The journal wishes to encourage a wide construal of the study of aesthetics to include papers from analytic, continental or historical points of view.

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Contents

editorial

Editors' note - Essay Prize

Al Baker and Maarten Steenhagen 1

interview

Film, Perception, Aesthetics: An interview with Bence Nanay

Mark Windsor and Shelby Moser 2

articles

Seeing-in as Three-fold Experience

Regina-Nino Kurg 18

book reviews

Dominic Gregory: Showing, Sensing, and Seeming

Reviewed by Giulia Martina 27

James O. Young: Critique of Pure Music

Reviewed by Vítor Guerreiro 37

EDITORS' NOTE - ESSAY PRIZE

To stimulate and congratulate, *PJA* will award an annual essay prize of £250 to the best article published in the preceding volume. And because the tenth volume of *PJA* (2013-2014) has proved to be a storehouse of an abundant harvest, we decided to award the first edition of the prize straight away, reviewing the last three issues.

The winner of the 2014 essay prize is Lewis Coyne, for the paper 'Heidegger and the problem of the sublime' (*PJA* 10:1). The article is an excellently researched and well-argued treatment of sublimity in Heidegger. Coyne manages to lay out complicated Heideggerian concepts with great lucidity, and defends an original, controversial way to concert Heidegger and Kant.

The articles we reviewed were without exception of outstanding quality, but two papers deserve special mention. Autumn Sharky's 'Not lost in translation' (10:3) and Daniel Abrahams 'Defining satire' (10:2) stood out for the originality and subtlety of their arguments.

Back to the present. Our eleventh year of publication starts with an interview with Bence Nanay, who explains his emphasis on perception, and his interest in twentieth century cinema. Regina-Nino Kurg's article 'Seeing-in as three-fold experience' shows that it may be fruitful to read Wollheim and Husserl alongside each other. Kurg argues that such a reading suggests that experience of figurative pictures will typically have a 'three-fold' phenomenology. For the first time, book reviews can be found in the pages of *PJA*. Giulia Martina reviewed Dominic Gregory's recent monograph on sensory representation, and Vítor Guerreiro discusses James O. Young's latest defence of anti-formalism about music.

Al Baker

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FILM, PERCEPTION, AESTHETICS

An interview with Bence Nanay

Mark Windsor and Shelby Moser

University of Kent

1 Film

MARK WINDSOR: Before you started your academic career you worked for several years as a film critic, and served as a jury member for a number of international film festivals. What sparked your interest in film?

BENCE NANAY: I grew up in Hungary, in Budapest. Budapest was kind of culture-obsessed at the time, in the nineties. There were more than a hundred cinemas—most of them have closed down since then. They were showing these old films, old black and white films, so you could really get an education in film history just by going to the cinema—it was really great. It was the ideal milieu for starting a career as a film critic. And there were a lot of cultural monthlies and quarterlies where you could publish stuff on film. So I was not forced to do weekly film criticism, which invariably means writing about films one doesn't like.

Eventually I got into this organisation called FIPRESCI,¹ which is the International Federation of Film Critics, and one thing they do is nominate film critics for the critics' jury of various major international film festivals. The film festival pays for your costs, so it's a good gig,

¹<http://www.fipresci.org/>

especially as a graduate student, going from festival to festival.

SHELBY MOSER: What kind of films do you like?

BN: I like, you know, really boring films, like ‘dead tree bad weather.’

SM: ‘Dead tree bad weather’? [laughs]

BN: In the States there used to be a commercial for the Sundance Channel. There were these students in film school, and this professor with a thick Russian or maybe French accent who asks, ‘so what is photogenic?’ And someone says, ‘sunsets?’ ‘Ah, what kind of Hollywood bullshit is that?’ And someone else says, ‘dead tree bad weather?’ ‘Yeah, that’s exactly it, that’s what’s photogenic!’ I like films by Antonioni and Godard, that kind of thing. That’s the way I got into film. As a teenager I went to crappy Hollywood films with my friends, and then I found out about this Antonioni retrospective. I went there for reasons that had nothing to do with aesthetics, but started watching them; they were amazing pictures, amazing images. I went to see other sixties Italian stuff, sixties French stuff, and silent films, and it grew from there. Most of my film criticism I did was while I was in graduate school in California, to the utter dismay of my advisors.

MW: What made you decide to pursue a career in academia as opposed to being a film critic?

BN: I think I went into film criticism because I wanted to figure out what makes one film better than another, what makes one image blow my mind and the other not very interesting. It was good to go to film festivals because I saw a lot of great films that would have been difficult to see otherwise, but it didn’t really get me closer to understanding what the difference was. I guess that’s the reason why I went into aesthetics, to understand how our mind works differently when we look at an amazing film and when we look at a really crappy film.

SM: Do you still do film criticism?

BN: Maybe I'll get back to it eventually. It was a good life, being on the 'festival circuit', as they say: fancy hotels and restaurants and meeting famous directors, actors, actresses. But it was also interesting from a philosophical point of view. Being on a jury of three or five or however many people—all critics, but clearly not 'ideal critics'—and having to decide on the best film is an odd process from an aesthetics angle. A lot has been written about aesthetic agreement and disagreement, and it was good to experience that in real-life scenarios, to see how different people can have completely different aesthetic judgements. One thing I noticed more and more is that if two people grew up liking certain kinds of films, then it's more likely that in a selection of contemporary films at a festival, they're going to like the same films. It was interesting to see how agreement and disagreement about taste actually works, when we had to make a decision by midnight, and to figure out how to settle aesthetic disagreements.

Most aestheticians are realists when it comes to aesthetic judgements. But my jury work at film festivals made me a little suspicious of that. In many ways I think what's important is previous exposure to other artworks. As I said, if there are two critics who were exposed to very similar films during their formative years then they're going to like the same kind of films. If they are exposed to very different films, they will probably like very different films. I'm not ready to come out of the closet as a full-fledged anti-realist and say that beauty is all in the eye of the beholder, but at least it seems like there are ways of explaining aesthetic disagreements in an anti-realist way if you appeal to previous personal history or exposure to certain kinds of artworks.

MW: Does this relate to 'mere exposure effect'?

BN: I think a lot of people are extremely suspicious of that concept, so I try to avoid it. James Cutting did some interesting studies on this.²

²Cutting 2003.

He showed pictures of artworks to students during lectures in a completely value-neutral way; he just showed the slides without any comment. At the end of the semester he made the students rate the pictures that he had previously shown, and there was a correlation between how many times a picture was shown in class and how much the students liked it. That was supposed to show that mere exposure to an artwork makes it more probable that people will make a positive aesthetic assessment of that work. Cutting says that certain works are in the canon because the canon is self-reinforcing: because we encounter works that are in the canon more often, we're going to evaluate them more positively than works outside of the canon. Cutting is really flirting with some kind of anti-realist conclusion here—that there is no fact of the matter about whether something is beautiful or not; all there is for aesthetic judgment is that we like things more the more we encounter them. This is something that Aaron Meskin and Matthew Kieran and others were not very happy about. They thought, well maybe that's because the artworks that Cutting showed were good artworks, maybe it wouldn't work for bad artworks.³

One methodological problem I see in both the Cutting experiments and the Meskin et al. experiment is that they were only looking at individual artworks. Mere exposure to one token object will influence the aesthetic assessment of that particular token object, but that's not enough for aesthetic anti-realism. I think what would be more interesting would be to talk about objects of a certain type rather than single token objects. So if you presented seventeen early Impressionist paintings, and found that an eighteenth, unseen early Impressionist painting also elicited a more positive aesthetic assessment, that may be enough to establish some kind of anti-realism, or to help explain aesthetic disagreement in an anti-realist way. The other thing is that our exposure to works of art is very rarely 'mere'; most of the time it's very value-laden. Way more work needs to be done.

