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Philosophy of Art

Book Review

Introduction

The present issue is dedicated to the Philosophy of Art conference that has been taking place annually at the Interuniversity Centre Dubrovnik since 2012. Initiated by David Davies, a McGill based philosopher whose ties to the region and to the IUC have been firmly established via his role as one of directors of Philosophy of Science conference, the Philosophy of Art brings together philosophers of art and aestheticians from Europe and North America, mostly but not exclusively of analytic bent. This is the first issue of any journal dedicated entirely to this conference, and it is the first time that Croatian Journal of Philosophy has opened itself fully to papers dealing with art and art-related issues. It is our hope that many more are coming.

David Davies *in his "Making Sense of Popular Art" engages with Noel Carroll's account of mass art, by raising the question of whether some or all works of 'mass art' in Carroll's sense are rightly thought of as works of mass art, rather than as non-artistic mass artifacts. As Davies argues, there isn't a prior conception of what it is for something to be an artwork which allows us to take some things satisfying this conception to have the further property of being 'popular'. Therefore, what we need is a way of distinguishing different senses in which artworks might be described as 'popular', and, different senses in which artifacts might be described as being 'art'. Davies' strategy is to bring into a discussion what he calls a neo-Goodmanian approach (defended in his forthcoming monograph* How artworks work*), ultimately claiming that while the neo-Goodmanian can embrace artworks that are 'popular' in the sense of being targeted at a wide audience, she should insist that there cannot be artworks that meet all of Carroll's requirements for being 'mass art'.*

In his contribution, "Aesthetic and Artistic Verdicts" James R. Hamilton *calls for a distinction between the two kinds of verdicts. As he argues, aesthetic verdicts are reflections of the kinds of things we prefer and take pleasure in while artistic are reflections of other judgments we make about the kinds of achievements that are made in works of art. He defends an 'achievement model', as an alternative to the 'ideal critics' model and to the model that appeals to our preferences regarding works of art. His account is bolstered by theoretical discussions on what counts as an achievement developed in literature on well-being.*

Stephen Snyder*, in his "Artistic Conversations: Artworks and Personhood" engages with Arthur Danto's account of the human person and the notion of embodied meaning employed in Danto's definition of the artwork. Central is the claim that the "artworld" itself manifests prop-*

erties that are an imprint of the historical representation of the "world" which is implicitly embodied in the artist's style. The "world" that is stamped on the people of a historical period entails a point of view, similarly to the logic that guides a conversation. This "conversational" logic is also extant in the artworks that artists of a given period create. On Snyder' s view, this analysis of Danto's account of how people are connected to their world clarifies Danto's assertions of a parallel structure of personification in the artwork and the human, and his claims that artworks themselves appear to be in a kind of dialogue.

In "Art History without Theory: A Case Study in 20th Century Scholarship" Deodáth Zuh *discusses the case study from 1950s Hungary, centered on Lajos Fülep's review on the doctoral thesis of Hungarian Renaissance scholar, Jolán Balogh. This case is an initiative to reflect on the status of research programmes in art historical practice. Zuh aims to show that art history's need for theory remains relevant as the process of research advances, and to argue that a 'theory-unaware' history of art would fail to reconstruct how different art-making individuals conceived of aesthetic properties. As he argues, the work of an art historian who does not pursue a research programme might lack coherence and resonance. Further issues raised in this contribution relate to the question of whether in the case of art, internal-normative history is governed by the problem of aesthetic value and whether the external-empirical history could be only formulated in these terms.*

David Collins's *contribution, "Aesthetic Possibilities of Cinematic Improvisation" targets the scepticism regarding the artistic potential or the possibility of films being improvised artworks. Collins argues that it is conceptually possible for many elements of the filmmaking process to be performed in an improvisatory manner, and shows how a number of existing films and filmmaking practices provide examples of the realization of such possibilities. He analyzes these films and takes them to show that improvisation by filmmakers can enhance the aesthetic or artistic value of a film, including their artistic potential. In addition, Collins considers several social and ethical implications of improvisatory approaches to filmmaking, and to art in general.*

Adam Anderzeyewski *unites theoretical discussions of crime genre with the aesthetics of food in his contribution "Tasting the Truth: The Role of Food and Gustatory Knowledge in* Hannibal". *The essay is a detailed and meticulous analysis of the famous television series, which Anderzeyewski uses to develop an alternative model to classical epistemology of detective fiction cantered on vision and deduction. This new model is built upon gustatory knowledge that takes the central stage in the world orchestrated by Dr. Lector.*

James O. Young's *paper "Literary Fiction and the Cultivation of Virtue" brings together theoretical presuppositions of some philosophers, the view that engagements with literature can make people more virtuous, and some most recent empirical findings supporting this view. Three*

claims in particular are discussed: entering imaginatively into the lives of the fictional characters increases empathy; reading literary fiction promotes self-reflection; and readers mimic the prosocial behaviour of fictional characters. However, as Young argues in the second part, there is no guarantee that in reading literary fiction, readers will not mimic antisocial behaviour and thus become morally corrupted.

Britt Harrison*, in her contribution, "Introducing Cinematic Humanism: A Solution to the Problem of Cinematic Cognitivism" develops an approach to film she calls 'philosophy of film without theory'. Harrison's aims are twofold: first, to develop a 'cinematic humanism', an approach to film that emphasizes its capacity to illuminate the human condition; and second, to show that such an approach cannot be defended within what traditionally seems its natural framework, namely cinematic cognitivism. The focus of Harrison's contribution is a historical reconstruction of the notion of cognitive, for which the author claims has become ambiguous and theory-laden, mostly due to Noam Chomsky's work. Consequently, to appeal to anything cognitive in our research program is problematic.*

An alternative way of thinking about narrative art's capacity to shed light on the human condition is presented in the final contribution. Iris Vidmar*, in her "Literature and truth – revisiting Stolnitz's anti-cognitivism" defends a theoretical account of literary cognitivism, a view according to which literature is cognitively valuable. Vidmar addresses Stolnitz's famous article "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art", countering its claims by findings from contemporary epistemology. Vidmar argues that testimony is the underlying mechanism via which the cognitive transfer between literary works and readers take place, and goes on to show that contemporary epistemology is more embracive of the cognitive values traditionally awarded to literature.*

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Making Sense of 'Popular Art'

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The aims of this paper are twofold: first, to identify a sense of 'popular art' in which the question, 'can there be popular art?' is interesting and the answer to this question is not obvious; second, to propose and defend a challenging but attractive answer to this question: challenging in that it draws some distinctions we might not initially be inclined to draw, and attractive in offering a productive way of thinking about the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the kinds of artifacts proposed as examples of 'popular art'. I take the 'interesting' question to be whether, given a way of distinguishing artworks from other kinds of artifacts, there can be artworks that meet the conditions set out by Noel Carroll for what he terms 'mass art'. I sketch a way of thinking about the distinction between artworks and other artifacts—what I term the neo-Goodmanian approach—and then explore the implications of the neo-Goodmanian approach for the existence of 'popular art', and vice versa. In so doing, I subsume these issues under a more general problem for the neo-Goodmanian—what I term the problem of 'fast art'. I argue that, while the neo-Goodmanian can embrace artworks that are 'popular' in the sense of being targeted at a wide audience, she should insist that there cannot be artworks that meet all of Carroll's requirements for being 'mass art'.

Keywords: Popular art, 'mass art', popular music, 'fast art', neo-Goodmanian aesthetics, the 'functional artwork' problem.

1. *Aims and structure*

My aims in this paper are twofold. First, I want to identify a sense of 'popular art' in which the question, 'can there be popular art and if so under what circumstances?' is interesting and the answer to this question is not obvious. Second, I want to propose and defend a challenging but attractive answer to this question: challenging in that it draws some distinctions we might not initially be inclined to draw, and attractive in offering a productive way of thinking about the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the kinds of artifacts proposed as exam-

ples of 'popular art'. I begin by distinguishing the sense of 'popular art' of interest to me from other senses of the term. I further suggest that the 'high art/low art' and 'art/not art' distinctions are attempts to answer different questions. I then introduce a way of thinking about the distinction between artworks and other artifacts that I have proposed elsewhere. In the remainder of the paper, I explore the implications of this conception of artworks for the nature and existence of 'popular art' in the designated sense.

2. *Making sense of 'popular art': What is the question?*

The term 'popular art' (or sometimes 'popular culture') is usually employed to pick out what is taken to be an accepted extension, rather than by reference to an accepted meaning for the term, or of the unit terms that it comprises. This supposed extension, furthermore, is not usually understood as a subset of a wider set whose members are taken to satisfy accepted conditions for being art. Unlike 'point-and-shoot' cameras, we do not have a prior conception of what it is for something to be an artwork which allows us to take some things satisfying this conception to have the further property of being 'popular'. To arrive at a well-defined and interesting question that we can proceed to explore, therefore, we must start by distinguishing different senses in which artworks might be described as 'popular', and, indeed, different senses in which artifacts might be described as being 'art'.

There are artifacts that are indisputably artworks and that are also 'popular' in the sense of *being liked or admired by many people*. Examples might include Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Equally uncontroversially, there are presumed artworks whose creators *intended* that they be popular in the sense of being liked or admired by many people. This might be the case with at least some of the first set of examples, but it would also apply more widely to artifacts with artistic pretensions aimed at a mass audience. Less obvious, however, is whether an artifact can be an artwork if it is intended for appreciation by a wide audience *in virtue of not requiring*, in those targeted, the kinds of cognitive or perceptual skills normally employed in our appreciative engagement with artworks. Such artifacts fit Noel Carroll's definition of what he terms 'mass art'. A mass artwork, according to Carroll, "is intentionally designed to gravitate in its structural choices (for example, its narrative forms, symbolism, intended affect, and even its content) toward those choices that promise accessibility with minimum effort, virtually on first contact, for the largest number of untutored (or relatively untutored) audiences" (Carroll 1998: 196).

The question I want to ask in this paper is whether some or all works of 'mass art' in Carroll's sense are rightly thought of as works of mass *art*, rather than as non-artistic mass *artifacts*. Note that something's being designed so as to be able to fulfil its assigned function for

the widest possible number of consumers by not requiring refined cognitive or more broadly perceptual skills normally does not prevent that thing from being an artifact of a given kind. A 'point-and-shoot' camera is still a camera, a 'large-print' information sheet in a museum is still an information sheet, and a self-described 'dummy-proof' income-tax programme is still an income-tax programme. Why, then, might being maximally accessible in virtue of requiring minimal cognitive or perceptual skills in a competent receiver disqualify something from being an artwork? There are no reasons to think that the conditions something must satisfy to qualify as a camera, a museum information sheet, or an income tax programme make any reference to the specific cognitive or perceptual skills required in the target audience, other than certain linguistic skills. But in the absence of some prior grasp of what conditions must be satisfied for something to qualify as an artwork, we cannot draw a parallel lesson in the case of 'popular art'. Our task is to see if there are indeed any good reasons to think that, given the most plausible account of the conditions for being an artwork, these conditions bear materially on the possibility of something's being 'mass art' in Carroll's sense.

First, however, we must say something about a couple of other distinctions in the neighbourhood. Consider the distinction sometimes drawn between 'high art' and 'low art', usually in terms of differences in the *intended functions* of artifacts. High art, it might be said, aims at edification, moral improvement, and cognitive insight, whereas low art aims at entertainment, pleasurable experience, and distraction from worldly cares. The high art/low art distinction, so conceived, relates to whether a work is intended to promote 'higher' human capacities and interests, or 'lower' human capacities and interests. On the other hand, those who make a distinction between that which *is* art and that which *is not* art assume that there is a principled difference between artworks and other artifacts. In principle, the two distinctions are orthogonal to one another. A sermon might be an example of high non-art, while Egon Schiele's pornographic drawings commissioned to speak to the baser natures of patrons might exemplify low art.

But can we draw such a principled distinction between artworks and non-artistic artifacts? There are reasons embedded in our linguistic and non-linguistic practice to think that intuitively, at least, we draw such a distinction. We resist saying that *all* artifacts, or even all artifacts with aesthetic properties intended to perceptually or cognitively engage an audience—such as cars, televisions, clothes, and cereal packages—are artworks. We also resist saying that any artifact that employs what are *recognized artistic media* is art. It is true that, as Larry Shiner (1994) has noted, there *is* a *broad* sense of 'art' in which what primary school children do with paint and brushes in art class is art. But this 'broad' usage seems restricted to cases where the predominant use of a medium is artistic, as it is with the kinds of materials

standardly used in art-painting (as opposed to those standardly used in house painting), and we do not speak here of *works* of art, save occasionally in an evaluative sense. There is no analogous temptation to say that the vast majority of holiday photographs, or home movies of family events, are, in a broad sense, art. Similar considerations would deny most linguistic artifacts status as (works of) literary art, even in a broad sense. Music and dance are interesting cases: most uses of musical instruments result in events that are 'art' in this broad sense, but not works of art, whereas social dance is rarely thought of as art at all in spite of its expressive elements.

These reflections put us in a better position to clarify what is philosophically interesting about the artistic status of Carroll's 'mass art'. If by 'art' we mean art in the *broad* sense identified by Shiner, then Carroll's works of 'mass art' are probably art, but, as we just saw, this doesn't make them 'works of art'. But the broad sense of 'art' is not of any obvious philosophical interest. Shiner himself, discussing debates over the artistic status of artifacts used in African and other non-Western cultures, argues that those involved in such debates often fail to properly distinguish the broad sense of 'art' from 'high art' and fallaciously infer, from the existence of 'art' in the broad sense in such cultures, to their possessing works of high art. But the question whether works of 'mass art' are works of *high* art is no more philosophically interesting than the question whether they are art in the broad sense. For in this case the answer is presumably negative: works of 'mass art', if they *are* works of art, will generally be works of low art. As may now be clear, if there is a philosophically interesting question pertaining to the status of 'mass art' as art, it is one we can raise only if we first offer some kind of principled distinction between artifacts that are works of art—a class taken to comprise both high and low art—and artifacts that are not works of art. How such a principled distinction might best be drawn is the subject of the next section.

3. *Artworks and other artifacts: The 'functional artwork' problem*

If we seek a way of distinguishing artworks from other artifacts that might aid us in assessing the idea of 'popular art' or 'mass art' in Carroll's sense, a useful strategy is to consider what may be termed the 'functional artwork problem'. It is clear that there are visual and verbal creations widely viewed as being works of art that have as their primary intended function the promotion of some instrumental end. Obvious examples are early Renaissance religious paintings such as the devotional works of Perugino (see Baxandall 1988), drawings by Schiele and Klimt executed to serve the pornographic interests of patrons, and art intended to promote a political end such as later works by Lyubov Popova, Eisenstein's *October*, and Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the*

Will. What conditions must be met if such artifacts are to be correctly viewed as artworks, while other artifacts with the same kind of instrumental primary intended function—sermons, pornographic drawings in male washrooms, and Nazi anti-semitic films—are not? The 'functional artwork problem' is the problem of accounting for the artistic status of some, but not all, artifacts with a given instrumental primary intended function.

It has generally been assumed that an answer to the functional artwork problem follows unproblematically from a consideration of artifacts whose primary intended function *is* an artistic one—that is, artifacts created with the primary intention that they be appreciated *as* artworks. The assumption here is that what makes artifacts with an instrumental primary intended function artworks is that they have an artistic *secondary* intended function—that is, that, whatever their primary intended function may be, their makers also intended that they be appreciated as artworks. Where theorists of such a mind differ is over what 'being appreciated as an artwork' itself requires, and thus over what must be intended by the maker if the resulting artifact is to be an artwork. Is this a matter, for example, of (i) intentionally possessing certain kinds of manifest 'aesthetic' qualities (e.g. Beardsley 1983), (ii) being intended for consumption within a particular kind of institutional context (e.g. Dickie 1974), or (ii) being intended for the kind of (artistic) regard accorded to those things already accepted as artworks (Levinson 1979)?

The idea that artworks are artifacts produced with the primary or secondary intention that they be appreciated *as* artworks is the residual legacy of 19th century assumptions about the autonomy of art, and more particularly of the otherwise discredited idea of 'art for art's sake' (on the latter, see Wilcox 1953). But it is difficult to reconcile this idea not only with much pre-nineteenth century Western art but also with the widely shared belief that the extension of our concept of art comprises many artifacts produced in cultures historically and culturally remote from our own where the idea of art as an autonomous practice seems to have no hold. This motivates seeking a different kind of answer to the functional artwork problem. I have proposed elsewhere, as the basis for such an answer, what I have termed the 'neo-Goodmanian approach' (Davies 2011: chapter 1). This, I have suggested, offers an alternative account of the arthood of canonical artworks that unproblematically extends to putative artworks whose primary intended function is instrumental. I shall not defend this approach here,[1] but shall briefly sketch its principal claims and then assess its bearing upon Carroll's notion of 'mass art'.

The central claim of the neo-Goodmanian approach is that artworks differ from other artifacts in that they require *a particular kind of re-*

[1] I defend this approach in the monograph provisionally titled *The Workings of Art* that I am currently completing.

gard on the part of the receiver in virtue of *how they are intended to perform whatever primary intended function they have*, whether artistic or instrumental. This approach draws on Richard Wollheim's talk (1980) of a kind of regard for which artworks call, and Nelson Goodman's talk (1968, 1978) of 'symptoms of the aesthetic' that characterise the ways in which artworks function as symbols.

Wollheim's notion of a distinctively artistic kind of regard should not be confused with the notion of 'artistic regard' central to Jerrold Levinson's 'historical definition of art'. Levinson (1979) claims that 'what it is to correctly regard an artwork varies both synchronically and diachronically. Nevertheless, we can define what it is for an artefact to be an artwork in terms of its maker's intention, opaquely or transparently construed, that the artefact be regarded in a way that is a correct way of regarding those things already accepted as artworks.' But Levinson's notion of 'artistic regard' is tied to the idea that artworks are artifacts whose makers intend them to be appreciated *as artworks*, not to the idea that a particular kind of regard is necessary for works to perform whatever primary intended function they may have. In a later paper he writes: "It is a necessary condition for something to be an artwork that its maker intends that receivers take an 'artistic interest' in the artistic vehicle—an interest in 'the way content is embodied in form, the way medium has been employed to convey content'" (Levinson 2005: 232)

Wollheim, on the other hand, speaks of 'artistic regard' in responding to 'aesthetic attitude' theories of what is required for the experiential appreciation of artworks (Wollheim 1980: 91–98). Perhaps the most discussed such theory involves Jerome Stolnitz's distinction (1992) between two kinds of perception, 'practical perception' and 'aesthetic perception'. He characterizes the latter as "disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of any object of awareness whatever, for its own sake alone" (Stolnitz 1992: 10). Wollheim responds that, if talk of the 'aesthetic attitude' is to contribute to our understanding of artworks, it must be defined in terms of a kind of 'regard' proper to artworks and only derivatively applied to things we take to be non-art. The 'regard' called for by something taken to be an artistic manifold is addressed to an entity taken to have the following distinctive qualities:

1) It is an artifact, whose details ('form') must be seen as organized for some purpose. An artistic manifold calls, therefore, for an 'interrogative' exploration—one that seeks to make sense of the manifold in terms of reasons for its being ordered in the way that it is.
2) It is historically situated, thus requiring that the purposiveness found in the details be a purpose reasonably ascribed in light of the historical context of the making.

Wollheim further claims that "it is part of the spectator's attitude to art that he should adopt *this* attitude towards the work: that he should make it the object of an ever-increasing or deepening attention," so that

more and more of the properties of the art object "may become incorporated into its aesthetic nature." (Wollheim 1980: 123)

Wollheim suggests that "if we want to test any hypothesis about the spectator's attitude to artworks, it would be instructive to take cases where there is something that is a work of art which is habitually not regarded as one, and which we then at a certain moment come to see as one" (1980: 120). Applying Wollheim's suggestion to such works as Yvonne Rainer's *Room Service*, I have identified (2011: chapter 1) the following distinctive features of the regard for which artworks call:

1) *Close attention* to the fine details of the artistic vehicle is necessary if we are to correctly determine the content articulated,
2) Artistic vehicles often serve to *exemplify* some of their properties,
3) Many of the *different properties* of the vehicle contribute to the articulation of content, and finally
4) The vehicle not only serves a number of distinct articulatory functions, but does so in a '*hierarchical*' manner, where 'higher level' content is articulated through lower level content.

These seem to be the features characterised in more technical terms by Goodman as what he terms the 'symptoms of the aesthetic'. The latter are identified as:

1) 'syntactic density'—where the finest differences in certain respects between characters is a difference in symbols.
2) 'semantic density'—where symbols are provided for things distinguished by the finest differences in certain respects.
3) 'exemplification', where a symbol symbolizes by serving as a sample of properties it literally or metaphorically possesses,
4) 'relative repleteness'—where comparatively many aspects of a symbol are significant, and
5) 'multiple or complex reference'. (Goodman 1968: 252–55; Goodman 1978: 67–68)

According to the neo-Goodmanian account, artworks differ from other artifacts that involve content articulated through vehicles—e.g. road signs, everyday uses of ordinary language—in virtue of the ways in which they articulate the contents bearing upon the performance of their primary intended functions, whatever those functions may be. This is a matter of being intended to function as an 'aesthetic symbol' in Goodman's sense. It is in virtue of these distinctive ways of articulating content that artworks must be regarded in a distinctive way. To adopt the 'aesthetic attitude' (in Wollheim's sense) to an artistic vehicle is to engage in an interrogative exploration of that vehicle constrained by a knowledge of its history of making, in the interest of grasping a specific artistic content articulated 'aesthetically', as characterised by Goodman. There is no need for the maker to intend that we take an *artistic interest* in Levinson's sense in the artifact, even if it *is* necessary that

we take such an interest if we are to *critically appreciate* the artifact as an artwork (on the relevant notion of 'critical appreciation' here, see section V below).

A notion introduced by Levinson (2005) in arguing against the possibility of pornographic art is helpful here. Levinson acknowledges that the most difficult cases for his account are cases of what he terms 'artful pornography', where artistic means are used to further pornographic ends. For the neo-Goodmanian, however, it is through being 'artful' in a neo-Goodmanian way—through articulating the content that bears upon an artifact's primary intended function 'aesthetically' in Goodman's sense[2]—that something qualifies as an artwork. This generalizes from artifacts with a primary intended pornographic function to artifacts with the other kinds of instrumental primary intended functions discussed earlier in setting out the 'functional artwork' problem. For the neo-Goodmanian, a 'functional artwork' is an *artwork* in virtue of being 'artful' in this sense. To illustrate this idea, consider Matthew Kieran's defence (2001) of the artistic status of the pornographic drawings of Klimt and Rodin. He says of some of Rodin's nude drawings:

> In such drawings we have an emphasis on compositional and design elements, some of which are a striking deviation from classical nude studies, in order to evoke sexual stimulation by sexually explicit means... The specifically artistically innovative developments in Rodin's line drawing enabled him to characterize the lines of action, sexual embraces, and actions in a more athletic, impulsive, vigorous manner which enhances the evocation of sexual arousal. (Kieran 2001: 37)

And he describes the 'artful' nature of Klimt's erotic drawings as follows:

> Formal artistic techniques are deployed in a highly imaginative manner in order to emphasize explicitly sexual parts, features, actions, and states—including the use of extreme close-up views, foreshortening, exaggerated perspective, distortions of posture and proportion, shifts in framing, heightened contrasts between right-angles and curves of the body. The effect is not only beautiful in terms of the grace of line drawing and structural composition, but serves to draw attention to sexual features such as the genitals, breasts, buttocks and open legs. Furthermore, these formal artistic techniques are used to emphasize our awareness of the states of sexual absorption, sensual pleasure, or languid sexuality represented. (Kieran 2001: 39–40)

4. *Neo-Goodmanian aesthetics and the problem of 'Fast Art'*

What kind of account can we give of 'popular art' or 'mass art', as conceived by Carroll, if we subscribe to the neo-Goodmanian account of what it is for an artifact to be an artwork? In a number of places

[2] But being 'artful' in using traditional aesthetic properties for such a purpose is another matter. For this kind of approach, see Stephen Davies's claim (2006) that artworks are artifacts that possess 'functional beauty'.

(Davies 2004: 16–23; Davies 2009; Davies 2017) I have defended what I term the 'pragmatic principle' as a general principle for assessing claims about the nature of art:

> Artworks must be entities that can bear the sorts of properties rightly ascribed to what are termed 'works' in our reflective critical and appreciative practice; that are individuated in the way such 'works' are or would be individuated, and that have the modal properties that are reasonably ascribed to 'works,' in that practice. (Davies 2004: 18)

This instantiates, in the case of the arts, the more general idea that the philosopher's task in dealing with a human practice is to seek a conceptual framework in terms of which to think about that practice, a framework to be assessed in terms of how it helps us to achieve the proper goals of, and make best sense of, that practice. The suggestion above was that the neo-Goodmanian account of the artistic status of certain artifacts is better placed to answer the 'functional artwork' problem than accounts grounded in the aestheticist tradition, and might thereby explain the artistic status of certain artifacts from cultures not historically continuous with our own, and the possibility and scope of artworks in our own cultural tradition with religious, pornographic, or propagandist primary intended functions.

But if a principal desideratum for any tractable account of how artworks differ from other artifacts is that it make sense of the kinds of distinctions that we make in our artistic practice, then the *inability* to account for 'mass art' in Carroll's sense might be seen as a major problem for the neo-Goodmanian. And it takes only a little reflection to see that the neo-Goodmanian conception of art and Carroll's definition of 'mass art' are in tension if not in outright contradiction. Carroll's 'mass art' is perhaps the most obvious example of a larger phenomenon that we might call 'fast art'. I take the latter term from Tom Wolfe who, in *The Painted Word*, writes about the mid-1960's pursuit of 'fast art' by American 'minimalist' painters. Minimalist art 'theory', reacting against 'emotional evocations' in the works of the abstract expressionists and their successors, dictated that "paint should be applied only in hard linear geometries, and you should get the whole painting at once, 'fast' to use the going phrase" (Wolfe 1975: 99). Kenneth Noland, Wolfe claims, was known as 'the fastest painter in the business'. 'Fast', here, does not refer to the time it takes to create a painting, but to the time it takes to 'get' one.

The category of 'fast' art, in Wolfe's sense, generalizes to a wider class of works whose makers also seemingly aim to produce an immediate effect on the receiver. Some works, it might be said, are designed to shock, awe, or surprise the receiver, or overwhelm her with delight—Damien Hirst's notorious 'shark' piece might be cited as an example of the former phenomenon. Carroll, as noted above, seems to define 'mass art' in terms of being 'fast' in this sense, being easy for anyone to access without either specialised knowledge or detailed engagement.

A mass artwork, we may recall, 'is intentionally designed to gravitate in its structural choices (for example, its narrative forms, symbolism, intended affect, and even its content) toward those choices that promise accessibility with minimum effort, virtually on first contact, for the largest number of untutored (or relatively untutored) audiences' (Carroll 1998: 196). Generalizing from Carroll's characterisation of mass art, we may take the 'fastness' of an artwork to be a matter of the kind of *cognitive effort* required to 'get' the work rather than of the total amount of *time* that this takes.

The neo-Goodmanian maintains that what distinguishes artworks from other artifacts is the distinctive manner in which they are *intended* to articulate those contents that bear upon their primary intended functions. (This intentional dimension of the neo-Goodmanian account is one way in which it departs from Goodman's own view.) Artworks, it is claimed, whatever their primary or even secondary intended functions, call for a more careful, cognitively sophisticated kind of regard than non-artistic artifacts, a regard sensitive to subtle differences between artistic vehicles, exemplificational roles their constitutive features may play, and the internally sophisticated structuring of contentful elements in the interests of the higher-order aims of the work. But this seems to distinguish artworks from non-artistic artifacts precisely in terms of the 'cognitive effort' on the part of the receiver required to 'get' those contentful properties of an artifact bearing on the performance of its primary intended function. To the extent that an artefact is 'fast' in the prescribed sense, the neo-Goodmanian view seems to entail that it is not an artwork. So, if there are indeed things generally viewed as artworks that are 'fast', it seems that we must conclude either (a) that we are wrong in taking them to be artworks, or (b) that the neo-Goodmanian view of the artwork/non-artistic artifact distinction is misguided. Since the putative works in question seem to differ from other unquestioned works only in degree—in how much 'cognitive effort' is required to 'get' them—rather than in kind, the first option seems unattractive. The onus is therefore on the neo-Goodmanian to show how her account can accommodate such 'fast' works. Accommodating Carroll's 'mass art' seems to be one of the more significant instances of this problem.

The problem of 'fast art', we should note, consists in a *modal* claim grounded in some putative actual examples. The claim is that there *can* be fast works, and the works cited are actual examples that might be taken to establish this possibility. The formulation of the problem therefore does not entail that neo-Goodmanian interpretive skills are irrelevant to the appreciation of (at least some) artworks. The more limited challenge posed by the possibility of 'fast' artworks is that it seems that such scrutiny is not *necessary* in all cases to 'get' an artwork. At least some artworks, it seems, are intended to articulate their contents in a non-Goodmanian manner.

5. *The problem of 'Fast Art': Two neo-Goodmanian strategies*

Our examples of 'fast art' include both works of 'popular art' and certain works of late modern (Noland) and post-modern (Hirst) art. In accordance with the pragmatic principle, I take the artistic status of the latter examples as deniable only if there are strong (and non-question begging) reasons to do so. However, I take the status of 'popular art' as a whole to be open to question, for reasons to be given below. For this reason it will be helpful to begin with the works by Noland and Hirst. If we can provide an account of such artworks in neo-Goodmanian terms, we can then see to what extent the same kind of account might apply to at least some works of 'popular art'. This might provide us with a principled way of drawing at least a rough distinction between those 'popular' artifacts that are rightly included in the domain of artworks and other 'popular' artifacts whose claim for inclusion therein is open to question or even to outright denial.

In an initial consideration of neo-Goodmanian aesthetics some years ago, I presented the neo-Goodmanian account in a way that would, as a matter of act, provide an easy and conclusive solution to the problem of 'fast art' (Davies 2004: chapter 10). The proposal was to finesse the traditional distinction between 'functional' and 'procedural' definitions of art (see Stephen Davies 1991) by distinguishing artworks from other artifacts in terms of both functional and procedural considerations:

> An artwork... articulates a content through a vehicle via an 'artistic medium', a system of articulatory understandings in a system of the artworld... An artworld system is a system whose articulatory understandings facilitate the articulation of content through vehicles that perform symbolic functions that are 'aesthetic' in Goodman's sense. 'Artwork' is defined procedurally, by reference to a performance that intentionally draws upon an established system of articulatory understandings, and functionally in that it is by reference to the facilitating of a particular kind of symbolic functioning that a system of articulatory understandings counts as an artistic medium. (Davies 2004: 253)

This proposal aims at a perhaps implausible marriage between 'institutional' theories of art and Goodman's resolutely anti-institutionalist idea that something is an artwork when it performs certain distinctive kinds of symbolic functions (for Goodman's terse dismissal of institutional theories of art, see Goodman 1978: 66). The proposal would serve our current purposes in allowing for there to be artworks that were not themselves neo-Goodmanian symbols (thus allowing for fast art) as long as they employ shared understandings that count as an artistic medium in virtue of fostering neo-Goodmanian forms of symbolisation. The proposal also preserves something that is important both to 'institutional' theories of art (e.g. Dickie (1974) and Danto (1981), albeit in very different ways) and to Levinson's 'historical definition' of art (1979)—the idea of art as a historical practice to which an artifact's

history of making must stand in a certain relation if that artifact is to be an artwork. Danto's artworld has an essential historical dimension, Dickie's artistic practices are historically construed, and Levinson insists that artworks must essentially involve and not merely follow upon past art. But it is precisely this feature of such accounts that renders them parochial. For what is distinctive of artifacts produced in practices outside of our own cultural tradition is that they *don't* stand in such a historical relation to that tradition and therefore, it would seem, cannot qualify as artistic.[3] And this is one reason why such theories cannot provide an adequate response to the 'functional artwork' problem.

Will the above understanding of the neo-Goodmanian account face the same difficulties? It might be thought that this problem presents itself only if we restrict the relevant 'artistic practices' to our own, or to others that mimic them. Why can't the neo-Goodmanian take practices in other cultures to be artistic because of the kinds of symbolic expression they permit or foster, and then make the move canvassed above to allow for equivalents of 'fast art'? While this move is tempting, there is, I think, good reason to resist it: this construal of the neo-Goodmanian view is too permissive. For example, it would make ordinary holiday photos works of art unless we are able to identify some features of photographic practice that are constitutive of the 'artistic medium' of photography. But, even if we are able to do this, how can we justify the idea that these features are being 'used' tacitly in some artifacts whose contents do *not* make use of them ('fast' works of photographic art) but not in others that equally do not make use of them in articulating their contents (ordinary holiday snaps)?

A better strategy for the neo-Goodmanian, I think, is (1) to preserve the idea that it is the neo-Goodmanian manner in which an artifact articulates the contents bearing upon the performance of its primary intended function that makes it an artwork—this can avoid the 'parochialism' confronting institutional theories in the broad sense, but (2) to seek a way of accommodating, as artworks so conceived, those apparently 'fast' artifacts whose artistic status it is difficult to deny. Adopting this strategy, we should begin with a word that has thus far been allowed to stand unexplicated in setting up the problem of 'fast art'. I have talked about what is required to 'get' an artwork, where this word presumably functions as a vernacular term for what is involved in the *appreciation* of a work as art. But, we may now note, talk of 'appreciating' an artwork is open to different interpretations. And, if we are to assess the challenge that the problem of 'fast art' poses to the neo-Goodmanian account, it is important that these interpretations are distinguished.

We can begin by setting aside one sense of 'appreciation'—which we may term 'normative appreciation'—that has no bearing on our cur-

[3] Levinson's acceptance (1979) of 'transparently' construed intended artistic regards only slightly ameliorates the problem by allowing for art outside our own traditions as long as it involves shared understandings that as a matter of act mirror some of our own.

rent concerns. In this sense, to appreciate some entity is to like it, to find it enjoyable, or to find it valuable. In this sense, I may appreciate something you have done for me, or a particular experience I have had. We can talk in this way about artworks—I may (or may not) *really* appreciate the songs of a particular singer or paintings by a particular artist—but the senses of 'appreciate' of interest to us in the present context do not, I think, carry any such determinate normative valence. They relate to various activities that enter into our experiential engagements with the artistic vehicles of artworks, activities that may indeed lead us to appreciate those works in a normative sense but that in themselves are only a precursor to normative appreciation.

With this in mind, let me first distinguish between what I shall term 'primary' and 'secondary' appreciation. Both relate to the particular kind of *experiential response* to an artistic vehicle that the creator of an artwork wishes to produce in fashioning that vehicle in a particular manner. Artworks, we might say, are artifacts that are designed to be 'experience machines'.[4] The production of a particular kind of experience in receivers is the means whereby the work is intended to fulfil its intended function(s). 'Primary' and 'secondary' appreciation are two analytically separable dimensions of this experiential response.