SM: This is sort of a miscellaneous question, but one that people will be interested in. Seeing as you were one of the last students of Richard

³Meskin et al. 2013.

Wollheim, is there anything you'd like to say about what it was like to work with him, or about his continuing influence on your work?

BN: I know that he was not universally liked, but frankly that bewilders me. I guess I met him during a tough period of his life, but he did not seem arrogant or anything like what some of the older aestheticians tend to say about him. He became a really good friend, besides being my teacher. We spent a lot of time sitting on the terrace of Café Roma, in Berkeley, sipping wine and talking about everything: art, music, literature, philosophy, love-life stuff, everything. I think that in many ways what I'm doing in aesthetics is a continuation of his project. Sometimes it shocks me that in some ways I'm really a disciple of Wollheim's, because he was the least likely person to have disciples. But I have to say that on some topics I had no idea what he was talking about. He was into Melanie Klein, and this whole psychoanalysis stuff is completely alien to me. But I think what you are really asking me to tell you is how I think I'm continuing his heritage. Should I talk about that?

SM/MW: Sure

BN: I think he took the whole idea of perception very seriously in the domain of aesthetics. He was probably the first one, in this tradition, who really saw that questions about aesthetics have a lot to do with perception, and obviously I'm trying to continue that. And I think he was basically right about twofoldness. Although that's one place where I think I probably should have detached myself more from his rhetoric in my publications on picture perception. But I really think that he was right. He was right both about picture perception and the aesthetic appreciation of pictures, but it was not very helpful that he didn't make a clear distinction between these two questions.

What he said was that twofoldness is necessary for pictorial seeing. There were really two things that he meant by this: there are two problems and two concepts of twofoldness that he used, completely interchangeably. So one problem he wanted to understand is what it

is to see something in a picture. Most of the time when we see things in a picture there's nothing aesthetic about it, right? When I'm watching a sitcom or when I'm watching a commercial on television or when I walk in the street and I see posters, I'm very unlikely to have an aesthetic appreciation of these pictures. So there's these two very different questions, one of them is picture perception, which has nothing to do with the domain of aesthetic appreciation at all, it's really a philosophy of perception question: what happens when you see something in a picture, regardless of anything aesthetic. The other question is what happens when you're aesthetically appreciating a picture. Wollheim slid back and forth between these two questions. I think Gombrich was doing the same thing. One may wonder why that was. Were they just so elitist that they could only see things aesthetically? [laughs] They admire the slightly asymmetric triangular compositions of *Friends* or something? It's very unlikely.

When Wollheim discussed twofoldness, which is the idea that you simultaneously see the picture surface and the three dimensional object, he sometimes clearly used it as a necessary feature for picture perception, and he sometimes clearly used it as a necessary feature for the aesthetic appreciation of pictures.⁴ How is that possible? I think that, if you want to be charitable—and I guess I want to be charitable—then what we could say is that he really used two different concepts of twofoldness. One concept of twofoldness, the one that's necessary for picture perception, has nothing to do with awareness. It just has to do with perceptions. You *perceive*, consciously or unconsciously, both the picture surface and the depicted object. For the appreciation of pictures, you have to somehow simultaneously be *aware* of them, to have a conscious perception of both. When you're looking at a picture, most of the time you're not at all attending to the surface, you're only attending to the depicted scene. When you're watching a sitcom you're not attending to the surface properties, you're only attending to Ross and Rachel . . . or Joey [laughs]

MW: . . . or Chandler [laughs]

⁴e.g. Wollheim 1987.

BN: . . . or Chandler [laughs]. But when you're aesthetically appreciating a picture, you attend both to the picture's surface and to the depicted object, and to the interrelation between the two. Having said that I have a new idea that it's not actually twofoldness but threefoldness.

SM: Could you say more about threefoldness?

BN: The idea is that you're actually aware of three things—that three things show up in your experience. Not just the picture surface and the depicted object, but the picture surface, the object that's visually encoded in the picture surface, and the depicted object. So if you're looking at a caricature of Mick Jagger, then the picture surface is just the picture surface, the three dimensional object that's visually encoded in the picture is, you know, a three dimensional dude with very . . .

MW: . . . big lips? [laughs]

BN: . . . big lips, exactly [laughs]. And then the depicted person is Mick Jagger himself. So there are these three things. Obviously, the second, the three dimensional person that's visually encoded in the picture is different from the actual depicted object, because one of them has larger lips than the other. There's these three things that you're aware of, but they are all different. And you can attend to any one of these three. And also to the various relations between them. To the relation between the first and the second if you're interested in depictive techniques. Or to the relation between the second and the third if you're interested in how naturalistic the picture is, or how good a caricature it is.

MW: And do we imagine the real Mick Jagger?

BN: There's two ways of going about it. You could say that's somehow part of the perceptual phenomenology. I don't want to endorse that. I think it's possible that you have some kind of visual imagery of him:

some kind of representation of the real Mick Jagger influences your experience of the picture. So you see this picture of a grossly thick-lipped person, and suddenly you realise it's a caricature of Mick Jagger. You're going to see it differently; there's a phenomenal change. It's going to be relevant in your perceptual phenomenology, but the representation of Mick Jagger himself doesn't have to be a perceptual one: it's some kind of mental, visual imagery.

2 Perception

MW: You've recently been working on two books, one of which was published last year, on philosophy of perception, and another, which is forthcoming, in which you use philosophy of perception as a means of approaching aesthetics. Let's start with the recently published book *Between Perception and Action*.⁵ Could you say something about what got you started on this project?

BN: It was very long ago when I started working on this. The general idea is that many of our perceptual states are really geared towards action, and you can't fully characterise these perceptual states without talking about action. In some ways, this topic has to do with my work in aesthetics, although the book has very little aesthetics in it.

One intuition about aesthetic experience, one that's very Kantian, is that it's free from pragmatic or practical outlooks, free from seeing something as a means. I think that a version of that is right, that aesthetic experience is disinterested in some sense. In order to understand what's missing from those experiences, I wanted to understand what's there normally. When you're running to catch a bus, or looking for your umbrella, you're really parsing the visual scene in terms of two properties only: is there an umbrella, is there not an umbrella? All that you perceive is geared towards your action. I wanted to understand what's going on there in order to understand what's going on in our aesthetic experience when that kind of stuff is missing.

⁵Nanay 2013.

Having said that, I think action-oriented experiences very important for understanding some important aesthetic phenomena, such as character engagement or identification. What goes on when you go to the theatre and you identify with Hamlet, or you go to the cinema and you identify with James Bond is something that I call vicarious perception. What you do is see certain things around James Bond as affording an action to James Bond. Very often we see things as being relevant to us, emotionally relevant, or relevant for our actions. But we also often see things as relevant, emotionally or in terms of action, to someone else. If I see you spilling some coffee on yourself then I tend to see that as affording an action to you, or as being relevant to your actions, or as being emotionally relevant. That is what I call vicarious perception. I think it's really important for our engagement with artworks, not just for identification, but also for our engagement with narratives.

MW: You talked about the way perception can be emotionally charged. Do you think this can help explain our emotional engagement with fiction?

BN: I think to see something as emotionally relevant to another person is extremely important for our engagement with fiction. If I see a rat running around my feet then I'm somehow going to see it or experience it as disgusting. That's an emotionally charged experience, but it's a self-centred emotionally charged experience; I attribute self-centred emotionally charged properties to the rat. If I see a rat sniffing around your feet, then I'm going to attribute other-centred emotionally charged properties to the rat; I'm going to see it as disgusting for you, not for me. I think that attributing these other-centred emotional properties clearly works very strongly in our engagement with artworks. I haven't really worked out the details of it, but that may be a good way of getting into the whole paradox of fiction stuff.

MW: If I see a rat as being disgusting to you, does that mean I also feel disgust?