Take first primary appreciation. With a representational painting, or a photograph, or a film, for example, the maker intends that the receiver see certain things—people, objects, or events—presented in a certain way in the visual array. In reading a novel, the maker intends that the reader imaginatively engage with a sequence of events narrated by the text. In listening to a piece of music, it is intended that we apprehend a series of sonic events as making up a larger sound sequence in which the comprised events stand in sonic relationships to one another. If the receiver is to 'get' the artistic manifold presented in her experiential engagement with an artistic vehicle in this 'primary' sense', she must to some extent defer to the manifold, allowing it affect her in certain ways. 'Getting' a work in this way is at least part of what is required to determine any work's artistic content, and is therefore a necessary condition for a work's fulfilling for a given receiver whatever primary intended function it has. However, even if primary appreciation is a matter of letting the artistic vehicle work on us, being so affected by the work will count as a *correct* primary appreciation of the work only if we bring to our encounter with the artistic vehicle relevant kinds of perceptual and conceptual skills and competencies.

Primary appreciation is experientially interwoven with our parallel attempts to 'get' the work in a further sense—to grasp and appreciate what we take to be reasons for the elements being ordered in the way that they are. This is what makes our engagement with the perceptual or conceptual manifold presented by a work's artistic vehicle 'interrog-

[4] I gesture here towards William Seeley (2011) who, drawing on Mark Rollins (2004), speaks of artworks as 'attentional engines': attention is in such cases a precondition for producing a particular kind of experience.

ative'. We are involved in an ongoing, partly pre-conscious, process of making sense of the manifold by experiencing it as structured in hierarchical ways, where parts derive their sense from the places we assign them in the evolving whole. The 'sense' we make of the artistic manifold should not be confused with the work's primary intended function. The 'sense' of the manifold is, rather, what unifies those contents articulated through the work's artistic vehicle in such a way that, in virtue of having this 'sense', the work can perform its primary intended function. '*Secondary appreciation*', as we may call this, is a matter of 'getting' a work not only through being aware of its first-order artistic content, but also through ascribing to it a higher-order 'sense' as a function of its first order content.

'Primary' and 'secondary' appreciation are analytically separable but empirically fused dimensions of the experiential engagement with a work's artistic vehicle through which the work is intended by its maker(s) to fulfil its primary intended function. But we also use the term 'appreciation' in a way that bears not on the experiences that artworks are designed to generate in order to achieve their intended functions, but on our assessments and evaluations of the works themselves as 'experience machines'. 'Appreciation' here is not internal to what artworks are designed to do, but requires a distancing from the latter, while still involving an experiential engagement with the artistic vehicle. Here is where we will tend to talk about properly appreciating an artwork *as an artwork*. What the latter is taken to require is an interest not merely in grasping the lower- and higher-order content, articulated through a work's artistic vehicle, that bears upon the performance of its primary intended function, but also in how the artist has *used* a particular artistic medium in articulating that content. '*Tertiary appreciation*' of an artwork requires that we take what we termed earlier a Levinsonian 'artistic interest' in the work, an interest in "the way content is embodied in form, the way medium has been employed to convey content" (Levinson 2005: 232).

It may be helpful to give a brief example of these distinct modes of appreciation. Consider Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* situated at the head of the flight of stairs that leads to the dormitories in the monastery (now the convent) of San Marco in Florence. Primary appreciation of this work requires that we allow ourselves to take in the image in all of its detail, to register it as a representational whole with certain formal relations between the different elements and certain patterned chromatic forms with their own affective qualities. We need to bring to our visual scrutiny of the image a familiarity with the general depictive conventions of the tradition to which Fra Angelico belonged, so that we can register the representational, formal, and expressive properties that *this* artistic manifold articulates through the distribution of pigment on surface.

Our scrutiny of the manifold is also informed by an interrogative

interest in *why* it is *this* artistic manifold that Fra Angelico has created for the appreciation of his intended audience. Again, our interrogative exploration should be guided by an awareness of the range of possibilities open to the artist, and also of the significance of different possible ways of rendering the subject. The resulting secondary appreciation of the painting informs our primary appreciation—our experiential engagement with the artistic vehicle. Insofar as our interest is in Fra Angelico's creation as an artwork, however, we must consider what the artist has done in his medium, in order to realize in pigment the kinds of contentful properties—higher and lower—of the painting that bear upon its performance of its primary intended function. In so doing we seek a tertiary appreciation of the painting.

The precise nature and extent of tertiary appreciation is a much contested and controversial matter. In particular, one needs to ask to what extent tertiary appreciation is solely a matter of experiential engagement with an artistic manifold, and, if so, the extent to which that engagement should be informed by knowledge of the way in which that manifold came to have the features that it does. I have elsewhere (forthcoming) argued, here, for a distinction between what I have termed 'experiential appreciation' and 'appreciative understanding'. Fortunately, however, we need not broach these matters further in the present context, since tertiary appreciation is *not* what is at issue in assessing the neo-Goodmanian account and its treatment of 'fast' works. For tertiary appreciation pertains to our activities as critical assessors and appreciators of works for their value as artworks, rather than to our engagement with them so that they can perform their primary intended functions. The issue between the neo-Goodmanian and the proponent of 'fast art' relates to the nature of primary appreciation and secondary appreciation. It is primary appreciation that, it seems, can be 'fast', in the sense that we can take in the first-order artistic content of certain works 'at a glance'. However secondary appreciation is also necessary if a work is to fulfil its primary intended function, whether this be broadly 'instrumental' or more traditionally 'aesthetic', since we need to unify the elements in the artistic manifold by reference to a 'sense' in virtue of which it has a particular content bearing upon the realization of its primary intended function. One way of putting our question, then, is to ask whether, if primary appreciation of a work is indeed sometimes 'fast', this is sufficient for secondary appreciation. If what we can get 'fast' is merely *necessary* for secondary appreciation, and thus bears upon but does not exhaust the 'artistic content' of the work whereby it performs whatever its primary intended function is, then, to the extent that this content is, as we might put it, a neo-Goodmanian function of the 'fast' content, the possibility of fast works will not call the neo-Goodmanian view into question. The proponent of neo-Goodmanian aesthetics might then respond to the problem of 'fast art' by making the following claim:

> [NGT] Primary appreciation of a work of art can be fast only if secondary appreciation is a neo-Goodmanian function of primary appreciation.

If we consider the two putatively 'fast' works cited earlier, it is clear that a strong case can be made that they in fact satisfy NGT and do not, therefore, present a problem for the neo-Goodmanian. Let me begin with Noland. In the first place, when we consider his works in more detail, it is not even clear that *primary* appreciation is fast, given the ways in which the rings of colour interact optically. If this interaction is intended as part of the work's artistic content and if it bears upon secondary appreciation and on the realization of the work's primary intended function, then it seems to require the kind of detailed attention to the canvas that, following Wollheim, we have taken to be a distinctive feature of the kind of regard for which artworks call. Second, as Wolfe's account makes clear, even if primary appreciation of Noland's work were deemed to be 'fast', secondary appreciation surely is not. To grasp the 'sense' embodied in the work's first-order properties requires that we understand the *significance* of the speed with which it might be primarily appreciated—the significance, here, of the minimalist aesthetic cited by Wolfe in his account. Furthermore, if the work is intended to be 'fast' for primary appreciation, this seems to bear upon the overall artistic content through which it fulfils its primary intended function in neo-Goodmanian ways. For example, it is through seeing such 'fastness' as *exemplifying* a possibility denied by the painters whose work it is parodying, and doing so in a way that requires *attention to detailed aspects* of what Nolan is actually doing, that the work would, on this reading, articulate the content bearing on its primary intended critical function. So read, the work is at least partly conceptual in being *about* contemporary artworks that pursue experiential goals at the expense of cognitive ones, and its art-critical function is achieved by commenting on the latter in a neo-Goodmanian way, as just described.

Hirst's 'shark' piece also belies its apparent 'fastness' when we attend more closely to how the artistic vehicle is supposed to articulate the content bearing upon its primary intended function. As critics have pointed out, if we accord to the artwork the sort of attention we normally accord to three-dimensional works of visual art—if, for example, we walk around the tank, and examine it from different angles—then interesting properties we would otherwise miss become apparent.

For example, the importance of the optical properties of the physical medium was noted by art critic and historian Richard Cork (2003): "The optical illusion of movement, generated by its abrupt shifts of movement behind the glass as awed visitors walked round the tank, suggested that the shark was still, somehow, alive." As with the Rainer piece to which we alluded earlier, we can assume that there is a difference in *how* the spectator is supposed to regard the object on display.[5]

[5] For a much lengthier discussion of these aspects of the Rainer piece, see Davies 2011: ch. 1.

In a natural history museum, our interest in such an object is directed solely to the shark, its physical properties, how it is presented as moving, etc. The tank is merely a receptacle for the object of interest. When it is located in an art gallery, however, 'getting' the piece arguably requires that we give the object the sort of detailed interrogative attention that we standardly give to three-dimensional works of visual art. When we walk around the tank, we are aware not only of the shark but also of the way in which its visual appearance is influenced by the optical properties of the transparent material of which the tank is made. The shark always appears to be pressing up against the surface closest to us, and, as we pass a corner of the tank, it appears first in duplicate and then in a position quite different from the one it appeared to occupy before we reached the corner. Whether we follow Cork in his reading of the significance of this or offer an alternative interpretation,[6] it seems plausible that our engagement with the object in the gallery must be neo-Goodmanian if we are to grasp the relevant artistic content through which the work fulfils its primary intended function.

6. *Making sense of 'popular art': A case study*

Suppose that such a strategy, captured in NGR, is a plausible way of accommodating those accepted artworks that might at first sight appear to be 'fast' in a way that goes against the neo-Goodmanian account. Would this strategy also be a plausible way of artistically enfranchising works of 'mass art' in Carroll's sense? The answer, it would seem, must be negative because it seems to follow from Carroll's very *definition* of 'mass art' that works that fit that definition must be 'fast' for both primary and secondary appreciation. Not only can we appreciate the manifest features of such works without neo-Goodmanian engagement, but also the 'sense' rightly ascribed to such manifest features is the one that they most obviously serve. Secondary appreciation, it seems, merely requires that the features experienced in primary appreciation be taken to serve no higher purpose than engaging us perceptually and emotionally.

If this were indeed the case for all those 'popular artworks' that Carroll takes to fall within the *extension* of his term 'mass art', we might ask whether such works are usefully grouped with the other artefacts that we view as artworks. For I take it that the artistic status of this *class* of 'popular' artefacts is at least open to reasonable dispute—at least, more open than the works of artists like Noland and Hirst. One

[6] I have suggested elsewhere (2004: 251–53) the following interpretation of this piece. In taking an interrogative interest in the thing presented as an art object, we might reflect upon the fact that the shark is presented in the gallery as a physically impossible physical object, capable of occupying two spatial locations at the same time and of moving from one location to another without passing through the points in between. Given the title, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, this might lead us to see the physical impossibility of the shark in the tank as exemplifying the physical impossibility characterised in the title.

option for the neo-Goodmanian, then, might be to stand her ground and deny artistic status to these artefacts. But a much better option, I think, is to ask whether all of the things we intuitively take to be examples of popular art do indeed satisfy Carroll's definition. The neo-Goodmanian can adopt here the same strategy that was adopted earlier on in setting up the 'functional artwork' problem. We might seek to distinguish, within the class of artefacts that seem to have as their primary intended function satisfying those kinds of desires in receivers that we earlier identified as distinctive of 'low art', those that should be viewed as *artworks* having such a function. And, it might be claimed, these are the ones that are intended to fulfil that function in neo-Goodmanian ways.

That this strategy may be a promising one is clear when we consider some of Carroll's own examples that are used to justify the claim that works of 'mass art' in his sense are truly *works of art*. He cites works like *Citizen Kane* which, he argues, are aimed at a mass audience but are undeniably works of art. But two conditions in Carroll's definition of 'mass art' must be distinguished: (a) being aimed at a general audience, and (b) being intended to be accessible with minimal cognitive or conceptual effort. While a work like *Citizen Kane* would satisfy the first condition, it does not seem to satisfy the second but, rather, to demand some interrogative engagement with the immediately presented narrative content if the 'sense' of the work is to be grasped. But if such engagement on the part of those who are able to 'get' the work in both the primary and secondary sense was intended by Welles, then it seems that the scope of the work's intended audience need not make it 'fast'. Indeed, given Welles use of cinematographic means in presenting the narrative, it might be argued that neo-Goodmanian techniques are required even for primary appreciation of such a work.

But let us suppose that the makers of many works of what we would intuitively take to be 'popular art' have no such intentions, and that the primary intended function of such works really is to entertain in a fairly effortless way. Surely much popular music, much pulp fiction, and many of the films shown in cineplexes are intentionally 'fast' for both primary and secondary appreciation. The primary intended function is to produce affect and/or movement on the part of receivers, to be infectious, or to arouse widely shared feelings relating to widely shared situations, with minimal cognitive effort on the part of the receiver. Such artefacts are certainly legitimate objects of *tertiary* appreciation: we can take an interest in how they are able to have the effects that they do, how they 'work'.[7] But, as we have seen, it is the nature of primary and secondary appreciation that is at issue in assessing the neo-Goodmanian account. And, as we might also note, we can take a tertiary appreciative interest in many artefacts that are clearly not artworks, as demonstrated by

[7] Tertiary appreciation of this kind seems to be what is at issue in the analysis of pieces of popular music in the *Switched on Pop* podcast discussed below.

Baxandall's use of the Forth Railway Bridge to exemplify the 'historical explanation' of an artifact (Baxandall 1985).

What can the neo-Goodmanian say about such instances of 'popular art'? As with other artifacts with instrumental primary intended functions, what the neo-Goodmanian will urge is that we need a principled way of distinguishing those artefacts intended for general appreciation that clearly are artworks from those that clearly are not, while allowing for cases whose artistic status is open to debate. What we should not assume is that *all* mass artifacts that meet Carroll's definition of 'mass art' must be mass *art*. But, to sharpen the point with which we began, can we make the stronger point that *no* artifacts intended for a broad audience that meet Carroll's further requirement—minimal cognitive effort required for appreciation—are art? Or, to approach this from another direction, can we explain why some of the things we would intuitively think of as popular artworks do not in fact meet Carroll's further requirement? We have already looked at how some mainstream films might in fact operate in a neo-Goodmanian way, being intended to achieve their primary intended function in virtue of articulating an artistic content in ways that call for 'artistic regard' in the stipulated sense. But it may be instructive to consider what might seem a more challenging case—the artistic credentials of popular music. Can we identify a basis for drawing the required distinction between works of popular music the realisation of whose primary intended function requires a neo-Goodmanian 'artistic regard' on the part of the receiver and those for which no such requirement obtains?

With popular music, matters are complicated by the fact that the pieces we tend to think of as 'artistic' often involve lyrics that by themselves engage our 'higher' interests and cognitive capacities. Examples of works of popular music that fit this description would include Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run*, Bob Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde*, and David Sylvian's *Brilliant Trees*. On the other hand, other works of popular music—such as *Sugar Sugar* by the Archies and *Hey Jude* by The Beatles—are not in this sense 'literary'. The words of such songs function more through their sound than through their meaning, as we discover to our shock when we actually inspect the words of *Hey Jude*! Such songs produce affect—and are designed to do so—but do so largely through sub-personal mechanisms that respond to tone, timbre, and rhythm. There *can* sometimes be an artistic dimension in such songs that requires us to focus our attention on the ways in which words and music have been made to work together. The appropriate model for understanding such pieces as artworks would come from the 'lieder' tradition of combining music and words, as in Schubert's musical setting of Goethe's *Erlkonig* (see Davies 2013). But this seems implausible in the cases just cited.

One strategy that might be used to artistically enfranchise mainstream pop music is exemplified in the podcast, *Switched on Pop*, that

examines chart-topping pop songs through the lens of musical theory.[8] The authors of the podcast, songwriter Charlie Harding and Fordham University musicology professor Nate Sloan, take the work of pop stars such as Carly Rae Jepsen, Justin Bieber, and Ariana Grande and focus not on the lyrics but on the use of particular chord progressions and instrumentation. They describe their project as follows:

> Our goal is always to figure out why a song is resonating with people. Often the reason has to do with some musical technique that people might understand viscerally but not intellectually. In the case of DJ Khaled's "I'm the One," we thought the secret was the chord progression. Khaled is using a chord progression, the 1–6–4–5 progression, that has been used in some capacity for centuries. It's the same progression that undergirds songs like "Blue Moon", "Stand By Me", and "I Will Always Love You." Khaled is using this chord progression that we are all deeply familiar with, and it can't help but get stuck in our heads. So for that episode we dive into the world of tonal harmony and how the music theorist Jean-Philippe Rameau first encoded the way that musical harmony can work on our emotions in 1723. Now, three centuries later, whether he knows it or not, DJ Khaled is taking advantage of those same principles.
>
> The idea that writing "frivolous" music doesn't take a lot of artistry is misguided. Mozart's opera buffa "Così fan tutte" has the most ludicrous and silly plot, but man is it complex. It took all of Mozart's considerable compositional skill. The music being put out by Justin Bieber and Diplo is completely analogous...
>
> We had a producer duo on our show called Grey, who produced the Hailee Steinfeld song "Starving." They said they spent 60 hours just fine tuning the sound of the snare drum on one of their songs. That gives you an idea of the immense efforts of a song you digest in three minutes and 30 seconds like an amuse-bouche.

If, as seems to be the case, this is intended as an argument for the artistic status of the kind of mainstream pop music cited, it clearly fails. That certain pop songs employ the same chord structures or harmonies used by classical composers to elicit affect does not make either the pop songs or the classical pieces works of art. Producing affect does not by itself make something art, especially if that affect is generated solely through the activation of sub-personal cognitive and perceptual mechanisms. The use of lighting, camera movement, and editing to produce strong affect via sub-personal mechanisms in films like *Blade Runner* is essential to those films as works of cinematic art (Coplan 2015), but it is the ways in which such affect is integrated with other aspects of the films rather than the production of affect by itself that grounds their artistic status. The same devices are used in advertising to get us to look favourably on a given product or politician, but one should only speak here of artworks when the elicitation of affect by such sub-personal means is used in concert with other features that engage us consciously.

[8] See https://qz.com/1035049/the-mozart-like-complexity-of-carly-rae-jepsens-biggest-hits/. Accessed 3rd May 2018.

This ties in with our earlier discussion of primary and secondary appreciation. Where an artwork is intended to produce affect or perceptual experience by mobilising sub-personal psychological mechanisms—as in 'op art' works by Bridget Riley, for example—the achievement of a work's primary intended function requires not merely a passive 'primary' response but also the interrogation of the manifold that is producing such affect. In Riley's case, this requires that the viewer not merely respond perceptually through the operation of sub-personal mechanisms in the visual system, but interrogate the canvas and thereby engage with the principles of visual perception that Riley is exploiting—and exploring—in her works. Works of op art are *about* visual perception and are only appreciated by one who engages with them as such. That something conjures with our senses or with our emotions is not sufficient for its being art, even when the conjuror is an artist!

We can make a similar point concerning the use of rhythm and dynamics in music to produce movement. We often find ourselves unconsciously moving our feet, hands or bodies in time as music is playing—as in the café where I'm writing this—but this happens as much (if not more!) when I am thinking about the sentence I am writing as when I actually attend to the music. But, the neo-Goodmanian will insist, if such music is to be art, grasping the content that bears upon the artifact's performing its primary intended function must require perceptual and/or cognitive *activity* on the part of the receiver—listening to or looking at a perceptual manifold interrogatively in my sense—not mere passivity. As an example of this, consider the standard methods used to produce movement and affect in works of techno, and consider the use by more self-consciously 'artistic' producers—such as Underworld in a track like 'Dark Train'—of not merely sound textures—which is a general feature of techno—but also complex polyrhythms that emerge from, merge into, or play off of one another. While such a piece is intended to produce movement and affect, it is intended to do so through our active awareness of the ways in which the different elements play against one another and our anticipation of how this play will continue: we can be enthralled even after many listenings by the way in which the contrasting elements can be brought together. This might be seen as analogous to the aesthetic richness of works by a composer like Sibelius when he brings strings and brass into sonorous dialogue or discord. In both cases, the intention is that the 'lower' pleasures of movement and affect be elicited through our attention to features of the acoustic manifold that function in a neo-Goodmanian way: the pleasures are elicited 'artfully', to use once again the term that Levinson applies to the pornographic images of artists like Klimt, Rodin, and Schiele. Generalising from these examples, while in nearly all popular music and cinema, certain kinds of affective and motor triggers are employed that affect us passively, in those such works that qualify as artworks these serve to frame or complete our active engagement with the perceptual manifold.

7. *Conclusion*

The foregoing reflections suggest that the neo-Goodmanian should insist that there can be no works of *art* that satisfy both conditions in Carroll's definition of 'mass art'. While artworks are 'experience machines' not all such machines are artworks. The experiences an 'experience machine' is designed to produce are those that will enable it to fulfil its primary intended function, whatever that is. For the neo-Goodmanian, however, what differentiates artworks from other 'experience machines'—e.g. advertisements, much dance music, B-horror movies—is that they can fulfill their primary intended functions only if they elicit the perceptual *activity* of the receiver in interrogating the perceptual manifold via an artistic regard. This perceptual activity is necessary because the artistic content through which the primary intended function is to be achieved is articulated 'artfully', in a neo-Goodmanian way. Just as there can be 'artful' pornography, there can be 'artful' works of pop music, 'artful' movies, etc., that have as their primary intended function entertainment or the satisfaction of some 'lower' capacity or desire on the part of the receiver. But these would not be works of 'mass art' in Carroll's sense, since they require the activity and not merely the passive receptivity of the receiver. So to the extent that something is an artwork, it can't be 'mass' in Carroll's sense, and to the extent that it is 'mass' in this sense it can't be an artwork.[9]

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Aesthetic and Artistic Verdicts

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In this article I propose a way of thinking about aesthetic and artistic verdicts that would keep them distinct from one another. The former are reflections of the kinds of things we prefer and take pleasure in; the latter are reflections of other judgments we make about the kinds of achievements that are made in works of art. In part to support this view of verdicts, I also propose a way of keeping distinct the description, the interpretation, and the evaluation of works of art. (And along the way, I worry about whether we offer the same kinds of interpretations of the objects of our aesthetic pleasures, properly considered, that we clearly do offer with respect to works of art.) The thesis I propose—the achievement model—is not original with me. What is original, perhaps, is that it is posed as an alternative to two other views of artistic evaluation, namely the appeal to "ideal critics" and the appeal to one way of understanding our preferences with regard to works of art. I do not attempt to show that each of these alternatives meets with insuperable problems; but I do indicate what I take to be the substantive content of those problems. In the end, in order to flesh out the thesis I propose, I borrow some material from the literature on human well-being concerning how we determine what an achievement is.

Keywords: Description, interpretation, evaluation, art, aesthetic pleasure, achievement.

"Appreciation" and "criticism" are terms in philosophical aesthetics and philosophy of art whose meanings have proved elusive. These terms are often used to mean description, and sometimes to mean interpretation. But they may be used to refer to evaluation. Indeed, one prominent figure in analytic aesthetics has argued not only that criticism needs to be revived but also that it is inescapably evaluative (Carroll 2008). For sake of precision, when it comes to evaluative judgments, we should follow Sibley in this: we should recognize they are "verdicts" as to the quality of the object or activity, whether that which is evaluated is a work of art or not (Sibley 1965: 136).

It is on the last of these, verdictive judgments, that I wish to focus in this article. I will, however, begin with some remarks about description and will also say a few things about interpretations. Both of the latter sets of comments will be made in regard to their uses in stating and defending verdictive judgments.

1. *A crudely sketched distinction*

Aesthetic experiences, including aesthetic experiences that are specifically of works of art, form one kind of pleasurable experience of objects or activities. The differences among them, *as* experiences, has primarily to do with differences among the kinds of thing one experiences.

Clear and obvious instances of things we might experience aesthetically include such things as sunsets, moonrises, cats, lizards, oak trees, grass, wind, silence, and so on. Equally clear and equally obvious instances of works of art that we might also experience (whether aesthetically or not) will include a Bach concerto, a performance of the play *A Streetcar Named Desire,* the novel *don Quixote,* the Vimeo of *Uterus Man*, the video game *Rocket League*, and so on.

If we had to say or write down what we experienced—especially if we had to say what made our experience of it an aesthetic experience of a work of art—we would have to describe it; we might have to interpret it; and perhaps we would be inclined to evaluate it as well. A quick and crude sketch of the distinctions on which I am relying could go like this.

> A person *describes* objects or activities (including of course, works of art) if she presents a statement of the evidence given to her senses, which statement is as free as she can muster from either interpretation or evaluation.[1]
> A person *interprets* objects or activities if she (a) gives a description of that work, (b) states, without evaluation, what she thinks the work is, is for, is about (possibly in some large sense), or means and c) ties that significance to details in the work's description.
> A person *evaluates* objects or activities (renders a verdict regarding them) if she (a) presents a statement either about how well what she has described achieves what she thinks it is, is for, is about, or means *or* about whether what she believes it is, is for, is about, or means is worth doing or is true; and (b) states either what descriptive facts about the work supports the contention it does or does not achieve its aims (under some kind-determination) or why the work's aims are in some way defective (under any kind-determination).

This distinction admits of intermediate states. However, I do not think it is "scalar" and not a genuine distinction after all. That is, despite the possibility of intermediate cases, this does not seem to admit "degrees" along a "spectrum" in the standard senses of those words.

[1] I set on one side the question whether aesthetic and artistic descriptions are the result of inferences (Dorsch 2013).

2. *Aesthetic verdicts of works of art and other things*

At the level of description, it is important that we observe a distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties of objects and activities, and that we determine which aesthetic features are in play in a given object or activity at least partly by determining what category the object or activity is likely to belong to based on its non-aesthetic features (Sibley 1965; Walton 1970). Many works of art, in particular, demand evaluations that are more or less plausible depending, in part, on what the descriptive facts actually are. And, actually, this seems right whether the object or activity in question is a work of art or not.

Consider how you might support the claim

(1) "That's a gorgeous sunrise."

Since this is in the present tense, I suppose you would frequently just point to it and say, "Look!" But if your interlocutor looked and did not respond in the same way, how would you go on? Here (and I am just guessing) you might point out that it is particularly golden, that it reflects golden sunlight off of low lying and level clouds (stratus or altostratus clouds), and so on.

Yet there is a puzzle here. If our focus is only on our *aesthetic* verdicts regarding works of art, then surely Paul Ziff has this much right: anything that can be viewed at all (including works of art) can be viewed aesthetically (Ziff 1984). And here is a particularly troubling example:

(2) "The Morris Louis painting in the Nelson-Atkins really makes me weak in the knees."

This example, which is not uncommon, suggests that our *aesthetic* verdicts about works of art are not only made *on the basis of* our subjective preferences, it also suggests that, in some way, they are also *about* those same subjective preferences.[2]

And that, in turns, raises an important question for those interested in our aesthetic reactions to the world including the artworld, namely, whether our aesthetic judgments are merely indexed to us according to preferences or are our expressions of those preferences. These, as Barry Smith has argued, are each flawed attempts to respond to the fact of aesthetic disagreement. In fact, if either of them is right, we lose the idea that people offering alternative aesthetic evaluations have actually *disagreed* (Smith 2012).

3. *Interpretation*

Of judgments about what an object or activity is, is for, is about, or means, I shall have only a little to say. First I should observe that the closer one is to the first item on this list—saying what something

[2] Part of the reason this is puzzling is that most of our sensory experience is subjective, and yet most of our judgments based on that experience are matters of objective fact about the world.

is—the more nearly descriptive one's judgments will be. Sometimes *category-placement* just is an interpretation. Alternatively, sometimes an interpretation, when it settles what something *is*, turns out to look a great deal like, and may even function in our reasoning *as* a description, because it works to settle the "what is it?" question by means of category-placement (Walton 1970). Furthermore, this observation goes a long way toward explaining what I meant when I remarked earlier that the distinction I am employing is "crude."

Conversely, the further along toward the last on the list—saying what an object or activity *means*—the more likely it is that our judgments are evaluative in nature. There is a reason for this, namely that it is more likely in such cases that one will be tempted to inflect the interpretation with one's own or one's group's *preferences*. For if one asserts that a work has a certain meaning, it is fairly natural to ask "meaning *what*, and *to whom*?" Many ways of answering that question make appeal to what an individual or group finds *significant*. And, I confess, I know of no way to explicate the idea of the significance of something to someone without reference to her, or their, preferences.

There is a second point: when one engages in interpretations of either of the latter three kinds—saying what an object or activity *is for*, what it *is about*, or what *it means*—the more likely it is that the interpretation will have been offered of a work of art, broadly construed. This may be indicated by noticing that we typically do not render these kinds of interpretations of sunsets, moonrises, cats, lizards, oak trees, grass, wind, silences, and so on. People do not often remark about what a sunset, for example, *is for*, what it *is about*, or what *it means*. Yet of course people often offer precisely these kinds of interpretations of Bach concertos, performances of *Streetcar,* of *don Quixote,* of *Uterus Man*, of presentations or playings of *Rocket League* or *Until Dawn*, and so on.

A third point, specifically about interpretations of works of art, is in order. In some recent work, Robert Stecker has pulled back on his early enthusiasm for holding that art-relevant interpretations are about the "*work meaning*" of the work (Stecker 2015). Stecker writes this:

> For me this is interpreting a piece for its work meaning as I define that notion in *Interpretation and Construction: Art, Speech, and the Law* (Blackwell, 2003). However, in setting out this test, I try to leave it more open just which types of interpretation provide the necessary understanding because I want to allow someone to accept the test without buying into my views about interpretation. (Stecker 2015: 395, n7)

Jane Forsey had taken Stecker to task about the earlier claim that interpretations are only about the "*work meaning*" of a work and suggested that, instead, we should think less about the meanings of works of art and more about their *functions*.

To be sure, her point is that we are not likely to get an adequate account of so-called "everyday aesthetics" without doing so (Forsey 2014). But I do not take her opposition to viewing the aesthetics of the every-

day through the lens of philosophy of art quite as seriously as she seems to. Nor for that matter do I take Stecker's oft expressed insistence of interpretation as the determination of "work meaning" all that seriously. One reason for both of these views is that interpretive judgments about works of art come in all of the kinds I mentioned above. That is, they are as likely to be concerned with what a work of art *is for* as they are to be concerned about what a work of art *is about* or what *it means*. This is especially true when the interpretations concern certain kinds of ceramics, many works of architecture, many documentary movies, and so on. In contrast, claims about what a work *is about* or what *it means* are more nearly about what has been at the center of discussions of the interpretation of painting since the 1950s or so. And claims about what a work *is for* are clearly about the *function* of the work.

4. *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*

Brock Rough claims there is a clear distinction, at least on the behavioral level, between philosophical aesthetics and philosophy of art, for "the study of aesthetics is the study of the felt quality of perceptions of the senses, while the study of art is the study of the historical practice of making art objects" (Rough 2014). Rough also offers a second way of drawing the distinction, this time couched in terms of a distinction between aesthetic and artistic *properties*. The idea is that

> Aesthetic properties are those that are the properties of sensory taste that we perceive in the things we experience: properties like 'beautiful,' 'dynamic,' 'graceful'… Artistic properties are those that are relevant to artworks: facts about the context of creation, who the artist was, when they made the work, what their intentions for the work were, etc.

He does this, as the rest of his blog essay reveals, in order to note how difficult it actually is to make out the distinction in a principled way. For there may be no principle that successfully distinguishes between them at the level of description. Moreover, he claims,

> there is no obviously principled way of distinguishing between, say, the pleasure felt by slipping into a hot bath, the awe one feels before a brilliant sunset, and whatever aesthetic response is felt when one contemplates a Caravaggio.

Notice that the claim he makes is that there is no principled way to distinguish among the aesthetic pleasures taken in everyday objects and activities and the *aesthetic* pleasures taken in works of art.

But is there no way to distinguish between verdictive claims that are aesthetic and verdictive claims that are artistic? A more successful attempt is made at the level of verdicts by Robert Stecker in a series of essays beginning at least as far back as 2007. The "test"—as he calls it—for whether a verdict is aesthetic or artistic is this:

> artistic value derives from what artists successfully intend to do *in* their works as mediated by functions of the art forms and genres to which the works belong. [So] does one need to understand the work to appreciate its

> being valuable in that way? If so, it is an artistic value. If not, it is not. (Stecker 2012: 357)

And, in a later essay still, he has "proposed fleshing out 'understanding' in terms of the kind of insight we gain through interpretation or a certain kind of interpretation" (Stecker 2015: 395).[3]

In this context, consider this evaluative statement:

(3) "*Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens*, is a better movie than *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*."

It is certainly possible to express this judgment and, when asked to support or defend it—by, say, someone who actually *liked* Jar Jar Binks—to simply stare as if to say, "how can you possibly ask me to defend *a preference*?!" This would be to take the expression "is a better movie than" as merely indicated a comparative preference, much like your preference for spinach over broccoli; or even simply for okra. In that case, given Stecker's test, you would be uttering an *aesthetic* evaluation.

But of course, you are likely instead to be tempted to say things about the plot structures of the two movies, the characters and the roles they play, even the acting.[4] But notice that *now* you are discussing the descriptive features of the movies and of movies, as works of art. That is, you are calling attention to features of the movies *qua* made-objects, perhaps even giving an interpretation of the movies, so as to justify the comparative judgment you have made. Your verdict will be, as Stecker's test proposes, an *artistic* verdictive judgment.

What this suggests is that, in certain cases, both aesthetic and artistic verdictive judgments can be professed about the same things. But a further point is that usually artistic verdicts concern man-made, craft-based works of art.

Finally, consider these claims.

(4) "That was a gorgeous sunrise."
(5) "That sunrise was quite good."
(6) "That was a better sunrise than the one yesterday."
(7) "Sunrises in this part of the country are more rewarding than those at home."

I would not dispute that you could make comparative judgments of these latter two sorts. But what is crucial is that you *need not understand* how sunrises occur—including how clouds of dust, for example, affect their vibrancy—in order to make such judgments. And I conclude that, at the verdictive level, we do have a distinction—between aesthetic and artistic verdicts—that is worth drawing and worth paying attention to.

A good deal of confusion is caused by not keeping these straight. For example, Jerrold Levinson writes this:

[3] The "certain way of interpreting" he refers to here relects his commitment to "work meaning," discussed above, at the end of the previous section.

[4] Of course, should you make disparaging remarks about Liam Neeson's acting in *The Phantom Menace*, I confess I would have to agree.

> In this short article I explore two related themes, between which there is, I hope to show, a curious tension. The first is the fact of there being demonstrably better and worse artworks. The second is the undeniable importance of personal taste as regards preferences among works of art.
> What should be the relationship between what one as an individual prefers in the realm of art and what is objectively artistically superior? To what degree should the former be aligned with the latter? Might there be a conflict between these two apparent values, that is, on the one hand, one's own taste in art and, on the other, what is truly better art? If there is such a conflict, in what way might it be resolved or reduced? (Levinson 2010: 225)

This question posed by Levinson depends on the acceptance to two facts: a) that there are demonstrably better and worse artworks with b) that our tastes—what we prefer—differ with respect to works of art. One thing this points to is that there is a bifurcation in our understanding of "verdicts," between the verdict we would make on behalf of everyone and the verdict we would make on our own behalf.

5. *Three theories of criticism*

Many people believe that, because the verdict we make on our own behalf is ineluctably inflected by our personal preferences, there really is no possibility of rendering verdicts on everyone else's behalf. For that seems to require a level of objectivity (or at least intersubjectivity) that the second fact shows, it is sometimes said, we cannot aspire to. On the basis of accepting the second of the facts that Levinson refers to, many people deny that the first fact claim is actually true. This observation about what many people have had to say has given rise to at least three different theories of criticism, or of evaluation, i.e., of verdictive judgments.