BN: No it doesn't have to. I may love rats but know you find them disgusting. And vice versa: if I engage with a fictional character who loves rats, say, Charlie from *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, even if I have a very different reaction to rats, I see rats as being emotionally relevant in a very different way for him than they would be for me.

MW: I'm trying to see how it would be useful for approaching the paradox of fiction.

BN: [groans] You want me to solve the paradox of fiction?

SM: [laughs] Right now . . .

MW: [laughs] 5 minutes . . .

BN: [laughs]

MW: . . . or at least indicate how it might be useful.

BN: In the paradox of fiction literature, people make a distinction between real fear and imagined fear or quasi-fear. I think that's a simplified way of thinking about emotions because it ignores the distinction between self-centred and other-centred emotions. I make a distinction between self-centred fear and vicarious fear. So self-centred fear is when the lion is running towards me. Other-centred fear is when the lion is running towards you—that's vicarious fear. I want to say that our engagement with fictional characters is a version of vicarious fear. Every emotion has vicarious equivalents—pity would be the vicarious equivalent of sadness. What you feel in response to fiction is vicarious fear.

That would be an elegant way of solving the paradox: to say that although there's the same term in these three claims, they don't mean the same. So here's the paradox of fiction: you do feel genuine emotions towards fictional characters; you know that they don't exist; and it's irrational to feel emotions towards non-existent things. I want to

say that it is vicarious fear, vicarious emotion, in the first of these three claims, so you do feel emotions towards fictional characters, those are vicarious emotions, and in the third claim it's actually self-centred fear, self-centred emotion. It's irrational to feel self-centred emotions towards things that don't exist. It's not irrational to feel other-centred emotions towards things that don't exist. So there's no paradox really because what is meant by emotion in the first claim—vicarious emotion—is different from what is meant by emotion in the third—self-centred emotion.

3 Aesthetics

SM: You recently gave the keynote talk at the Kent Postgraduate Conference in Aesthetics, entitled 'Aesthetics as Philosophy of Perception,' in which you presented material from your forthcoming book of the same name.⁶ You've already talked about your approach in *Between Perception and Action* but before talking about the current book, could you explain a little more about what led you to approach aesthetics using philosophy of perception?

BN: The book is based on a really simple idea: a lot of questions in aesthetics seem to be about perception, so I use philosophy of perception as an apparatus for addressing questions in aesthetics. Now, I should say something so that I don't get misunderstood. I'm not saying that all aesthetic experiences are perceptual experiences, or that all aesthetic properties are perceptual properties. I also make a sharp distinction between aesthetics and philosophy of art: it would be crazy to argue that philosophy of art would benefit very much from a philosophy of perception approach. But I think it's not at all crazy to think that aesthetics would.

The book is focused almost entirely on the role of attention, which I take to be very much a part of philosophy of perception. It's a hot topic in philosophy of perception right now, and attention is super important for aesthetics. If you're paying attention to one property

⁶Nanay forthcoming.

of an artwork you're going to have a completely different experience than if you're paying attention to another property. If you're attending to the bass in a piece of music then it's going to be a very different experience than if you're listening to some other instrument. There's an abstract painting by Paul Klee with lots of patches of colour. It is called *Green X Above Left* and I saw it recently at Tate Modern. Once you read the title it is impossible not to attend to that 'X'. It changes the entire experience. Depending on what you're attending to, your experience will be very different. Because of that, it's actually a really important thing to figure out what properties of an artwork we should attend to and what properties we should ignore. That could really change or enhance your experience of the artwork.

I think attention is greatly underexplored in aesthetics; it should be extremely important and this book aims to readdress that. The main thread is about distributed attention: a way of attending to an object whereby you are attending to a wide variety of its properties. I think this way of attending is crucial for understanding a number of important debates in aesthetics—*aesthetic experience, formalism, uniqueness, and so on.*

MW: Could you say a bit about what you understand attention to be—does it have to be conscious?

BN: No. In my philosophy of perception work I'm a big proponent of unconscious attention. I think attention can be unconscious but I think in aesthetics that's less important.

I think for aesthetics purposes we can go along with an everyday concept of attention, or *attending*. Attending is something you do. Sometimes you don't do it voluntarily because something grabs your attention. Maybe there are cases where unconscious attention is relevant for aesthetics. Here's one possible example. There are experiments about how your eyes move when you watch a film. Eye movement is not the same as attention; you can move your eyes without changing your attention and you can shift your attention without moving your eyes. If you move your eyes while shifting your attention

then that's an overt shift of attention. If you are keeping your eyes fixated but you shift your attention—so, I am looking at you [Mark] but am shifting my attention to you [Shelby]—you can do that. That's a covert shift in attention. Eye movement is not the same thing as attention but very often eye movement is indicative of attention—at least indicative of overt attention.

So there are these studies about how your eyes move when you watch a film; there are certain systematic patterns. One thing that has been found is that in Hitchcock films, everyone's eye movement is always in the very same spot. Hitchcock very clearly directs your attention to the same spot. In *my* kind of films, it's definitely not going to be like that [laughs]. So, in Antonioni films when you have a long, half a minute take with pretty compositions and no one is really visible—you know, 'dead tree bad weather' films—then your eye movements are going to be all over the place. It's an interesting distinction and I think *that* will be one place where unconscious attention can be important or interesting. In the debates that I want to address in the book it's mainly conscious attention that plays the important role.

SM: You acknowledge in the introduction to your book⁷ that you take a liberal view on what counts as philosophy of perception, including questions about attention, sensory imagination, and emotion, and that those who find this use of the concept of perception too inclusive can read the title of the book *Aesthetics as Philosophy of Mind* instead. Why didn't you choose that title?

BN: Well, I do think these questions *belong* to philosophy of perception. If you look at what kind of papers and books are published under the heading of philosophy of perception there are going to be all these things. The role of attention in perception, or what attention does, or what attention is, the relation between mental imagery and perception, what role emotions play in our perception—those are all philosophy of perception questions. In philosophy of mind, there are a lot of things that are just utterly useless for aesthetics. So, ques-

⁷Available on <http://webho1.ua.ac.be/bence.nanay/>

tions about physicalism, or mind body identity—who cares? I think it's more specifically philosophy of perception that we can use for aesthetics.

MW: In your talk at Kent you mentioned that there might be a potential marketing benefit in using philosophy of perception to help bring aesthetics in from the cold of the philosophical fringes. Do you see that as something that actually might work?

BN: No. [everyone laughs]

SM: We're doomed?

BN: I think aesthetics is a little fringy, don't you?

SM: Maybe we're too isolated and on the fringe to tell.

BN: Yeah, so I think most philosophers don't believe that the questions aesthetics asks or answers are really important philosophical questions.

MW: It's seen as a bit lightweight, perhaps.

BN: Yeah, and I don't like that. I think aesthetics problems are genuinely important and as important as whether properties are tropes or universals, or the KK Principles of knowledge. I think it will start to sink in when you're out in the job market or trying to publish in non-aesthetics journals. It's very difficult to publish aesthetics in non-aesthetics journals. Some people make a point of doing this. Some aestheticians are very good at it. They have this ideology of how aestheticians should publish in non-aesthetics journals precisely to integrate aesthetics back into philosophy. I fully agree with that. I think we should try to reintegrate aesthetics into philosophy and make non-aestheticians see that aesthetics problems are genuinely important and interesting problems.

I'm trying to write this book in a way that will be accessible both for philosophers of perception who have nothing to do with aesthetics and for aestheticians who have nothing to do with philosophy of perception. And it's not easy. It's a little complicated in terms of what I can assume from the reader, but that could be a good thing for an aesthetician to do—to try to genuinely convince non-aesthetician philosophers that these are as important as, I don't know, the three versus four-dimensionalism debate. And maybe that's also a way of creating some hype. Let's face it, philosophy is very much fashion-driven. Some branches of philosophy are more successful than others in setting the trend. Aesthetics has been incredibly unsuccessful so I think we should try and change that. If we do consider some aesthetics problems as things that have a lot to do with philosophy of perception, then the hope is that even non-aestheticians should really take it seriously. I am really happy that there are a lot of philosophers of perception who are acquiring a side interests in aesthetics.