The first "solution"

In Hume's famous essay "Of the Standard of Taste" we have the first possible solution (Hume 1757). This solution allows for the two fact-claims to be true and resolves them by holding that we have good reason to appeal to "ideal critics" who possess good taste and who can discern which objects are worthy of aesthetic attention. There are a number of problems with "the ideal critics solution," as it has been called. But one advantage it has is that it seems to square with the fact we are able to learn from others, others whose judgment we trust, and so whose good taste should lead us to choose the right things. It also squares with the fact we do seem to acquire "taste" from following the judgments of others whom we trust.

But these advantages form a two-edged sword: for at least some of those others whom we trust may just be snobs. That, at any rate, seems to be the current view of most undergraduates—and their teachers—in university level institutions in the USA. And they are not alone, of course (Kieran 2010). Of course, this attitude on the part of many may be nothing more than prejudice; and there is no reason to think that

we should follow the advice of the ignorant over that offered by the educated. However, we will make no progress by tossing about insults.

There are, as already indicated, some other, and more severe, problems with "the ideal critics solution." Briefly they concern two things: Does the artistic appreciation of a work of art depend on first-hand acquaintance with that work of art? There is independent, empirical, evidence that this appeal, to the need for first person experience in order to support any verdictive judgment, is false (Robson 2013). However, if there were such a need, then there is considerably less pressure to accept the ideal critics solution. For no one, we might think, not even a truly *ideal and reliable* critic, could tell *me* what kind of experience I will or should have with any given work of art. And, secondly, how does the ideal critic come to her/his views in the first place? It is either by a process of learning from others whom *they* regard as ideal critics or it is by a process independent of the existence of ideal critics. If the latter, then we don't need them; all we have to do is undergo that independent process. If the former, then we have a "vicious infinite regress"—that is, there is no rational starting place in this chain.

The second "solution"

The second solution is concerned with analyzing more closely what is involved in the second of the two facts Levinson cites. This fact, remember, is that our *individual* preferences are considerably diverse when it comes to works of art. The question then becomes, absent an ideal-critic solution, can an individual come to change her preferences *rationally* so as to make them line up with the judgments made on behalf of everyone (that even she is inclined to make) that some works of art are simply better than others?

This should be seen as engaging with some features of the by-now standard analyses of preferences. Among those features will be that any two alternative preferences are called "incomparable" whenever the preference relation is incomplete with respect to them and they will be called "incommensurable" whenever it is impossible to measure them with the same unit of measurement. To be sure, cases of irresolvable incompleteness are often also regarded as cases of incommensurability. In moral philosophy, irresolvable incompleteness is usually discussed in terms of the related notion of a *moral dilemma*. In aesthetics and philosophy of art, irresolvable incompleteness is often discussed in terms of the related notion of no-fault differences in preferences. But the feature of these analyses that is likely to draw most attention is the feature of *transitivity* of both strong preferences, indifference, and weak preferences.[5] Transitivity is a controversial property, and many

[5] $A \succcurlyeq B \wedge B \succcurlyeq C \rightarrow A \succcurlyeq C$ (*transitivity* of weak preference)
The corresponding properties of the other two relations are defined analogously:
$A \sim B \wedge B \sim C \rightarrow A \sim C$ (*transitivity* of indifference)
$A \succ B \wedge B \succ C \rightarrow A \succ C$ (*transitivity* of strict preference)

examples have been offered to show that it does not hold in general. These examples can be used to show that actual human beings may have cyclic preferences. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the same applies to the idealized rational agents of preference logic. Perhaps such patterns are due to irrationality or to other factors, such as lack of knowledge or discrimination, that prevent actual humans from being rational in this sense. There is a strong tradition, not least in economic applications, to regard transitivity as a necessary prerequisite of rationality. One crucial argument for this rests on the importance of preferences for choosing. Preferences should be *choice guiding*. They should be used to guide our choices among the elements of a given set of preferred objects or activities. But when choosing, for example, from the set, {A, B, C}, a preference relation that is not transitive does not guide choice at all: any or none of the alternatives should be chosen according to that relation. This is also why a good case can be made for running a so-called "dutchbook" argument against someone whose preferences are not transitive. The transitivity of preference, it seems, is a necessary condition for a meaningful connection between preferences and choice.

Crucially, for the second solution, preferences have been interpreted as expressions of value. "$A \succ B$" then means that more value is assigned to A than to B, and "$A \sim B$" that the same value is assigned to the two. As noted above, there is a strong tradition, particularly in economics, to equate preference with choice. Preference is considered to be hypothetical choice, and choice to be revealed preference. And, in the aesthetic conception of verdicts, we *should* think of preferences as strongly connected to our choices. After all, in daily life we ask each other things like this: "Which painting do you like?" or "Do you like Jay-Z's music video of 'Empire State of Mind'?" We think of these as connected to choices about what to buy, look at, and listen to. Even when we ask a further question that pushes us to use descriptions to support our verdicts, the question is "What was it about X that you liked?" And that question too is about what *kinds of things* we would choose to purchase, to look at, and to listen to.

For us to be fully responsible for our choices—especially if we are going to offer verdicts on everyone's behalf—we must answer the following three questions affirmatively: (A) Can we have reasons for our preferences? (B) Can preferences be rationally criticized? And (C) can we really change our preferences? Whether we can do all three of these things is a difficult and highly technical issue. But here are some observations.

We rarely consider those who justify their choice only by saying "Because I preferred to do this" as giving reasons. So, if choices (and hence preferences) are justifiable, we have to be able to give reasons for them. And one promising way to think of this is in terms of so-called "second order" preferences, the preference to be the kind of person who would prefer a particular kind of thing or to engage in or disengage from some particular kind of activity.

In practical reasoning, it is an important issue whether preferences can be criticized *rationally*. Preference sets as discussed so far are open to rational criticism only insofar as (i) they are inconsistent or (ii) they, in combination with beliefs, commit the agent to inferences that make the resulting preference sets inconsistent. But we should not be content with this if we really want to see why an individual might rationally seek to change her *intrinsic* preferences.[6]

There are several, largely empirical reasons, for thinking that people's preferences really do change over time. So, the second solution to the problem Levinson points out takes its cue from this discussion and concludes a) that we *do* change our intrinsic preferences, b) that they *can* be criticized from the point of view of taking on board a second-order preference for higher aesthetic experiences, and c) that therefore we *can* offer reasons, *from an aesthetic point of view*, about the aesthetic aspects of our first-order preferences. Whether we do so, of course, depends on how much we are ready to adopt the second order preference for "appreciative experiences worth having." But the point is, according to the proponents of this solution, we *can*.

The third "solution"

The third solution—which I favor—also agrees to the two facts, but thinks there is no real tension between them. For it assumes that philosophical aesthetics can account for the second of the facts and philosophy of art can account for the first one. Most of its focus is on the first fact: for it offers an "achievement view" of the nature of artistic merit, not an aesthetic view that is grounded in first-person experience, the quality of that experience, and preference sets. That is, contrary to the assumption shared between the Humean/Levinsonian solution and the second solution as well, it does not assume that the *artistic merit* of a work of art is to be explained by its "capacity..., in virtue of its form and content, to afford appreciative experiences worth having" (Levinson 2015: 226).

The third solution assumes there really are differences between philosophy of art and aesthetics. But it does not agree with the assumption that artistic merit depends on the capacity to provide aesthetic experiences of some kind.

Crucially, it holds that the first and second facts that Levinson describes have two very different kinds of explanations. The first kind of claim—that there are demonstrably better and worse artworks—asserts the *artistic* merits of a work of art on behalf of everyone by reference to the *achievements* made or not made in the particular work of art. Whether such achievements are or are not made in the work is an objective question of fact. The second kind of claim—that our tastes

[6] A clear and interesting discussion of extrinsic and intrinsic preferences, and the reason this demand is placed on intrinsic preferences can be found at (Hansson and Grüne-Yanoff 2012).

differ with respect to works of art—asserts the *aesthetic* value of a particular work of art to some individual or group on the basis of the aesthetic qualities that that individual or group *prefers*; and preferences are usually subjective or intersubjective.

This third solution squares with our standard ways of dealing with the lack of *artistic* value of forgeries. For, despite the fact they may provide *more* "appreciative experiences worth having" than even the originals may, they may still be objectively less valuable, in the same way that a piece of property may be less valuable, from a realtor's point of view, than some potential homeowners feel it is because of their preference to own it. It squares also with everyday kinds of remark about the aesthetic value of some works of art being merely opinions, because those comments are explicitly about what we like, and are not really about what is better or worse. Claims that are genuinely about what is better or worse in a work of art rest on considerations of the achievements in them, not on our varying preferences for or against them. Moreover, this solution is better positioned to explain why some works of art do not aim to provide high-quality aesthetic experiences. And, finally, it results in no contradiction between either finding that a work is good but not to one's liking or finding that a work is bad but is something one really likes (like a so-called "guilty pleasure").

This solution does *not* seem to explain why we have and continue to have the practices of art making and reception that we do have. One standard story, one that initially seems plausible, is that art practices arise in any culture because of a human preference for aesthetic experiences deemed worth having. A second part of that standard story is that art occurs in every culture because people will develop ways to ensure we have access to that kind of experience—and art is the most promising way to do that (Matthen 2013, 2015). I should caution that we must tread carefully here because there simply is very little actual direct evidence that this story, plausible as it is, is true (Nadal *et al.* 2018).

One way to address this issue is suggested by Noel Carroll (Carroll 2016).

> As an appreciative heuristic applied to art…the…approach proposes that, in order to appreciate a work of art, one must 1) identify its intended purpose or purposes and 2) determine the adequacy or appropriateness of its form—its formal choices—to the realization or articulation of its intended purpose (or purposes) (Carroll 2016: 4–5).

Moreover, "although, by laying out these elements sequentially, it may seem as though I am suggesting that they must be performed sequentially—first find the purpose, then see how it is or is not implemented successfully—these operations need not be performed in any specific order" (Carroll 2016: 5).

By "identifying its intended purpose" Carroll shows, I believe, how we might answer the challenge posed by the standard plausible stories about the evolution of art. This is because, according to Carroll and oth-

ers, the intended "purpose" of a work of art needs to be construed very broadly so as to include discovering an intended meaning, or discovering an intended aesthetic effect, discovering the purpose of providing cognitive experiences, discovering the purpose of providing certain specific affective experiences for an audience, and so on. And there is nothing incompatible within the idea that art—as a set of human practices of making and appreciating (including evaluating)—grew out of an initial impulse to provide aesthetic experiences worth having and then *outgrew* that, historically, to become a set of practices having purposes that are not necessarily aesthetic, or not only aesthetic, in nature.

6. *Achievements and artistic verdicts*

Aesthetic and artistic values and verdicts are different, not only because their targets are different, but also because one involves the values associated with preferences and the other involves the values of artistic achievements. David Davies articulates the commonly accepted alternative to this view (which he and others call "aesthetic empiricism" and with which he disagrees) as follows: "the basic principle of empiricist axiology [is] that the artistic value of a work of art resides in qualities of the experience it elicits in an appropriately primed viewer" where "experience" is understood not only to refer to direct perceptual encounters but also imaginative engagement with a work of art (Davies 2003: 255).

In contrast, Davies and Carroll both urge us to think of verdicts—the evaluations of works of art—on the achievement model. Carroll puts the point—which he calls "appreciation-as-sizing-up"—this way:

> This sense of "appreciate," in contrast to the "appreciation-as-liking" sense, is impersonal. Clearly, one can assess the value of something without liking it. One can assess the value of a piece of property without being attracted to it, for example, a decrepit tenement building. Furthermore, if "depreciate" is the opposite of "appreciate," one can surely estimate the diminished or diminishing value of something, while still regarding it with affection. I still cherish my old cashmere sweater although I realize its diminished value—not only is it somewhat tattered, but it has no more use-value for me, since I (unfortunately) outgrew it long ago. (Carroll 2016: 2)

Still, we can see why we might need more details about artistic achievements (Dorsch 2014). So, I offer the following considerations.

In a paper she initially delivered at the Central Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in 2014, Gwen Bradford was concerned about the question of whether claims about the meaning of life can ever be "objective," that is, whether a life can have "objective worth." One way to think about this is to suggest a way that "achievements can have objective worth" (Bradford 2015: 1).

Among the background assumptions in this paper is "that achievements are valuable in virtue of *challenge*, inter alia." (1) Bradford assumes this here, although she has argued for it elsewhere (Bradford 2016). The structure of achievements is this: "an achievement involves a

process that culminates in a product, outcome, or goal" (Bradford 2016: 796). Her assumption is based on the fact that not every achievement is of a worthwhile goal. Some simply are not—for example, climbing a mountain or peeling a banana—while others of course are—for example, painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling or creating the small pox vaccine. So, the intrinsic value of achievements, if they have any, probably lies elsewhere than in the fact they culminate in worthwhile goals. And the assumption she makes here is that the value has something to do with the difficulty, or challenge, that the adopter of a goal presents to herself.

Using J. S. Mill's famous "crisis" over imagining that all his life projects might be realized, Bradford notes that "Mill subsequently has something of a breakdown, overwhelmed by the sense that his aim has now "lost its charm" and seems worthless and "tragic" (Mill, 1989 [1873]. *Autobiography*: 112)" (Bradford 2015: 2). Bradford uses this story, in part, to motivate the claim that "there is something significant about the *pursuit* that is distinctive from the finished product" (Bradford 2015: 3).

But if there is something significant about pursuit beyond the value of the product, what precisely is that source of significance and value? It does not consist in the outright impossibility of a goal, such as squaring the circle. That Sisyphean picture of a goal is, perhaps, "the archetype of meaninglessness" (Bradford 2015: 4). However, there are other reasons a goal might be difficult or seem unreachable, and not be a paradigm of meaninglessness. Suppose "the goal develops and expands as we approach it," where this means both that "new aspects of the goal emerge and so the pursuit expands" and that "our understanding of what would amount to completion of the goal changes as we progress" (Bradford 2015: 4). Tellingly, the examples Bradford gives to illustrate this conception of what she calls "self-propagating goals" are the goals of a scientific understanding of some phenomena and *the goals of artists*. These seem both to have value that is independent of whether the goal is arrived at and to lend value to activities in pursuit of such goals. For, as Bradford comments, in such cases "the more you accomplish, the more is possible for you to accomplish" (Bradford 2015: 6).

So it is, one might well think, with works of art. Consider now two aesthetic evaluations and two artistic evaluations of the same object.

(8) "The Ennead Architect's design for the Natural History Museum of Utah, which once I loved, no longer appeals to me; and I do not enjoy looking at it."

(8*) "The Ennead Architect's design for the Natural History Museum of Utah fails because it is a hodge-podge of architectural styles and no effort is or has been made to integrate those varying styles either into a whole in which the styles seem to reflect on each other or into a whole in which the styles can be seen to complement each other."[7]

[7] Neither of these is true, by the way. I offer them only as examples.

(2) "The Morris Louis painting in the Nelson-Atkins really makes me weak in the knees."

(2*) "The Morris Louis painting owned and displayed by the Nelson-Atkins Gallery is one of his *Veil Paintings*, a "stain painting" consisting of waves of brilliant, curving color-shapes submerged in translucent washes through which separate colors emerge principally at the edges; and in the stain paintings Louis was concerned with the classic problems of pictorial space and the flatness of the picture plane."

One thing that is immediately evident in the two verdicts is that one does not need to understand anything about the museum or the painting to have aesthetic reactions like (8) and (2). In contrast, it is difficult to see how one could have reactions like (8*) or (2*) without such understanding or mis-understanding.

So, what is to be understood/misunderstood in these latter two cases? It's fairly natural to say that (8*) holds there was a manifestly possible goal that was not even aimed at and (2*) holds there was a possible goal that was aimed at and achieved. And what was understood or misunderstood on the part of she who asserted (8*) and (2*) was the nature of the achievement, what was there to be aimed at, so to speak, and the effort it would have taken or did take to achieve it.

This, however, is not the final word. For consider the achievements imagined in the following two cases:

(8*) "The Ennead Architect's design for the Natural History Museum of Utah fails because it is a hodge-podge of architectural styles and no effort is or has been made to integrate those varying styles either into a whole in which the styles seem to reflect on each other or into a whole in which the styles can be seen to complement each other."

(9*) "The Ennead Architect's design for the Natural History Museum of Utah fails because the function of a natural history museum is to be programmable in such a way that its patrons can get the information they seek; and this building is not programmable in that way."[8]

(8*) is clearly about styles and combinations of styles in architectural design; and (9*) is about the functions that architects must think about in developing and executing their designs. If, following Stecker, we hold that what has to be understood in works of art is expressed in the interpretations we give of works, *and* if we hold—as I do—that interpretations are either about what a work of art *is for*, what it *is about*, or what it *means*, then we should say that (8*) is more about *work meaning* and (9*) is more about *function*, i.e., what the object *is for*.

Are these in the kind of tension that Forsey seems to think? I think, rather, that we should be pluralists about what it takes to evaluate a

[8] Neither of these is true either.

work of art and that to render an artistic verdict, as opposed to rendering an aesthetic verdict, one must show how one *understands* the object or activity being evaluated. But that requirement can be met in a variety of ways, by any kind of interpretation of the art object or art activity or even by a placing an art object in a category for descriptive purposes (so long as the category itself is sufficiently action- or belief-guiding).

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Artistic Conversations: Artworks and Personhood

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This essay explores claims made frequently by artists, critics, and philosophers that artworks bear personifying traits. Rejecting the notion that artists possess the Pygmalion-like power to bring works of art to life, the article looks seriously at how parallels may exist between the ontological structures of the artwork and human personhood. The discussion focuses on Arthur Danto's claim that the "artworld" itself manifests properties that are an imprint of the historical representation of the "world." These "world" representations are implicitly embodied in the artist's style. The "world" that is stamped on the people of a historical period entails a point of view that influences how they might act, something like the logic that guides a conversation. This "conversational" logic is also extant in the artworks that artists of a given period create. This analysis of Danto's account of how people are connected to their world clarifies Danto's assertions that a parallel structure of personification in the artwork and the human exists. It also explains his claims that artworks themselves appear to be in a kind of dialogue.

Keywords: Arthur Danto, personification of art, artistic dialogue, artistic agency.

In this essay, I discuss Danto's account of the human person and how it is essential to understanding the notion of embodied meaning he employs in his definition of the artwork. The essay begins with the question of what Danto means when he suggests that artworks have some sort of personification. Brian Soucek raises the question in his essay "Personifying art," which examines the question of personification in art, juxtaposing the positions of those who are sympathetic to those who are not. He suggests that by examining who we are as humans such that we personify art, we find a third way to look at the dilemma. This essay follows Soucek's lead but goes beyond the solution he points to, focusing on what Danto wrote on the human person and its relation to art. Scattered throughout what can seem to be obscure offhand com-

ments, Danto's account of the person is not fully articulated. Nonetheless, Danto's references to the human as a being in a "sentential state"[1] and the account of *ens representans* he gives in *The Body/Body Problem* and *Connections to the World* together provide a consistent account of the person. My conclusion is that in Danto's view, it is not the person that bestows a kind of personification on the artwork. Rather, the ontological structure he refers to as our *world,*[2] which gives us a point of view, is also at play in the creation of the artwork. Through "transitivity," the activity of the artist imparts perspective, as "an ontological category," to the artwork, thereby giving it some of the same properties of personhood that we as humans also possess.

Discussing the essays he wrote in *The Body/Body Problem,* Danto notes "how frequently I drew upon analogies between human beings and artworks, preeminently paintings and photographs, to clarify issues in the metaphysics of embodiment and of truth" (Danto 1999a: ix). Indeed, the metaphoric references made throughout his work are too frequent to mention here. The intensional relationship of the metaphoric reference of artworks to people brings to light a parallel in the common way that humans are related to art and to other persons. "There is something like a parallel between what one might call the metaphysics of persons and the metaphysics of artworks" (Danto 2012: 294). Soucek (2008) notes Danto's use of the analogy of the personification of art when discussing forgeries. In "Moving pictures," Danto asks if it would matter if a recently widowed woman, whose husband had died unexpectedly, were promised a clone of her husband, an exact replacement, in, let's suppose, three weeks. Should she love the clone as the original? Danto argues that it would matter, and the relationship of the artwork to a mere object and the artwork to the forgery are parallel. Something like the soul of the work would be missing (Danto 1999b: 212–214). "An artwork is then a physical object with whatever in the philosophy of art corresponds to the soul in the philosophy of the person" (Danto 2012: 294).

In his essay, Soucek (2008) examines two positions, one, like Danto's, attributing something to the artwork that is also in the person, and the other, representing those who argue that though personification is understandable, any attribution of "sentience, or self-reflection, or agency" to the artwork is something akin to a category mistake, and

[1] "Let me recklessly speak now of men as being in certain *sentential states*….I shall think of sentential states as *internal* to men …in predicating 'believes-that-*s*' of [a man], we are asserting that [a man] is in a sentential state" (Danto 1968: 89). What "we essentially are is a certain representation of the world: a person in a deep sense is the way he represents the world" (Danto 1973: 22 n26 on 201).

[2] Danto does not necessarily use world in the same manner across all of his texts. Here, I will italicize *world* when it means a representation of the actual world. I will refer to the actual world as the world. Italicized, *world* will be a representation *of* world. A *world* representation, as I use it, will also refer to the representation *of* the (actual) world.

hence false (230). Ultimately, Soucek rejects both positions, opting for a third path that examines what kind of persons we are such that we personify art. He concludes that "personification of art is not ultimately about art at all. It is rather about us—about persons" (238). Soucek poses a challenge to Danto's notion of personhood in art, raising the question as to where art's power—to speak to us, to transform us, even to evoke change in us—comes from, suggesting we look inward, not to art itself. This approach addresses the problem of how or whether art can be 'transformed' by the artist. If we were to use Hume's law, which we might formulate as 'there is nothing in the conclusion that is not in the premise', it is hard to see how something could be added to the artwork which was not transferred from the artist, and if that is the case, do we have the Pygmalion-like power to produce a thing that entails personifying attributes through artistic means? Kant's response to Hume's laws was to recognize the active role the human mind plays in constructing the world we experience. In many senses, I'm very sympathetic to this approach. But this is not how Danto formulates the relation of the person to the artwork; also, he does not look to the inner self as the source of art's 'personification'. Thus, to dismiss his approach as a category error would be a mistake.

To defend Danto's notion that a parallel between "the metaphysics of persons and the metaphysics of artworks" exists, I bring attention to the following facets of Danto's philosophy: (a) Humans are representational beings, and the representations of our world that we receive are historically situated; (b) Danto sees little difference between inner and outer consciousness, except that individuals do not have the advantage of privileged access to their own inner states (since one can discern them about as well from an external perspective); (c) the representations that are our essence are, in some cases, akin to texts, vehicles of understanding, and can be embodied in mediums besides the flesh; (d) the mind may be like a text, and along these lines, Danto (1999a) speculates "if we are, so to speak, a text made flesh then a beginning might be made in addressing certain problems concerning the identity and unity of a person against the model of the unity and identity of a text" (220).[3]

To better understand Danto's position, it is helpful to examine how Danto may have been influenced by Nietzsche, who Lydia Goehr (2008) holds was his most significant predecessor (84, 152). I contend that the influence of Hegel in Danto's work is often overstated, and that of Nietzsche or Sartre is as often overlooked. Looking at Danto's philosophy of art within the context of his non-aesthetic writings shows it is a mistake to read him as holding that humans give art agency or personification, that this is something *we* do and that *we are aware* that we do it. Artists do have skill and certain intangible attributes that are manifest through their style, but what gives the artwork personification, or

[3] For an in-depth discussion of these points see (Snyder 2018: 147–167).

perhaps even agency, are the sentential structures that give us agency. These are fundamentally the same structures. Danto's interpretation of Nietzsche cannot and should not be understood as his own system. Nonetheless, Danto tells us that he has "quarried" the works of thinkers on whom he has written, incorporating their thoughts into his own philosophy (Danto 1975: 12; LLP reply to Rush 480),[4] and I think this holds true here.

One reason that Danto is often miscategorized as a Hegelian, outside of his frequent praise of Hegel's aesthetic theory and his apparent adoption of Hegel's end-of-art theory, is that in his effort to overcome the mind/body problem, he shares Hegel's aim of overcoming transcendent metaphysics, a task Hegel has in common with Kant. Though his approach is more ontological than Kant's epistemological project, Danto strives to 'eliminate' Cartesian dualism by reducing, in some manner, the significance of the inner-subjective state that Descartes uses to ground his own existence as one separate from the external, material world. In the end, Danto recognizes that the dualism cannot be completely eliminated, and he posits a sort of Spinozistic-materialism in response to Descartes, arguing that there are two aspects of material existence: there is material that represents and material that does not (Danto 1999a: 192, LLP 60–61). He refers to this as "representational materialism."[5]

I once encountered the argument that one need not know anything about the human subject in Danto's philosophy of art. I could not disagree more. Though Danto clearly eschews the Cartesian notion of inner subject often employed by Continental philosophers, in order to support his own answer to the mind/body problem, he replaces the Cartesian subject with a 'thinner' subject that in my estimation is outside the mainstream of philosophical thought.[6] The thinner notion of the person, that Danto refers to as *res* or *ens representans*,[7] is, I hope to show, the key to understanding Danto's philosophy at a deeper level.[8] In fact, in my assessment, his philosophy of art cannot be fully under-

[4] The following abbreviation is used in this essay: LLP for Auxier, R. E. and Lewis E. H. (eds.) 2013. This volume contains essays by multiple authors with responses from or an essay by Danto. When cited, if the authorial context is not clear, the author's name will be inserted after the abbreviation. Otherwise, assume that the reference is to Danto.

[5] Danto was a student of Susan Langer, who was an anti-reductionist materialist. Danto's representational materialism is likely a continuation of Langer's ontology.

[6] Danto's entry on the "Person" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* might foreshadow his position, especially in his suggestion that, "Persons may indeed, then, be ontologically primitive as "wavicles" (not waves and not particles, but both together) are perhaps physically primitive."

[7] Danto appears to use these terms interchangeably.

[8] Danto's notion of the person seems to be influenced more by Eastern philosophy, perhaps drawing on Nietzsche, and according to Randall Auxier, Danto's early interest in Zen.

stood without understanding his account of the human as a representational being. In *The Body/Body Problem* Danto (1999a) writes:

> There is a general problem of how our representations are embodied, presumably in our central nervous system, but I have been struck, in reading through the essays that compose this volume, by how frequently I drew upon analogies between human beings and artworks, preeminently paintings and photographs, to clarify issues in the metaphysics of embodiment and of truth. In the past some years I have written extensively on the concept of art, but what these essays make vivid is the degree to which that concept has dominated the way I have thought philosophically about any topic, and this has set my writing apart from much of the philosophical mainstream. But that can be explained, I think, through the fact that art is typically thought to be marginal to philosophy, a kind of ontological frill, whereas it is in my view absolutely central to thinking about subjects—especially subjects having to do with our own philosophical nature, to which the pertinence of the concept of art seems initially remote … [These essays] project a single, evolving conception of human beings, considered as beings who represent as *ens representans* with works of art simultaneously being understood as materially embodied representations. (ix–x)

As does Hegel, Danto holds that art and philosophy are intertwined in human experience, and they both strive, in their philosophies, to overcome the subject-object dualism defining the mind/body problem. This, given Danto's claim that art has ended, leads readers to the conclusion that there must be a Hegelian reading of Danto. But even if influenced early on by Hegel, as many have noted, Danto takes a fundamentally different position, and his solution to the mind/body problem in many ways moves closer to Nietzsche's thought as a "body/body" problem. Danto speculates that the representational subject lives in a "sentential state," in which "belief is a relationship between a person and a sentence" (LLP 32). But humans are not the only material that represents; hence, examining this connection more closely will yield a better understanding of his notion of art's 'personification'.

> My hope is not so much to urge more philosophers to become aestheticians, much less philosophers of history, but to make plain what we sacrifice in our ultimate self-understanding if we think of art and of history as anything but fundamental to how we are made, and how our bodies must therefore be in order for this to be true. (Danto 1999a: x)

Danto (1999a) had planned to write a book on *ens representans* (15), but confessed he never had the energy. Still, he sees representations as the unifying theme of his five major works[9] (LLP 29–30), and pushing the implications of his thinner, perhaps Zen-like, notion of the person leads to a far richer understanding of his theory of art. It also reveals a stream of thought that points to what I see as a radically different

[9] Danto (1999a) writes that he was inspired by Santayana's five-volume *Life of Reason* to write a system of philosophy in five volumes; *Analytical Philosophy of History*, *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*, *Analytical Philosophy of Action*, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, and *The Body/Body Problem*, are the results of this endeavor (14–15).

account of humans and their art, and though it goes well beyond the scope of this essay, it could open the way to new theological insights.

1. *Style is the man:* The body/body problem

In the sections that follow, I briefly discuss how the basic action may have been used as an anti-dualistic tool; Danto's account of the person as representation and text, to understand the relation of the human to the artworld[10] and how it emerges without the 'dialogue' of an institutional theory of art; and his account of inner and outer consciousness in representation, communication, and language, which spells out how art can transfigure an audience without the artist's self-reflection or a dialogue among artist and audience.[11]

Danto tells us that the basic action, in its early manifestations, was an attempt to overcome the mind/body problem. Statements like 'I am my hand, I am my body' went with the idea that the basic action could bridge the gap Descartes opened between the mind and body. Sartre (1992) wrote "The point of view of pure knowledge is contradictory; there is only the point of view of engaged knowledge. [Thus,] knowledge and action are only two abstract aspects of an original, concrete relation" (407). Sartre's anti-Cartesian claim was part of a broader movement that led thinkers to believe the body must hold properties common to the mind that evoked action in it. It was hoped that if the causal gap between the mind and the body could be filled, perhaps the "cognitive gap" would follow too. The basic action was one of the key threads of this search for unity of knowledge and action (Danto 1999a: 66–67): "knowledge- and action-ascriptions bridge the space between representations and objects" (Danto 1973: 22). But the basic action could not fulfill this promise, and Danto (1999a) lost interest in it, considering it a failure (51, 80). The problem, as the locus of the mind/body problem shifted, did not go away. "By closing the gap between our minds and our bodies, we open a gap between our bodies, on the one side, and mere bodies on the other" (64). Danto's solution was to rearticulate the mind/body problem as the body/body problem (LLP Auxier xxvii), not necessarily solving the problem, but doing away with philosophical is-

[10] The "artworld" is a term Danto coined in 1964: "to see something as art requires something the eye cannot de[s]cry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (580). It should not be confused with the common usage of the 'art world' referring simply to artists, art historians, curators, etcetera who are involved with or make a profession in the 'world of art'. Danto does not always use a single word to refer to the "artworld," but in this essay, when I use a single word, it refers to Danto's conceptual structure; when I use two words, "art world," I refer to the people involved in the arts.

[11] The dialogue among artists, curators and audience (the art world) might be appropriate to what George Dickie referred to as the institutional theory of art. Nonetheless, Danto considered the institutional theory of art incapable of providing a rule that differentiates visible from non-visible attributes of art.

sues bound to dual substances. This returns us to Danto's account of representational realism:

> there are two kinds of matter in the universe, matter that is representational and matter that is not. It endorses a metaphysics that holds the world to be such that parts of it rise to represent itself, including, of course, the further fact that those parts not only represent the world but represent that they do so. Representational beings—ourselves and animals—are like openings in the darkness, like lights going on, illuminating the world and themselves at once. (1989: 244)

Danto's approach, as I understand it, is unique. Danto always maintained that he remained within the fold of analytical philosophy. Working broadly within the analytical framework of the philosophy of language, he recognized, with Nietzsche, that it is an illusion that language corresponds directly to the world.

> I saw [Nietzsche's] work as anticipating Russell and Wittgenstein…Most of what appealed to me in Nietzsche was his essential insight that philosophers had tended to think that if language is to fit the world, it had to do so like a tight garment, matching the articulation of the human body. To every subject in a sentence, there must be a substance in the world to which it corresponds as if, he says in more [than] one place, the lightning is something separate from the flashing. This is grammatical superstition. (LLP reply to Andina 512)

Though Danto did not agree with Nietzsche that there is no world to which language could correspond, his choice of representation as the basic orientation of his philosophy reflected the recognition of this "grammatical superstition." In broad strokes, the argument Danto lays out in *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge* for the representation having an advantage over descriptively oriented linguistic philosophy goes something like this. An example of a representation is '*x* believes *p*'. A truth value cannot be ascribed to this if one does not know whether or not *p* corresponds to some state in the world. Danto circumvents the problem of knowing whether *p* is true or not by viewing the state of belief as itself true, the representation is true, insofar as '*x* believes *p* is true', independent of *p* corresponding to anything in the world. Thus, the belief, as a representation, is intensional. Its truth as a belief does not rely on there being any extensional objects, or objects in the world that refer to it. For Danto, our entire *world,* as we understand it, is a representation, and its correspondence to something in the world is not guaranteed; because we believe our representation of the world, our *world,* to be true, we never question it. It still holds, nonetheless, that our survival chances are increased as our representation of the world approaches the 'actual' world.

The representation is not descriptive. Danto chose the representation as the focus of his philosophical system because it was prior to description, description being too closely tied to an inclination for truth (Danto 1968; LLP 29–30). The truth itself was not so much of a problem, but philosophical systems that strive for a strong correspondence the-

ory of truth often become trapped in their inflexibility. Danto's choice allows for a more pliable antifoundationalist approach better suited to creating definitions, which in many cases are prior to truth statements. Without determining which parts of language refer to which parts of the world, we can have no truth. Representations need not be true, insofar as they correspond to something in the world. This works well for art. But this does not mean representations are against truth; historical narratives are representations, which, unlike art, strive to convince us of their veracity (LLP Ankersmit 395–397, 415).

The sentential state is one in which someone believes something. Representations are sentential states of sorts; hence, if we are representational beings, we are also sentential beings (Danto 1999a: 27, 87–88; Danto 1968: ix, 86–97). Danto, recognizing that there is no knowledge outside of our frame of reference, inserts the subject, a sentential being, into the frame of his philosophical system. He must draw a line, though, between material that represents and material that does not represent—humans and animals being those that do.[12] "As far as the mind-body problem goes, the view I am advancing is that the body is itself sententially structured. Perhaps, even probably, what is sententially structured is nervous tissue, which is perhaps all that neurophilosophy requires to vindicate its chief insight" (Danto 1989: 243). He also makes clear that the sentential structure, which forms the representations that are our "essence" (Danto 1999a: 203), is not found simply in flesh. "It is the same proposition whether written or spoken or believed, whether it is made up of sound waves, layers of ink, or nervous tissue" (Danto 1989: 243; see Danto 1968: 95). Representations, as Danto refers to them, encompass a broad array of communicative devices. "Propositions, pictures, names, signs, ideas, appearances—for to be an appearance is to be an appearance of something, leaving it always open if the thing itself really appears or not—not to mention impressions, concepts, and images, are all vehicles of understanding as I mean for that expression to be used" (Danto 1989: 50–51; see Danto 1968: 160–161). Danto considers these vehicles to be representations and the "central components of philosophical thought," irrespective of where they are "housed" (Danto 1989: 51). So, the line between *ens representans* and things that represent is blurred at this point, since he sees no fundamental difference in regard to a representation's content and how it is embodied (Danto 1999a: 91–92). Still, not all representations are as we are. A gas gauge represents some truth about the world if functioning properly, but "the representation must modify the *ens representans* in some way other than that which consists simply in having the representation" (Danto 1989: 251).