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE: Bence Nanay is Professor of Philosophy and BOF Research Professor at the University of Antwerp, and Senior Research Associate at the University of Cambridge. He has published widely on topics in philosophy of mind, philosophy of biology, and aesthetics. He edited *Perceiving the World: New Essays on Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), and is the author of *Between Perception and Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and *Aesthetics as Philosophy of Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWERS: Mark Windsor and Shelby Moser are both PhD candidates in History and Philosophy of Art at the University of Kent.

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SEEING-IN AS THREE-FOLD EXPERIENCE

Regina-Nino Kurg

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It is generally agreed that Edmund Husserl's theory of depiction describes a three-fold experience of seeing something in pictures, whereas Richard Wollheim's theory is a two-fold experience of seeing-in. The aim of this article is to show that Wollheim's theory can be interpreted as a three-fold experience of seeing-in. I will first give an overview of Wollheim and Husserl's theories of seeing-in, and will then show how the concept of figuration in Wollheim's theory is analogous to the concept of the image subject as the depicted object in Husserl's theory. I will claim that our experience of non-figurative pictures is a two-fold seeing-in, while that of figurative pictures is a three-fold seeing-in.

1

Richard Wollheim calls seeing-in a special kind of experience that is marked by a duality called two-foldness: We see

1. the marked surface, and
2. something in the surface.¹

In other words, seeing-in permits simultaneous attention to the medium and to the object.² To understand the difference between

¹Wollheim 1998, p. 21.

²Wollheim 1980, p. 212–213.

ordinary visual experience and pictorial experience, Wollheim introduces the terms *configuration* and *representation*. A picture that depicts something is both a two-dimensional configuration of lines and strokes on the picture's surface, as well as a three-dimensional representation. The configuration is something physical and definitely visible. However, it is wrong to compare our visual experience of an object with that of a picture's configuration: "it is only when we think of our drawing as a flat configuration that we can talk of the unalike-ness or dissimilarity of the thing we draw and the thing we see."³ Seeing the configuration means to attend to what might be called the *physical dimension* of a picture, which must be differentiated from its *pictorial dimension*. For example, when black paint is put on a white canvas, our seeing of the paint on the canvas is the physical dimension, and our seeing how the black is on the white is the pictorial dimension.⁴ The latter involves awareness of depth, which is also the minimal requirement for representation.

Edmund Husserl describes the experience of seeing something in a picture in his lecture course 'Phantasy and Image Consciousness,' of 1904/5. According to Husserl, depictive or image consciousness involves three objects:

1. the physical image [*das physische Bild*];
2. the image object [*Bildobjekt*];
3. the image subject [*Bildsujet*].⁵

Husserl gives the example of a black and white photograph representing a child. In this case, the image as a physical thing is the imprinted paper, which is a real object taken as such in perception. The physical thing can be torn or warped, and even destroyed. The image object or representing/depicting object, on the other hand, "has never existed and never will exist."⁶ It is a photographic image of a child that deviates from the real child in many respects. The real child, that is, the

³Wollheim 1974, p. 22.

⁴Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁵Husserl 2005, p. 21.

⁶Ibid., p. 21.

image subject, has red cheeks and blond hair, for example, but the photographic image of the child has none of these colours. It displays photographic colours and deviates from the real child in size.

2

Until now, minimal attention has been paid to the similarities and differences between Husserl and Wollheim's theories of seeing-in. But from the few texts that have been published, a general view emerges, which sees Husserl's theory as providing two levels of seeing-in: we see the image object in the physical image, and the image subject in the image object; whereas Wollheim's theory deals only with the first level of seeing-in. Göran Sonesson, for instance, thinks that Husserl's explanations are more precise only in explaining the seeing-in of the image subject in the image object, but, in his view, the question of how to see the image object in the physical image is more important, and this is the question with which Wollheim is concerned.⁷ In like manner, John Brough thinks that there are two senses of seeing-in, and this is why we should speak of three-foldness instead of two-foldness in image consciousness. That is, 1) we are aware of the surface of the physical support; 2) we see something in it (that gives us the image); and 3) we see the subject in the image.⁸ Brough adds:

Seeing-in is more complicated than might initially appear. Husserl's remarks about imaging suggest that it is possible to distinguish two levels of seeing-in (Husserl 2005, pp. 21; 30). Wollheim does not seem to make this distinction, instead focusing exclusively on what I take to be the first of the two levels. In this first kind of seeing-in I see something in the image's physical support [. . .]. The second level of seeing-in involves seeing something in the image rather than in its physical substratum. Here the subject of the image comes into play: I see the subject in the image.⁹

⁷Sonesson 1989, p. 272.

⁸Brough 2012, p. 552.

⁹Ibid., p. 551.

Brough thinks that the subject we see in a picture of Cartier-Bresson's photograph, for instance, is Simone de Beauvoir. This means that the subject is a specific person and not, as we might want to claim, a small grey figure of a woman. In my view, the fact that the image subject is a specific person or a thing plays an important role in understanding the three-foldness of the seeing-in experience. It becomes evident when we compare Husserl's earlier texts from 1904/5, in which he defends the three-fold theory of image consciousness with his later texts from 1918, in which he starts to doubt whether image consciousness must always occur in the mode of depiction and claims that, in some cases, the subject as a depicted object is not involved in image consciousness. He thinks that in a theatrical performance an actor (in most cases) creates an *image of* [*Bild von*] a character in the play or some tragic event but not a *depiction of* [*Abbild von*] the character or the tragic event. In this sense, the image subject is absent.¹⁰ To quote Husserl:

The actor's presentation is not a presentation in the sense in which we say of an image object that an image subject is presented in it. Neither the actor nor the image that is his performance for us is an image object in which another object, an actual or even fictive image subject, is depicted.¹¹

In Brough's view, we have the same kind of experience when we look at nonfigurative art: the images do not represent any particular subject or a subject of a particular kind.¹² Accordingly, abstract painting is a two-fold image consciousness.¹³

¹⁰In Brough's view, this does not mean that theatrical presentations do not have subjects in a more general sense. A theatre play is definitely about something, although not depicting any particular person or place or event (Brough 1997, p. 44).

¹¹Husserl 2005, p. 616.

¹²Brough 1997, p. 45.

¹³Ibid., p. 30.

3

Now, if we agree with Brough that leaving out the image subject as *depicted object* makes Husserl's theory of image consciousness a two-fold experience of seeing-in, then Wollheim's distinction between the representational content and the figurative content (that is more than just representational content) could be taken as a way of adding a third *fold* to the seeing-in experience. According to Wollheim, figuration is a specific form of representation: if we see in a marked surface things that are three-dimensionally related, then we have representation; if we can correctly identify those things, we have figuration.¹⁴ To quote Wollheim:

The idea of representational content is much broader than that of figurative content. The representational content of a painting derives from what can be seen in it. The figurative content derives from what can be seen in it *and* can be brought under non-abstract concepts, such as table, map, window, woman.¹⁵

Accordingly, abstract paintings have representational content but no figurative content. Abstract paintings are representations since the minimal requirement of representation is that we experience *depth* or "that we see in the marked surface things three-dimensionally related."¹⁶ Very few abstract paintings lack representational content, like Barnett Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*.¹⁷ Thus, Hans Hofmann's *Cathedral* has representational content but Vermeer's *Officer and Laughing Girl* has representational and figurative content.¹⁸

¹⁴Wollheim 1998, p. 21.

¹⁵Wollheim 2001, p. 131.

¹⁶Wollheim 1998, p. 21.