[12] Danto mentions with some frequency the idea that animals, like us, are representing beings. In other texts, he makes frequent references to the representational capacities of dogs. That said, humans are creatures that live in history, and animals do not (Danto 1989: 273).

According to Danto's account of representational materialism, the human body exists in two aspects: the basic biological mechanism and the part that lives in history and represents. "We are within the world under the laws of causation and outside the world under the laws of representation" (1999a: 93). The human that is the body is the human that is the person (I am my body), but the one cannot be reduced to the other. As sentential beings, we are, to use a metaphor he often employs, words made flesh (143, 222). One consequence of the move away from Cartesian mind/body dualism—which posited an inner subjectivity such that the thinking subject had a special advantage when it came to knowing her own interiority—is that in its material orientation, the inner realm of *ens representans* loses much, if not all, of its significance. It is not so much that there is no interior; rather, we manifest our interiority externally because we are not aware of it as such. Because *ens representans* has no privileged access to its own inner states, more can be discerned from the outer perspective, for "we do not occupy our *own* interiors" (Danto 2007: 339).

This leveling of inner and outer plays a role in Danto's theory (1) in that if one were to gain access to another's interior, one would gain little and (2) given (1) when the historian forms a narrative statement[13] referring to a past era, 'understanding' other minds from an external perspective is not a problem. (1) Regarding the dualism of mind and body, Danto speculates that if we could actually monitor the neurochemical activity of our brains as we laugh, tell secrets, or philosophize, we would get little from this that we didn't get otherwise (Danto 1999a: 28). More than once, he discusses an example used by Leibniz, who asks, what if we created a machine that could "think, feel and have perception." If the machine were large enough, we could step into it, witnessing thought, feeling, and perception as it happens. But, he supposes, it would likely just resemble the inner workings of a mill. Would this tell us more about the inner human side of what it is to think, feel, and perceive? We may learn more about how the mind functions, but little more about what it actually is to feel. If we could enter into another person, as Leibniz's mill, Danto doesn't really think we'd get much more than we would from talking to people, knowing them, reading their letters, or even perhaps following them on Facebook or Twitter (Danto 1989: 255–256; Danto 2013: 93–94).

[13] According to Danto, when narrative-historical models are employed, the narrative structure is useful only when looking back in time. Thus, any attempt to project on the future a historical model that assumes a specific account of history as a whole is not prediction but "prophecy" (Danto 2007: 9). Danto's narrative philosophy of history focuses on what he calls narrative sentences. Danto uses the following example to explain the narrative sentence. In 1618, it could not have been stated that 'The Thirty Years' War has begun today.' Only from the perspective of future historians, after the war's completion in 1648, could one make reference to The Thirty Years' War (Danto 2007: 152).

(2) In terms of other minds, and other minds of other times, the issue is somewhat more complex since it involves presuppositions concerning the structure of narrative sentences. Because our representation manifests how we understand and causally interact with the world, we live in it unaware. We can be aware of another's representation of the world, especially if it differs from our own, but of our own, we cannot know it as we use it. We would have to become a new self, perhaps looking back at the self of another time, to apprehend it. So the outer perspective, again, is in some way superior to the inner. Danto wrote, in response to Lydia Goehr, that he did not rely as much as she thought on the artistic intention, though it is indeed important. He conceded that artistic intention was important for *Kunstwissenschaft* insofar as establishing the general aim of the artist is important because, though there is no limit to how many interpretations there can be for an artwork, not all interpretations are possible. Regarding narrative sentences, Danto's answer was couched in terms of the way he prioritizes the inner and the outer. Intention,

> has little bearing in the philosophy of history when the apparatus of narrative sentences is introduced—Petrarch could not have intended to open *the* Renaissance, Erasmus did not aim to be the best pre-Kantian moral theorist in all of Europe. But neither does it arise in the interpretive redescriptions we give of artworks when we talk about them hermeneutically. (LLP 388)

The significance of an action, whether an artistic creation or one that causes an event, and what there is to 'know' about it, will not be known until later; thus, the immediate intention may not be congruent with its significance. The contours of an individual's *world* cannot be known to that individual, but only to those who observe the person. In terms of historical context, an individual's *world* is only graspable by a historian when that *world* is no longer lived.

It is important to understand what bearing a materialist *ens representans* with flattened inner and outer realms (at a minimum an inner realm of lessened significance) has on Danto's account of embodied meaning, especially in terms of how the artwork comes to be manifest with artistic intention. There are several important issues that I hope to clarify here: (1) to provide a fuller explanation for how embodied meaning, what in Hegelian terms is a universal particular, is possible; (2) how Danto's frequent reference to the personhood of art can make sense within his system; and (3) given (1–3), I would like to make sense of Danto's suggestion that artworks are in a dialogue with each other.

Works of art, as *ens representans*, are "materially embodied representations" (Danto 1999a: x). By choosing the medium of representation as the basis of his philosophical system, Danto saw a pre-descriptive way to handle epistemological issues in a more flexible manner. It also better reflects how we live in the world. Because one of the richest repositories of representations is found in the realm of art, Danto takes a special interest in it. To my surprise, the reasoning behind Danto's assertion that art and philosophy are interconnected is not due to art's

expressive qualities or some unique property art has in manifesting the human condition. Rather, it is because we share properties with representations, insofar as we occupy the same space between language and the world (Danto 1968: ix, 63). Frank Ankersmit contends that for Danto, "aesthetics is not merely an interesting offshoot of philosophy in general, to be addressed after a few more fundamental philosophical issues have been settled; on the contrary, aesthetics, because of its preoccupation with representation, is where all meaningful philosophy *originates*" (LLP 395). As a creature bound to representations, *ens representans* shares a common philosophical origin with works of art, which points to a common form of embodiment. Danto has made much of his somewhat tenuous belief that the mind is like a text, that it can be read as a text and that we are texts embodied (Danto 1989: 248, 267; Danto 1999a: 144, 204, 222). "Why should we not suppose that some day sentences might serve to individuate neural states, so that we might read a man's beliefs off the surfaces of his brain?" (Danto 1968: 96). A sentence '*x* believes *p*' can exist in print, on ink and paper, be spoken or inscribed on our being. The content or meaning is fundamentally the same. A belief may be that '*x* is *p*', when in fact '*x* is not *p*'. Like a picture, it need not be true, and at the pre-linguistic level, one can have such a state. Even a dog can have a belief, which is intensional, thereby being in a sentential state, perhaps believing it is taking a ride to the park, when in fact the veterinarian is the destination. The medium of "vehicles of understanding," representations, or sentential states are broad. The chart below is an attempt to show the relation of representing and non-representing to organic and inorganic things.

Type of 'object' / Capacity of 'object'	Organic	Inorganic
Representing/ sentential	Animalia	Art, texts, some machines
Non-representing	Human body, protozoa	Stones and bones
Personhood	Human person, animals?	Art, texts
Agency	Human person	Art and texts?

Table 4.1 Type and capacity of objects

What should be noted is that not all things that represent, or that are sentential, are organic. Pictures, texts, some machines, to mention a few, are inorganic.[14] As Danto stated, what he wrote in *The Body/Body Problem* was never fully integrated into a systematic text, but the references to the word enfleshed and the mind as a text are found throughout his works. Thus, I believe the answer to the question of embodied meaning is found in the properties shared among living and non-living material that represents. There are at least some attributes of the representations making us human—that are part of our essence—which can exist in non-organic mediums: art, as the embodiment of matter and form, is one of those mediums.

The representation is intensional, a state of belief about something that may or may not exist. It is what manifests our human meanings: our representations are our *world* inscribed upon us, and the representation that we more or less inherit from our place and time in history determines to a large extent the choices we will make, a point of view being something that "representational causes" take into consideration (Danto 1989: 272–273; Danto 1973: 188–189). The significance of Danto's shift away from subjective interiority becomes clearer here. If the representations that make us 'who we are' are external, then they can be externalized in other mediums, such as art.

> The mind, construed as embodied—as *enfleshed*—might perhaps stand to the body as a statue does to the bronze that is its material cause, or as a picture stands to the pigment it gives form to—or as signified stands to signifier, in the idiom of Saussure. And to the degree that "inside" and "outside" have application at all, it is the mind that is outside, in the sense that it is what is presented to the world. (Danto1999a: 197)

Though Danto suggests that the metaphors we use to describe the connection of mind and body are not always helpful, we can perhaps understand here how the mind that is presented to others is embodied in the artwork, making it, as us, a representational 'being', much like the woodblock leaves the imprint on the paper.

Danto (1992) wrote that one task of philosophy is "to draw the boundary lines which divide the universe into the most fundamental kinds of things that exist. There may of course be no differences so fundamental as all that, in which case a task still remains for philosophy: namely, to show how lines believed to divide the universe in fundamental ways can be erased" (6). As Danto sought to erase and redraw the boundary between mind and body, inner and outer consciousness, I see in his writing moves toward redrawing the boundaries of agency. Before proceeding, I should try to better define what I mean by agency in this context. Certainly, Danto ascribes to humans a metaphysical

[14] It is not unequivocally clear that the set of representational beings is congruent with the set of sentential beings, but I think they are close enough to conclude that what he writes about sentential beings applies to *ens representans*. Tiziana Andina (2011) discusses "representations that human beings incorporate in a physical structure different from their body" (54–55, see 46–55).

agency, or freedom, that is not present in inorganic objects. But when he refers to representational causality, he implies that above our metaphysical freedom, we are directed by forces, sententially embodied, of which we are unaware. Of course, these inorganic structures have no activity in and of themselves, but if we step into them or, in the case of our own *worlds,* are born into them, knowingly or not, we activate their agency insofar as our choices are constrained to the possibilities inherent within the representation's narrative, if it has a narrative form. "Representations, in the form of intentions and reasons, themselves cause action" (Danto 1973: 189–190). By agency, I mean no more than this, but it is nonetheless significant for my reading of Danto.

Returning to Nietzsche, let us examine the following passage in which Danto explains how, for Nietzsche, inner and outer consciousness are not really different.

> In part he was endeavoring to break the grip of a prejudice we are almost unaware that we are dominated by; namely, that we know what we are better than we know anything in the world. Each of us is convinced that however others may be mistaken about our feelings and sincerity, we ourselves cannot be in error, and that we exercise, in at least this one domain, an unimpeachable authority. This prejudice is underwritten by the common philosophical teaching that we have immediate access to the workings of our own minds. (Danto 2005: 98)

Nietzsche proposes that we do not have privileged access to our own minds. In 1965, Danto (2005) writes that Nietzsche presents "a remarkable and, to my knowledge, utterly original theory of consciousness" (98). It is safe to say that Danto incorporated this idea into what was to become his own theory of consciousness, which reflects the parallel stance on other minds that he developed in *Analytical Philosophy of History*, written at the same time.[15] Nietzsche's analysis of inner and outer consciousness, laid out in *The Gay Science* §354, posits that there is nothing in the inner consciousness that is unique to us because our inwardness is still constructed by a language used for external communication. Danto's flattening of the difference between inner and outer consciousness is not far from this, even extending to the dream world (1999a: 142–143; WA 46–49). There is another, less explicit, thread of Danto's thought that I believe can be attributed to him via Nietzsche, which is his account of agency. Nietzsche, especially in his later writings, sees the idea of the self as a fiction. It is not so much that there is no persistent locus of our experience. Rather, it is the idea that humans do not possess anything like the transcendental self or a soul, something which in itself structures our being. Our self, and to some extent our agency, if not issuing from some a priori internal structure, comes from the formative power of language, implying that language is itself a form of thought (Nietzsche 1968: III §5; Danto 2005: 88). This

[15] The chapters in *Narration and Knowledge* where other minds are discussed explicitly were written in 1966 and 1967, but the concept is present in the original publication of *Analytical Philosophy of History*.

somewhat Averroean account of thought and language implies that there is an agency attributing process that does not correspond to an individual entity. I cannot say that Danto explicitly holds this view. Danto attributed this idea to Nietzsche, but a number of passages in Danto's published texts indicate it may be part of his own thought. Irrespective of whether the idea came from Nietzsche, I don't see how Danto's philosophical system can come together without holding a view something like this. Consider the following passage in which he recalls an experience with a friend who is so adamant regarding the truth of her perspective that Danto realizes she is in fact *defined by her perspective*, in this case, that the aesthetic is essential to art. This pushes Danto (1999a) to consider the point of view as an ontological category:

> perspectivism in Nietzsche's metaphysics requires points of view as centers of power, each seeking to impose itself on blank passive reality. But in general, I think, points of view are crucial in the explanation of behavior, especially when understood as action, and indeed I am not sure what behavior could be considered as an action that did not refer back to the horizon within which the decision of what to do arose for the agent, and with it the issues of relevance. (176 –177)

In his assessment of Nietzsche, Danto (2005) attributes this extra-individual agency to the will-to-power (88–91). But Danto writes elsewhere that the perspective of one's *world* does more to define our actions than the internal 'power' of what one might call our 'will'. We may be in some sense metaphysically free, but our actions are caused through representations. "There is, to begin with, the epistemic fact that in order to explain human conduct, we have to take into consideration the way humans represent the world, themselves included, so that what we are is very often inseparable from what we believe we are" (Danto 1989: 272). As with his friend, the critic, our perspectives of our *world* inscribe on us our possible causal reactions. Along these lines, Danto defines four sets of different causal relations, which I do not discuss here, that differentiate representational causality from the causality we associate with the objective sciences. Our actions, then, are for the most part 'determined' by our representations. Thus, our agency is inscribed upon us through the representation of the world we inherit, placing us within a specific geographical and historical slot.

> To understand a person's conduct is accordingly to identify the representations that explain the conduct, and then to interpret this against the dense background of beliefs that compose his picture of the world. Explanation in the case of human behavior may be—in fact I believe it is—just causal explanation. But the identification of the causes requires some separate operation, call it understanding if you will, which consists more or less in identifying the point of view of the agent in question. A point of view is something that causes [in the objective sense], other than representational causes, cannot be said to have. (Danto 1989: 272)

Danto (1999a) tells us that his plan to write a book on *ens representans* never came to fruition and that what was packed in the essays of *The*

Body/Body Problem would have to suffice, though he assured readers that all the essential logic was there (15). My conclusions may be an extrapolation of what Danto has left for us, but I hold that this position, which may have emerged as he wrote on Nietzsche, is present throughout his work.

This brings us back to Soucek's claims about personification and art. If our identity, and perhaps even agency, is attributed to us via the representations that are essential to *who we are*, and the representations are inscribed on us in a way that could be inscribed on another medium, then it is possible to understand how, in Danto's system, artworks and humans share certain properties. It is not that we lend to, implant with, or create in them personification. That would require a subjective power, and likely a level of self-reflection, that Danto does not account for. But what he does account for is how representations of *world* and representations in art have a way of guiding us, perhaps in a predictive or 'conversational' sense that amounts to agency, if even in a weak sense. The historically indexed representations, which leave an indelible stamp on the identities of artists, form a set of 'tools' that artists then use to create their artworks. Through the process of interpretation, artworks—imprinted with the *world* of the artist "by transitivity of identity" (Danto 1981: 204)—bestow on the interpreter at least some of the agency mediating structures, points of view, that representations of the *world* had originally implanted in the artist. This explains how, when the beholder steps into the artwork, she is transformed into something "amazing" (173).

If personhood in art is understood as something initiated not so much by the 'self' as by the same representational structures that also form the self, taking this view of 'agency' into account will provide an explanation for several other facets of Danto's philosophy that remain otherwise unexplained.[16] The first, as noted above, is that Danto seems to give the artworld a point of view, perhaps even an internal perspective. In "Moving Pictures" Danto (1999b) discusses film having become self-aware.

> Film becomes in a way its own subject, the consciousness that it is film is what the consciousness is of, and in this move to self-consciousness cinema marches together with the other arts of the twentieth century in the respect that art itself becomes the ultimate subject of art, a movement of thought which parallels philosophy in the respect that philosophy in the end is what philosophy is about. (230)

When Danto declares that the narrative of art has ended, the reason given is that art has become self-reflective. Certainly, without a notion of agency, this is not possible. If one assumes that it is the artists who have been self-reflective on the nature of art, a possibility it seems natural to entertain, we could encounter difficulty with Danto's claim

[16] For a discussion Danto's notion of personhood in art as it relates to rhetoric, see (Snyder 2018, 182–186).

that artists cannot self-reflect on their *world*. I do not want to enter that discussion here. I have done that elsewhere (Snyder 2015), and I think it would be more fruitful to pursue the route opened through representational materialism. As living beings, "we are attached [to the world] by our sensory apparatus. The representation must modify the *ens representans* in some way other than that which consists simply in having the representation" (Danto 1989: 251). So to have the property of agency that *ens representans* has, there must be some self-reflective capacity. When Danto discusses art, it clearly has this property, and in some references art seems to act independently. The best I can do to interpret this is to reiterate one of the basic tenets of Danto's essentialist definition of art: "it is analytical to the concept of an artwork that there has to be an interpretation" (Danto 1981: 124). If to be art, art is interpreted, then there must be a biological interpreter who 'activates' the work's agency. Is self-reflection in art something that occurs through interpretation? Perhaps not in the beholders themselves, but as artists 'engage' with the artworld, they create other works.[17] This would allow for the type of dialogue he sees happening among artworks:

> Warhol's *Brillo Box* was enfranchised as a work of art when the boxes it exactly resembled languished in the limbo of mere objects, though they resembled his boxes exactly. ... The relationship between *Brillo Box* and the other members of "the world of art works" was more complex. They were "in dialogue" with one another, as curators like to say. (LLP reply to Ankersmit 429)

What would such a dialogue entail? If the artwork represents the style of the time, and the style of the time endows a person with a somewhat narrowly defined agency, an agency that makes an individual predictable without being determined, then the artworks could conceivably be in dialogue. In a response to Noël Carroll, Danto argued that the history of art had a "historical implicature" and that the creation of artworks, throughout the era of art, had obeyed a certain logic of conversations, insofar as what comes next in a conversation is something that makes sense in terms of what came before it. Though his point was to show that when this conversational structure had been "broken" there would be no more art of this style, he clearly states that there is a conversational structure in non-biological representations such that a dialogue can take place among them (LLP 456–457, 52).[18]

[17] In "Outsider Art," Danto (2001) conceded that outsider art might not be art in the sense he means here, since outsider artists do not engage the artworld; they are an artworld unto themselves. Though outsider artists may have talent, they are not part of the conversation of the artworld, and, for critics, their works are impossible to explain (242–249).