¹⁷Wollheim 2001, p. 131. It has been pointed out that the requirement of depth is not always fulfilled even in the cases of figurative pictures. For example, the stick figure drawing has no background. Paolo Spinicci shows, however, that the requirement of apparent depth is nevertheless fulfilled, since the figurative content constitutes a figurative space of its own (Spinicci 2012, p. 99).

¹⁸Wollheim 2001, p. 131.

As an aside, we may observe that Wollheim also thinks that representations can be divided according to the particular or kind of object they represent. That is, representation can either be of a particular object or event, or it can be of an object or event that are merely of some particular kind. For instance, a painting can represent a particular person, say Madame Moitessier in Ingre's painting of the same name, or it can represent *a* woman, like in Manet's *La Prune*.¹⁹ Hence, it is interesting to ask whether the particularity of the object depicted adds a further, fourth level or *fold* to the experience of seeing-in though. This is not a line we will pursue here.

At this point, I only want to emphasise that Wollheim's view implies two different kinds of experience: seeing non-figurative and figurative pictures, where the first can be explained as two-fold and the second as three-fold seeing-in. In the case of the non-figurative picture we experience the configuration of lines and strokes on the picture's surface and the representation. In the case of the figurative picture, we also see figuration. Thus, the three *folds* of the seeing-in of a figurative picture are: 1) configuration, 2) representation, and 3) figuration.

4

Now, one could argue that the "missing" third fold in Wollheim's theory of seeing-in is another experience that *connects* the experience of seeing the picture and that of seeing something or someone in the picture. This criticism is presented by Flint Schier:

So what we really require is (as it were) a three-fold experience: an experience as of seeing the canvas, an experience as of seeing you, and an experience as of there being certain features of the canvas which make it 'appropriate' that I should be seeing you as having certain features.²⁰

Schier thinks that Wollheim's theory of seeing-in does not adequately describe pictorial experience. He believes that Wollheim's

¹⁹Wollheim 1998, pp. 67-68.

²⁰Schier 1986, p. 201.

double-experience model of the seeing-in only gives us two simultaneous experiences: an experience *as* of seeing the picture canvas (seeing S) and an experience *as* of seeing what is depicted on it (seeing O). However, in Schier's view, this does not explain how the experience of S is related to the experience of O, for the simple coincidence of the two experiences "cannot amount necessarily to an experience *as* of their being related in a certain way."²¹ In other words, what is missing is the picture-relation: "The brute fact of a double experience of S and of O [. . .] does not add up to seeing S as a picture of O."²²

In my view, there are at least two reasons to discredit Schier's account of Wollheim's theory. First, Schier does not make a proper distinction between seeing-as and seeing-in theories. Although he refers to the second edition of *Art and its Objects*, in which Wollheim makes the distinction, he is willing to admit that he does not see any real change in Wollheim's account, instead claiming that all Wollheim does in the second edition is to make the account of seeing-as more nuanced.²³ Given this, it becomes clearer why Schier tries to find the connection between an experience *as* of seeing the canvas and an experience *as* of seeing the (depicted) object. But in Wollheim's words, seeing-in is marked by the duality of simply seeing the marked surface and seeing something in the surface.²⁴

Second, for Schier the main question seems to be how these separate (although simultaneous) experiences of seeing-in can be united into one pictorial experience. He does not take the seeing-in experience to be one single experience with different aspects. But this is not in accordance with Wollheim's theory, especially not with his later specifications about the two-foldness thesis. In the text "On Pictorial Representation," Wollheim writes that he originally identified *two-foldness* with "two simultaneous perceptions: one of the pictorial surface, the other of what it represents," and says that he recently reconceived the theory, now understanding it in terms of a *single experience*

²¹Schier 1986, p. 204.

²²Ibid., p. 201.

²³Ibid., p. 19. Moreover, Schier thinks that seeing-as is a stronger notion than seeing-in and "a better basis for an analysis of pictorial experience" (ibid., pp. 203-204).

²⁴Wollheim 1998, p. 21.

with two aspects, which he calls, in this text, the configurational and the recognitional.²⁵

In my view, there is nothing “missing” in Wollheim’s theory of seeing-in, and the three-foldness thesis emerges naturally from his theory. It is coherent with Wollheim’s theory to claim that the three *folds* of the single experience of seeing-in are configuration, representation, and figuration.

5

In this paper I have not tried to claim that Wollheim’s theory is identical to Husserl’s theory of seeing-in. Their theories differentiate in many respects. For example, in Wollheim’s view representation requires the awareness of depth but, as Brough has shown, seeing depth is not a necessary condition for having an image, according to Husserl.²⁶ In addition, Wollheim would not say that we see a photographic image of a child in miniature in a black and white photograph. Instead, he would say that we see the real child. I have tried to show that there is a similarity between Wollheim and Husserl’s theory in the sense in which they differentiate the experience of figurative and non-figurative pictures. Our experience of seeing-in a picture depends upon whether the picture has the figurative content: only in the case of figurative picture is seeing-in a three-fold experience.

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²⁵Wollheim 2001, p. 221. It is another question, of course, whether Schier should be blamed for misunderstanding Wollheim’s theory since the article ‘On Pictorial Representation’ (1998) was published many years after Schier’s book *Deeper into Pictures* (1986).

²⁶Brough 1996, pp. 49-50.

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BOOK REVIEW

Showing, Sensing, and Seeming: Distinctively Sensory Representations and their Contents, by Dominic Gregory

Oxford University Press, 2013. xvi + 437 pp. £32.00 cloth, £14.99 paper.

Reviewed by Giulia Martina

Consider a photograph of an apple, Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples and a Pot of Primroses*, your memory of a green apple with pink veins that you once saw, the apple you are prompted to imagine right now. Moving to other sensory modalities, we could also add the fresh apple smell you now recall, the mental image of the smooth texture of the apple's skin, which you would be able to sense if that fruit were in your hands, and an audio recording of the crunchy sound of an apple being bitten into.

Intuitively, all such pictures, mental images, memories, and records have something in common. On the one hand, they all are about either a particular apple or an object that is a fruit of a certain kind: this captures the intentionality of such representations. On the other hand, they all distinguish themselves from, say, linguistic representations, thoughts, and symbolic representations because of their special relationship with our sensory capacities and sensory mental states. They are, in Dominic Gregory's terms, *distinctively sensory representations* (DSRs). Gregory's book tries to substantiate these intuitions with a general theory of DSRs, according to which their essential property—that which marks them out as a unified class—is the special content they have.



Figure 1: Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Apples and a Pot of Primroses*, ca. 1890, oil on canvas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

As Gregory notes in Chapter 1, DSRs apparently have some common properties that constitute the *explananda* of the theory developed in Chapter 3. First, DSRs are *perspectival*, for they always show things as looking certain ways from a certain point of view. The nature of perspectives is later explored in Chapter 2, where Gregory argues for their objectivity. Perspectives need not be characterized by any mental or subjective property, for they are points in geometrical space which can well be empty, i.e., without any subject or sensation being there instantiated. That is, they might simply specify a certain layout of objects and properties in the world around a certain point. Nevertheless, DSRs can either be *objective* or *subjective*. Just as one who seems to see an apple does not necessarily seem to see

their subjective episode of seeing, a visualization of an apple does not need self-referential content that involves one's imagined seeing of the apple.¹ Yet while many DSRs are objective in this sense, others are modally different, for they represent sensations.² Furthermore, DSRs are only concerned with *sensibilia*, that is, objects and properties that can apparently be sensed. Moreover, their contents are rich and fine-grained; in particular, they are *more specific* than conceptual contents of propositional attitudes.³

Chapter 3 is at the core of the book. The main thesis is captured by two central points:

1. Distinctively sensory showing comes from subjective informativeness;
2. Scene-showing corresponds to seeming.

1. Distinctively sensory contents “single out” the “ways for things to stand sensorily,” which Gregory identifies with types of sensations, in *a subjectively informative way*, i.e., in terms of what it is like to have sensations of those types.⁴

In virtue of such a relation between the contents of DSRs and the phenomenology of the perceptual experiences they individuate, DSRs perform the sensory showing that distinguishes them from other kinds of representations. For example, if I grasp the content of Cézanne's painting I thereby appreciate how it visually shows things as standing, and I identify a way things look in terms of the phenomenology of the

¹Gregory 2013, p. 21. Where not otherwise specified, all references are to the book reviewed here.

²I cannot deal here with the distinction between objective and subjective DSRs, which is an admittedly thorny issue—and perhaps less intuitive than Gregory seems to think. The book discusses this issue at length, engaging with the relevant philosophical arguments against the author's view.

³Although this suggests that DSRs' contents are, instead, non-conceptual, Gregory does not want to commit himself to this position. The relation between DSRs and concepts is reconsidered in Chapter 4, where the author accepts the plausible line that, if perceptual experiences were constrained by the subject's conceptual resources, DSRs would have a conceptual content; but he also embraces the more controversial thesis that, if perceptual experiences have non-conceptual content, the content of DSRs would be analogously non-conceptual. Cf. Gregory 2013, p. 92.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 48.

visual experience in which things look that way. A linguistic description of a table holding some apples and a pot of flowers does not by itself provide me with the same capacities.

2. A DSR represents (shows) an object *O* with the property *P* iff the way the representation shows things as standing sensorily (the sensation-type *S*) is such that anyone who enjoys an *S* sensation seems to sensorily encounter an *O* which is *P*.⁵

The second principle specifies how the modality-specific showing unique to DSRs is different from other kinds of representing in terms of the range of objects and properties it is limited to capturing. The further specification that DSRs can show things as standing sensorily in certain ways, either from perspectives or in the course of sensations, is meant to allow for the objective/subjective distinction.

The theory of DSRs just sketched is then applied to well-known philosophical problems. Chapter 5 is devoted to the imagery debate, i.e., the discussion started by Kosslyn and Pylyshyn about the nature of sensory mental images, such as those involved in visualization. Gregory offers a useful introduction to the most important arguments and shows their relation to the empirical evidence. Against the background of his theory of DSRs, it seems discussion should now focus on the content of mental images rather than their format (pictorial or otherwise), in order to better understand the similarities and differences between mental imagery and perceptual experience. This remains an open line for future research.

Chapter 6 focuses on pictures and theories of distinctively visual picturing. Gregory inclines towards experienced-resemblance theories of depiction. Given a picture of an apple, I identify the type of perceptual experiences that occurs when an apple looks a certain way—presumably in virtue of my grasping the DSR's content—and thereby experience a resemblance between that type's phenomenology and the phenomenology I am presently enjoying, because the identification is based on the way the picture itself (i.e. the material object which is the depictive vehicle) looks to me.⁶ Such basic sensory grasp-

⁵See Gregory 2013, p. 52.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

ing grounds our conceptual recognition of the picture's content. Gregory's intent is to explain distinctively visual pictures on the basis of their content, avoiding reference to our pictorial experiences of them as far as possible. However, pictures show things as looking a distinctive way because their contents allow us to identify phenomenologies of certain types of perceptual experiences. So one could doubt whether what distinctively visual pictures depict can be determined by the contents of such pictures without being dependent on our experiences of them.⁷ Gregory's theory of DSRs is applied in Chapter 7 to explain other pictorial properties, such as lifelikeness. Finally, Chapter 8 addresses distinctively sensory records such as photographs, audio recordings, and memories—in particular their epistemic status.

As a whole, the book purports to contribute to a number of lively philosophical and psychological debates, but it is guided first of all by a desire to provide a general theory of sensory representations. As such, I want to focus on the book's core theory, which I summarised above, to clarify some important points. As it is formulated in the book, Gregory's theory is open to different readings and would perhaps benefit from more precise and in-depth explanations.

Let me focus on objective DSRs and esteroceptive sensations or perceptual experiences, those that apparently put us in contact with the outside world.⁸ Gregory first states that the DSRs' contents "single out" "ways for things to stand sensorily." But what exactly do these two expressions mean?

Now, the author explicitly identifies the way that things look, smell, sound, or feel with different sensation-types. Even if it is not clear how types of sensation are individuated, here this is done in terms of the sensations' phenomenal character. One possible reading, thus, is that the content of a DSR singles out the phenomenal character of a possible perceptual experience. The question, then, is what this singling out consists in. Gregory writes about a "picking out" or "identification" in virtue of which distinctively sensory contents "involve" perceptual experiences when considered in terms of their phe-

⁷Cf. also Gregory 2010.

⁸In fact, Gregory's theory is more plausible with respect to these experiences.

nomenology.⁹ On a metaphysical interpretation, the singling out relation is an individuation: the DSR's content determines the individuation conditions of the phenomenal character of the related perceptual experience. If this is correct, then the author seems to be committed to a thesis according to which the content of a picture, mental image, or record is identical with, or at least is essentially dependent on, the phenomenal character of a possible sensation that is an instance of a certain sensation-type.

But let us suppose that, on a weaker interpretation, the singling out is an epistemic identification. Gregory would presumably endorse such an interpretation, for in his view the singling out is subjectively informative. In other words, the special feature of DSRs is that, once a subject grasps their content, she appreciates what it is like to undergo a sensation with a certain phenomenal character, and she is thereby able to epistemically identify sensations of that kind. To be sure, Gregory's remarks that DSRs' contents somehow "involve" perceptual experiences suggest that the epistemic relation is too weak. Yet even if the singling out is not meant to be a metaphysical relation between DSRs' contents and possible perceptual experiences, a thorough explanation is missing as to why the epistemic relation, with respect to the phenomenal character of those experiences, holds. How can the content of a picture tell me what it is like to enjoy a possible sensation? Or, focusing on the stronger reading, how can a content of a picture individuate, or be identical with, the phenomenology of a possible experience?

It seems that Gregory needs to say something more about the structure and nature of sensory mental states in order that the relation between such states and DSRs—on which his theory centres—does not remain inscrutable. More precisely, he should commit himself to a theory of the relation between the content of DSRs and the content of the perceptual experiences whose phenomenal character they individuate. Moreover, he also needs to endorse a thesis about the relation between the content of a perceptual experience and its phenomenology.

⁹See e.g. Gregory 2013, pp. 46-47.

The preliminary assumption is that perceptual experiences have an intentional content. This thesis is perhaps implicit in the book, since Gregory believes that sensations present things as being a certain way, and that they are accurate just in case the world really is how it appears to be, or how it is presented or shown to be.¹⁰ Such phenomenologically salient accuracy conditions are intentional contents of perceptual states.¹¹ Moreover, the book is at least compatible with a weak intentionalist thesis, according to which the phenomenology and the content of a perceptual state co-vary. A perceptual experience is of a particular type when things appear a certain way to its subject (say, *thus*), and the content of that experience captures the ways things would seem to be to any subject having an experience of that type, in terms of accuracy conditions any subject having an experience of that type sensorily appreciates (the content has the form: *things are thus*).

A commitment to the theses that perceptual experiences have an intentional content and that this content matches the experiences' sensory phenomenal character is fruitful for the book's overall argument. Above all, the content of perceptual experiences plays a key role in determining the contents of DSRs, which, we have seen, is their essential property. Pictures, visual mental images, and memories, for instance, have *distinctively sensory* contents—distinctively visual ones, in this case—in virtue of the fact that they individuate types of perceptual experiences in terms of their phenomenology. But such a phenomenology characterizes the way things appear to be, i.e. it is reflected in the perceptual intentional content of the experience. A subject grasping a DSR's content (say, the content of the photograph of a green apple) thereby grasps in a phenomenally conscious way a possible state of affairs (e. g. one when there is an apple with certain visible properties, such as the property of being green, apparently being in front of the subject, and so on). Such characterization of a possible layout of worldly objects and their perceivable properties, around an objective point of view, can be naturally identified with an expe-

¹⁰Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 28–31.

¹¹At least in the sense argued for by Siegel 2010.

rience's perceptual content—without necessarily committing us to a specific theory about the nature of this content.

In this respect, it is worth pointing to an alternative reading of Gregory's formula of "a way for things to stand sensorily," which contrasts the author's declared reading—i.e., a sensation-type. "A way for things to stand sensorily" is used in the book to mean the phenomenally-relevant intentional content of a perceptual experience, which also corresponds to a common use of the expression in the philosophy of mind.¹²

With such a framework in mind, Gregory's first slogan can be understood along the lines I propose. The relation between a DSRs' contents and the phenomenally salient contents of perceptual experiences promises to explain why DSRs are the special kind of representations they are. The crucial relation of individuation between a DSR and a perceptual experience can thus be explained as follows: a DSR singles out a sensation with a certain phenomenology in virtue of sharing at least a component of its own phenomenologically relevant *content* with the relevant sensation.

What is more, Gregory's second point also seems to go in this direction. Point 2, above, explains the distinctively sensory nature of content that pictures, memories, mental images, and records have, in terms of the kind of objects and properties they represent. Now, perceptual experiences themselves have precisely this kind of content: they *prima facie* seem to have the properties Gregory ascribes to DSRs and cites as *explananda* for his theory, and they seem to have them in virtue of their perceptual content. First, they are perspectival. The perspectivalness of a DSR, as Gregory acknowledges, mirrors the perspectivalness of the sensation in the sensory modality to which the DSR relates: a picture is perspectival in the same way that vision is. Since it is in virtue of its content that a DSR such as a picture is related to a certain type of perceptual experience, one may well think that the content of the perceptual experience in the relevant modality thus singled out is perspectival. Second, perceptual experiences are

¹²In fact, Gregory seems to accept that an experience's perceptual content is constituted by objects, perceivable properties, and a Fregean mode of presentation. Cf. Gregory 2013, pp. 30–31; 49.

only concerned with representing *sensibilia*—objects and properties that sensorily appear to be instantiated—almost by definition. Third, they have content that is more fine-grained than content specified in terms of concepts—such as that of propositional attitudes. Finally, the content of a perceptual experience in a certain sensory modality is phenomenologically relevant just in the same way the content of a DSR bound to that modality would be. In conclusion, perceptual experiences satisfy Gregory’s two points: they individuate contents—the way things appear to be—in a subjectively informative manner, and they perform a scene-showing such that they show an object *O* having the property *P* iff anyone enjoying those experiences seems to perceptually encounter an *O* which is *P*.

If this is correct, it could be objected that perceptual experiences themselves actually count as DSRs. It is true that this might be a threat to the book’s argument. If Gregory’s aim is to explain why DSRs form a unified, distinctive class and to trace this back to the relation between their contents and (the content of) perceptual experiences, then nothing explanatory is gained if perceptual experiences simply are DSRs. If my second interpretation of the book’s theory is correct, photographs, pictures, and mental images on the one hand, and perceptual experiences on the other, cannot differ substantially with respect to their content, for what explains the special relation between the former and the phenomenology of the latter is a common component of their distinctively sensory contents. However, we are not forced to conflate DSRs and perceptual experiences provided that one specifies some further properties that distinguish them, over and above the common kind of content. Sure enough, experiences, unlike pictures, mental images, and records, are *mental states*, so they can differ from DSRs because they have a phenomenal character, an intentional mode, or functional role, or they lack a representational vehicle such as the material that constitutes a picture or an audio recording.

Perhaps Gregory would have preferred to remain neutral on the issues I have raised here, but he needs to clarify some basic theses and argue for them in greater detail in order for the theory to be a good explanation of the intuitive, appealing idea we started with.

Gregory's book shows how fruitful it can be to approach well-known discussions—such as those involving depiction, mental imagery, and picture perception—from a wider perspective. Familiar problems can be seen under a new light once we recognize they are grounded in the common nature that representations share. Yet we see that the more these debates engage with different areas of research, such as philosophy of perception, cognitive science, philosophy of language, and metaphysics, the more philosophically interesting and profound they become. A theory of distinctively sensory representations thoroughly developed along such lines cannot be as neutral as its proponent may claim, but it is surely a precious and novel research project worth pursuing.

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BOOK REVIEW

Critique of Pure Music, by James O. Young

Oxford University Press, 2014. xi + 224 pp. £35.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Vítor Guerreiro

Ever since people have written about the idea that music has some sort of extra-musical content (expressive or representational) it has enjoyed wide acceptance. It was not until the publication, in 1854, of *On the Musically Beautiful*, by the Viennese musical critic Eduard Hanslick, that formalism arose as a serious alternative to this idea that extra-musical content partly explains music's value.¹ Formalism in music has perhaps been most eloquently stated in the words of one of its present-day defenders, Nick Zangwill, who tells us that:

Listening to music is an isolated and lonely encounter with another world, a disembodied world of beautiful sound, far from the world of human life. . . . To humanize music is to desecrate it. Music is inhuman, and awesome because of it, like stars in the night sky.²

James Young defends anti-formalism about music (and art) in works such as *Art and Knowledge*.³ Young's position can be characterized as the conjunction of the following two theses:

¹Hanslick 1986.

²Zangwill 2012, p. 389.

³Young 2001.

1. Music can be (and some music in fact is) about extra-musical reality, in particular human emotions.
2. Not all musical value is formal value, i.e., value that depends solely on formal properties of the music.

In *Art and Knowledge* Young proposes that “a work of art can be beautiful because it is a source of knowledge”.⁴ He defends the view that there are two fundamentally different kinds of representation—*semantic* and *illustrative*—and that the representation proper to the arts is the latter, rather than the former, even when taking into account the literary arts. The main difference between these two kinds of representation is that illustrative representations do not (in fact cannot) make *statements* about reality; neither do they (nor can they) present arguments, in the absence of which the ability to make statements would not go a long way in improving artworks’ cognitive significance. The knowledge we get from art is not propositional knowledge. Instead, artistic (illustrative) representation puts one “in the position to recognize the rightness of a perspective”,⁵ or it provides insight on *what it is like* to be in a certain situation.

Building on his previous ideas, here in *Critique of Pure Music* Young holds that music provides insight into emotional experience by arousing emotions in the listener. This is a particular case of illustrative representation.

The book is organized into five chapters. In the first chapter (Music and Emotion) a *resemblance theory* is put forward (resemblance between certain experienced features of music and human behaviour expressive of emotion) as an explanation for why people persistently describe music in emotion terms. The chapter includes a captivating and empirically informed discussion of the role of convention in determining the expressive character of certain intervals, chords, and scales (e.g. the familiar association between the minor mode and “negative” emotions). Here Young holds that the role of convention, though significant, is substantively less so than some writers (such as Kivy) sup-

⁴Young 2001, p. ix.

⁵Ibid., p. 69.

pose. In the second chapter (Music and the Arousal of Emotions) he defends the view that music *arouses* emotions in listeners in virtue of the resemblance we perceive between our experience of music and our experience of human behaviour expressive of emotions.

Neither the resemblance theory nor the idea that music arouses emotions are defended solely with philosophical arguments. To defend both, Young makes use of evidence afforded by empirical research, since in his view the resemblance theory is an empirical theory and, as such, it can't be confirmed or disproved solely by way of *a priori* reasoning. In this respect, Young's book strongly contrasts much of the philosophical literature on the subject. Drawing on such evidence, Young identifies four mechanisms by which music arouses emotion: i) automatic brain reflexes; ii) emotional contagion; iii) somatic effects; and iv) frustration and realization of musical expectations.

According to Young, the resemblance between certain aspects of music and human behaviour expressive of emotion is what gives music its emotionally expressive character. The most common mechanism through which this happens is "a pervasive feature of our experience of the world," namely our ability to exploit *cross-domain mappings*, i.e., to enact a "transfer of concepts derived from one sensory modality to experiences derived from another sensory modality" (p. 19). It is in virtue of this ability that we can hear *movement* in the music, and it is the experience of diverse *kinds* of movement (as well as one of music's most notorious somatic effects: the urge it instills in listeners to move along with it) that gives rise to *similarities* between experiences of music and experiences of emotion. The fact that such resemblances found in music are the intentional result of the composer's action makes it the case that music counts as a *representation* of emotionally expressive behaviour. The fact that the arousal of emotions by music thus conceived is also the intentional result of the composer's action makes it the case that the music counts as a representation of the *phenomenology* of expressed emotions, not just of emotionally expressive behaviour. These conclusions are sustained by a conception of representation presented in Chapter Three (The Content of Music). According to this conception, there are three conditions a thing must

satisfy in order to be classed a representation:

the *content* condition: if R is a representation, then R is a source of knowledge about the represented object;

the *intentionality* condition: if R is a representation, then someone intended R to have cognitive significance (nothing is a representation by accident);

the *accessibility* condition: if R is a representation, then some audience members, distinct from the person who intended R to be a representation, must be able to recognize the cognitive significance of R.

If the characterization of representation given by these conditions is correct, and if both the resemblance theory and the idea that music arouses emotion are true, we are but a step away, Young argues, from acknowledging that (some) music represents emotion: by intentionally endowing music with properties that give rise to expression and arousal of emotion, the composer intends music to have cognitive significance, satisfying the intentionality condition; if all goes well, the content condition is also satisfied and, furthermore, if an audience recognizes the expressive qualities of music and, while listening to the music, experiences the emotions the composer intends to arouse, the accessibility condition is thus also satisfied.

Young speaks of “cognitive significance” (or “content”) rather than “meaning,” because of the clear distinction he makes between semantic and illustrative representation. Sometimes we speak of the “meaning” of a musical work or a painting, but this is for Young an imprecise use of the word (p. 91). Meaning is but one kind of cognitive significance: the cognitive significance proper to semantic representations (e.g. a declarative sentence); but something can have cognitive significance without having (semantic) meaning. This sets Young against writers, such as Scruton, who conceive of representation in terms of propositional content and infer music’s inability to represent extra-musical reality from the premise that music does not express propositions—unlike Young, Scruton thinks pictorial depictions express propositions.

In the fourth chapter (Music and Lyrics) Young attacks the idea that music and literature are fundamentally different arts, based upon the kind of representations they employ and how they relate to emotions, or, in the phrase used by Kivy in the title of a recent book, “antithetical arts.”⁶ The conviction that music and literature are “antithetical arts” results, according to Young, from the erroneous adoption of a “propositional theory of literature,” together with a formalist view of music. Briefly, the former sees literature as “a series of statements whose only cognitive content is its semantic meaning” (p. 127); the latter states that “music is contentless form and makes sense only in purely musical terms” (p. 125). From the conjunction of these two views comes the idea that the combination of music and words in a hybrid artwork (in opera, for example) poses a problem: composers can “compose music that is subservient to the text and enhances its semantic content, or they can write music that is successful in purely musical terms.” Young thinks this is a pseudo-problem: “music and words can work together to arouse emotion in complementary ways.” (p. 132). The problem dissolves, according to Young, if we eliminate the confusion relating to how both music and literature represent emotion. The author holds that in both literature and music the kind of representation that prevails is illustrative, not semantic:

Works of literature do not make statements. Literary works provide insight by changing how people see the world. One way of doing this is to evoke emotions. (pp. 132–33)

And such insight cannot be condensed in a statement.

Though different, the ways literature and music represent also partly overlap when we consider, Young suggests, that some literature is designed to be read aloud (as well as, in some cases, sung). “Words can, when uttered, have properties akin to those of music and the sounds of words can have an emotional impact” (p. 135). In defence of this idea the author, once more, draws not only on philosophical argument, but also on empirical evidence.

⁶Kivy 2009.

The book ends with a chapter on the value of music. Why do we find the experience of music valuable? Young's view is that the formalist gives us at best an incomplete answer to this question: as it was mentioned, the anti-formalist accepts that part of music's value is formal, but he holds that not all musical value is.

Appealing to what he calls the heresy of substitutable experience, Young employs against the formalist a well-known argument used against the view that music is emotionally expressive, evocative, or representational: if music were valuable in virtue of the fact that it arouses emotions, we could substitute something else that has the same emotional effect for the music—a drug, for example. But no music lover would be willing to make such a trade. But Young argues that the formalist, once committed to the idea that value in music is formal value, owes us an explanation of why people find music aesthetically gratifying, if the relevant musical experience is experience of formal properties and relations. The hypothesis that, according to Young, generates the heresy of substitutable experience is the idea that listeners engage in intellectual games, such as *cherchez le thème* and the “hypothesis game” (searching for the themes and forming hypotheses about what will happen next): if music were valuable because it affords listeners the opportunity to play a sort of “musical chess,” then we could substitute it for something else that had the same effect (e.g., reading the score), without thereby losing anything. Even if “musical chess” is in fact a source of pleasure—and the anti-formalist need not deny this—it doesn't offer us a complete explanation of the value people ascribe to music.

Young also raises doubts about the way formalism appeals to beauty in order to explain the value of musical experience. In particular, he attacks what seems to him a unanimous view among defenders of formalism: the idea that the aesthetic properties of music are ineffable (which supposedly makes the experience of beauty an unexplained explainer). Some formalists hold that most descriptions of music, especially those that employ emotion predicates, are metaphorical; that musical experience can't be described (or, if it can, only in a very limited way) in literal terms. Zangwill calls this view

“this-worldly mysticism” about music: musical experience has properties that are ineffable or not susceptible of literal description.⁷ Against this sort of approach, Young holds that the beauty of music is at least partly explained by its cognitive value, that is, its capacity to represent emotions. The view that aesthetic value incorporates both hedonic and cognitive value echoes the remark made by Aristotle that pleasure taken in representations is an integral feature of human nature, and that we contemplate with pleasure even “reproductions of objects which in real life it pains us to look upon” (*Poet*, 1448^b3).

Young’s criticism of this aspect of the formalist doctrine is actually one of the book’s most disputable claims, it seems to me. It is not clear that such criticism is even remotely fair. In defence of the formalist (and one should bear in mind that not all formalists accept the “essential metaphor thesis”) we can point out, first, that there is a difference between being mysterious or unexplainable and being ineffable in the sense of being describable only in non-literal terms; second, that it is not that aesthetic properties themselves are ineffable (we can speak intelligibly about elegance, delicateness, graciousness and a host of akin properties, for example), it just so happens that the experience of music is always more fine-grained than any description we can give of it; and third, that there is nothing particularly mysterious about the relative ineffability of musical experience, since all perceptive experience shares this quality (how would you explain the smell of coffee to someone who has never experienced it?). There is nothing here to suggest that the experience of aesthetic properties is unexplainable, even if some formalists adopt such stance. Here is an analogy: the difficulty in describing the visual experience of a shade of colour does not imply an absence of explanations for the fact that we have colour experiences. So at least this part of Young’s critique of formalism simply moves too fast.

No less important than putting forward true propositions backed up with sound arguments (and it is up to the reader to decide whether Young’s book succeeds in this task) is to prevent ideas from becoming stale by force of being taken too often as the default view. In this sense,

⁷Zangwill 2009, p. 15.

a passionate, clear, focused, and engaging defence of anti-formalism was needed. Young's book certainly succeeds in this task.

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