[18] In *The Body/Body Problem*, Danto (1999a) speculates that there are interactive processes that are mediated as sentential states, implying a kind of inter-system information processing that could be common to certain machines and biological entities. "The laws of behavior for sententially characterized beings—animals, some machines, and us—must take account of the truth-relations between the world and us, as well as within us, as part of their own truth-conditions" (90–92).

The representative structure of the artwork mirrors the structure of the person, and in some way the artwork can enter into a conversation that anticipates a certain kind of action. Goehr's (2008) essay on the musicality of violence recognizes the common organizational features of the artwork and acts of violence, each being born of historical representations. "The terrorist act and the artwork share certain structural or internal logical features because they draw on a common history of aesthetic, political, and religious assumption" (171). In her essay, she points out that even against the best of intentions a musical composition aiming at commemoration can bring back the terror, precisely because the shared structures the artwork uses are evoked in performance.

Though the artwork can anticipate, as in a conversation, its ability to influence the action of a beholder outside of the artistic conversation should not be overstated. It may have little or no effect. But the representations of our world, which plot the field of likely human actions, also play a guiding role in the way artists create art insofar as artists are carrying on the conversation through their art. And the conversation is carried on as long as art is following a particular style, a conversation that is predictable without being determined.

Often citing Buffon, Danto asserts that "style is the man." Style, for Danto (1981), is something immediate, like a basic action or concept; it refers directly to whatever it is that makes something *style* (200). If the content is removed from the representation, style is all that remains. Nonetheless, in the creation of the artwork, style and substance issue from the same impulse (197). Style, for Danto, encompasses the ability to apprehend directly what others see indirectly. Those not possessing their own style must imitate others. Imitators can acquire a manner by learning, but only by imitating those with style. Thus, when one has learned the manner of style, one 'knows' in a mediated fashion, whereas the one who manifests style, grasps it in an unmediated way (200–201). Danto defines style as the unconscious self-representation of the way in which the *world* at a particular place and time is imprinted on the artist (206–207, 214–215). Imperceptible to artists, this representation is nonetheless perceptible to the audience. This notion of style links the artist's work to its historical context, making it interpretable to present and future audiences.[19] When one paints in the style of Rembrandt,

[19] To illustrate this, Danto uses the example of the forger Han van Meegeren. Van Meegeren wanted confirmation from his contemporaries, even if his success meant it could not be acknowledged, that his paintings were as good as those of Vermeer, so he painted *Christ at Emmaus*, which was for some time accepted as a work of Vermeer's. The evidence that eventually revealed its fraudulent identity was not the modern x-ray, but rather the manner used in painting. Van Meegeren's brush strokes bore the manner of the 1930s, which could not have been used in the manner of a mid seventeenth-century painting by Vermeer (Danto 1981: 41–3). Van Meegeren is perhaps known as the most notorious forger in art history. His forgeries, made in the 1930s, were accepted by one of the most renowned art historians of the day, Abraham Bredius, who declared van Meegeren's *Christ at*

one can master the technique, the manner, but it is somehow separated from the style, because the style is bound to the person whose style it is.

> So when someone paints in the style of Rembrandt, *he* has adopted a manner, and to at least that degree he is not immanent in the painting in the way Rembrandt is. The language of immanence is made licit by the identity of the man himself and his style—he is his style—and by transitivity of identity Rembrandt *is* his paintings considered in the perspective of style. (204)

Toward the end of *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Danto presents in a few pages a summation of the interconnections among the various parts of his philosophy, and how they tie his theory of art together (204–208). Danto asks, "What, really, is 'the man himself'?" His answer is found in the way that we embody our representations: "I have argued a theory to the effect that we are systems of representations, ways of seeing the world, representations incarnate" (204).

If, according to Danto, style is the person and the person is transferred to the work through "transitivity of identity," then we can conclude that Danto did not hold that we personify art through a conscious action. It seems more accurate to say that we are personified in our art. Given what Danto has articulated in the passages cited in this essay, if we are the incarnation of the representations of our ways of seeing the world, then this would also hold true of the artworks that we create. Soucek's suggestions, that we look at who we are such that we personify art, is in some sense true, but a more accurate formulation would be this: whatever representations we personify are, by transitivity, also personified in our art. This 'personification' does not come about through artistic 'intention'; rather, it is transferred through the artist's style that is the artist's original choice and the representation of her world.[20] Understanding Danto's account of our own personhood,

Emmaus to be a stunning find and, perhaps, the greatest Vermeer ever. Part of the reason these forgeries were not detected at the time, was due to the failure of the current artworld to recognize its own mannerisms. However, van Meegeren himself revealed his forgeries after the Second World War to avoid the charge of treason. Van Meegeren was accused of collaborating with the Nazis by aiding the enemy to acquire Dutch national treasures. His name was connected with the sale of *The Woman Taken in Adultery*, allegedly painted by Vermeer, to Nazi Field Marshal Goering, and for this he was imprisoned. The charge of treason resulted in the death penalty, so van Meegeren revealed his secret. To his defense, he claimed to be a national hero, having traded Goering two hundred original Dutch paintings for his forgery, thus saving them from Nazi confiscation. After a two-year trial, in which van Meegeren was compelled to demonstrate his forging technique, the charge was reduced to forgery, and he was sentenced to one year in prison. Van Meegeren died in prison before his term was served.

[20] Regarding Sartre's notions of freedom and original choice, Danto (1975) writes that our choice is our character, insofar as it determines who we are in life; it is our being. "Our basic freedom, then, lies less in our power to choose than to choose, in the respect that the primal and original choice determines a style of choosing, and the style is the man himself" (137). For a discussion of the influence of Sartre on Danto's notion of style see (Snyder 2018: 187–192).

as the incarnation of our world representation, also clarifies Danto's notion of embodied meaning, giving a clearer idea of how representations are endowed with the meanings and manners of a given time. For Danto, the points of view that we are born into and the attitude or style that we to some small extent adopt are who we are. This "ontological category," which perhaps, in the sense discussed above, has a kind of agency of its own, is what is transferred to and interpreted in art; thus, some of the properties of personhood that are common to us are also found in art.

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Art History without Theory. A Case Study in 20th Century Scholarship

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This paper aims to demonstrate that art history's need for theory remains relevant as the process of research advances. The paper rests on a case study from 1950s Hungary. Lajos Fülep composed an interesting opponent's review on the 1955 doctoral thesis of Hungarian Renaissance scholar, Jolán Balogh. Fülep disapproves not of the lack of theory in Balogh's scholarly work, but of her theoretical encroachments without an awareness of a basic need for theorizing. Behind Fülep's critical review there apparently stands the instinctive idea of a Lakatosian scientific research programme. If a historian of art does not pursue a research programme, her work could easily lose its coherence and resonance. Without a research programme, there is no room left either for internal, or for external histories. One also has to consider, whether in the case of art, internal-normative history is governed by the problem of aesthetic value and whether the external-empirical history could be only formulated in these terms. If so, then a theory-unaware history of art would fail to reconstruct how different art-making individuals conceived of aesthetic properties. In line with this idea, the second part of this paper reflects on the status of research programmes in art historical practice.

Keywords: Scientific research programmes, Hungarian intellectual history, theory of art history, need for theory, internal and external histories, Renaissance.

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1. *Problems and theses*

A need for theory (NT) is one of art history's most peculiar characteristics and remains relevant as the process of research advances. To illustrate this, I will embark upon a seemingly trifling case study in 20th century Hungarian scholarship on East-Central European Renaissance: Lajos Fülep's (1974) critique of Jolán Balogh's doctoral thesis (Balogh 1955) on a chapel of Esztergom in Hungary.

Lajos Fülep (1885–1970) was a regular but odd member of the 'Sunday Circle', a loose group of progressive-minded, philosophically idealist Hungarian intellectuals meeting at Béla Balázs's apartment in Budapest between 1915 and 1919. The group was discussing a wide range of problems in philosophy, theory and history of art, literature, and cultural criticism. It was a free association of intellectuals under the leadership of Balázs himself, and of Georg Lukács, assessing the then-actual problems of European culture. Although, when looking upon the Circle's discussions reported by its visiting fellows, Lukács's halo was evidently discernible, Fülep delivered a typical example of this grouping's heterogenity. His intellectual pedigree was significantly influenced by the pre-war years spent in Italy, had a critical approach to *Geistesgeschichte*, but was almost the single theorist of his generation that had never capitalized on his idealist backround to build up a genre of critical social thought (for details see Congdon 1991). This development could have been motivated by the fact that Fülep never went to exile, he only undertook a self-imposed solitude in rural Hungary, while after the second world war he contributed to the vast project of writing the history of Hungarian art by his managerial qualities and his sweeping theoretical insights.

Jolán Balogh (1900–1988), coming from a different generation of young art historians, has been a student of Budapest art history professor Antal Hekler. Between 1926–28 she was an intern at Hungary's freshly established cultural institute in Rome, carried out a vast activity in Austrian and Italian archives and, afterwards, became a decent and acknowledged expert of Renaissance art and culture in Hungary.[1] Without entering the minutiae of this complicated history, it is important to remark that Balogh's apprenticeship in art history was made in the interwar years giving a fresh start to Italo-Hungarian cultural exchange, and to the re-invetion of an age-long tradition of Hungarian Ranaissance.[2] Her seminal work in reconstructing the Intalianate aspects of 15th–16th century Hungary constituted the basis of her doctoral

[1] For a relevant token of her activity see Balogh (1975).

[2] Such as her master, Hekler, Balogh was working with the hypothesis that Renaissance was no periodic occurrence in Hungarian Art History (thriving for only good 40 years) but had a parallel evolution with Northern Italian tendencies from the late 14th century to the end of the 16th. A synoptic view on Hungarian advances in art history of the Renaissance, the different Hungarian schools of broader Renaissance studies, and, respectively, Balogh position in these schools has been delivered by Born (2015).

thesis in the mid-1950s. This is the point where her academic agenda intersected with that of Fülep's.

In his critique Fülep disapproves not of the lack of theory in Balogh's scholarly work, but of her theoretical encroachments, and sometimes even of her theory-laden conclusions without the awareness of a basic need for theorizing. Without such an awareness, the message of a historical work would be inconspicuous. Fülep's critique clearly introduces a meta-theoretical tier: what is the envisaged level of theory in historical research in general and why is it needed? This call "into question both the practice [of art history] and fragmented theory [also known as: NT]" (Elkins 1988: 375).

Fülep's critical review is led by an instinctive, not clearly elaborated idea of a *scientific research programme* (RP) in art history. According to this, if an historian of art pursues no research programme or, to invoke Imre Lakatos' words, a normative methodology, her work would lose coherence and, respectively, the whole enterprise is liable to forfeit its scholarly importance. Without a research programme, there is no room left either for internal-normative, or for external-empirical histories. One also has to consider, whether in the case of art, internal histories would be assessing the issue of aesthetic value, whether aesthetic value defines the choice of normative problems for a historian and, accordingly, whether aesthetic value yields the framework for considering the socio-psychological circumstances in which works of art emerge. If so, then a theory-free, or theory-laden but theory-unaware history of art would fail to properly reconstruct the relation of normative and empirical histories of art. In this way, it would be unclear how different art-making individuals, who were coming from different historical, social, and material circumstances, conceived of aesthetic value and of the basic (or extended)[3] spectrum of aesthetic properties. Accordingly, Balogh's work, notwithstanding with its clear erudite nature, could be labelled historically "blind" (in the sense of the Kantian dictum, and its paraphrase provided by Lakatos).

In any case, it is useful to ponder introducing the concept of research programmes into the study of art history. With this, I do not mean to suggest that no research programme had been ever used in art historical practice. I rather want to consider whether Lakatosian conceptual tools could add an extra layer to this very practice of relevant reflection. I believe the answer is yes. Reflection on doing art history under the auspices of a certain set of theories would, assumedly, tell us something about their quality. If these theories are research programmes, then their quality will revolve around the two markers of the "progressive", respectively, of the "degenerative". Research pogrammes are progressive when the normative-theoretical growth of the chosen problems could anticipate the empirical growth of the research process. If, to anticipate this empirical growth, too many auxiliary hypotheses has to added to the initial theoretical framework, then research pro-

[3] For details see Levinson (2005).

grammes will slowly begin to degenerate (Lakatos 1980: 102). At the same time, it seems that one could doubt whether the notions of progression and degeneration are (or are in an usual way) key features of research programmes in art history. I will come back to this topic later.

Finally, I will not, in this text, give a more elaborate taxonomy of art historical and meta-historical genres than their experts (Elkins 1988; see also Iversen and Melville 2010 and Verstegen 2013) have already conveyed, nor will I reflect on the many differences of the history of science and the history of art by emphasizing the role of the visual in the latter (Danto 2014). What is at stake here is the question of what exactly makes an art historical investigation scientific, or how could art history achieve its scientific goals. One conclusive answer is that this goal should be achieved by deploying viable research programmes in art historical practice and, probably, also in reflecting on goals and scopes of art history itself.[4]

2. *Fülep's case with Balogh*

Balogh's book presents at least five important theses. Two of them are explicitly formulated, while the other three need a careful reconstructive work. Balogh's *explicit* claims are:

(1) The Bakócz chapel (henceforth: Chapel) is a salient example of Tuscan, and a unique token of sacral Cinquecento architecture beyond the Alps. It is an admirable piece of construction: it is perfectly proportionate; uses only types of local marble for the entire inner decoration; its former bronze dome with relief ornate constituted its *differentia specifica*, which was unparalleled even in Italy at the time;

(2) It is a direct heir to the space-shaping ideal represented by Brunelleschi's *Cappella Pazzi* in Florence.

These first two points are mixed with three *implicit,* but equally important theses:

(3) The Chapel was a highly expensive local Renaissance edifice started and finished in an age of financial crisis and economic depression, when all the pillars of the medieval Hungarian state were in decline;

(4) It successfully survived four sieges, a stark denominational shift, and one complete structure relocation in the 19th century for "its beauty deflected Barbarism" (Balogh 1955: 17);

[4] The concept of research programmes is *ab ovo* self-reflecting. While one considers the history of science through the lens of conflicting research programs the historiography deployed would also conflict with other kinds of historiographies in determining the basic values of inquiry. To cite Lakatos: "The methodology of scientific research programmes constitutes, like any other methodology, a historiographical research programme. A historian that accepts this methodology as a guide will look in history for rival research programmes [...]" (Lakatos 1980: 114).

(5) This survival was facilitated mainly not by the supreme technical knowledge of its artisans, but by its aesthetic value.

Fülep's critique was clearly ignited by the number and importance of such implicit theses. Fülep calls Balogh to account for not delivering a "synthentic-theoretic outlook" of the era she investigates. Without this "general outlook", the "air of the epoch" would not transpire**.** Balogh's work, Fülep says, is painfully documented and scholarly accurate, but it fails to picture "the historical reality that produced the artworks", respectively "what is essential to understand the historical determinations conditioning its emergence" (Fülep 1974: 457, 461, 670). Fülep misses, in Balogh's book, the "representation of the milieu", i.e. the social environment that lets the artwork emerge. On a final account, Balogh's work conveys no "Geistesgeschichtlich" framework (just a few promising traces of a fragmented theory) which could be the warrant of understanding the concrete, singular artwork. She could be regarded as an astute researcher, who collects all the traceable facts then neatly presenting them it in kind of a catalogue raisonné without providing the bigger picture the story would require.

3. *Methodology, theory, and Lakatosian RP*

I endorse the view that one can have an elaborate methodology of treating and unravelling the aspects of artistic creation, without having a complex theory that could be applied everywhere, that is, a framework to accommodate *all* the facts discovered. I will use "theory" here in a minimal sense, as a selective point of view. A minimal need for theory is, therefore, *a need for a selective point of view*.

Theory, as a selective point of view, had an important role in the philosophy of historiography. In his classical essay, Karl Popper pleaded for a theoretically informed way of historical inquiry: He wrote, "[…] there can be no history without a point of view. Like the natural sciences history must be *selective* unless it is to be choked by a flood of poor and unrelated material. The attempt to follow causal chains […] has little interest for us. […] The only way out of this difficulty is to introduce a preconceived selective point of view […] that is to write a *history which interests us*." (Popper 1957: 150).

One of the most creative appropriations of this idea goes back to Imre Lakatos. At the beginning, Lakatos interpreted the Kantian dictum ("history of science without philosophy of science is blind" (Lakatos 1980: 102)), to emphasize the constant interaction of a history of ideas with the history of implementing them. Afterwards he applied this twin-focused analysis to Popper's diagnosis on the selectivity criterion of writing history:

> Some historians look for the discovery of hard facts, inductive generalizations, others for bold theories and crucial negative experiments, yet others for great simplifications, or for progressive and degenerating problem shifts; all of them have some theoretical 'bias'. This bias, of course, may

> be obscured by an eclectic variation of theories or by theoretical confusion: but neither eclecticism nor confusion amounts to an atheoretical outlook. (Lakatos 1980: 120)

Whereas research programmes are not theories, but a series of interconnected theories that have the goal of constituting scientific objectivity, Lakatos would have only been speaking about a series of theories, which are implemented from a selective point of view. Accordingly, the minimal need for a research programme proves itself to be a minimal need for a selectivity-driven series of theories, which have the goal of constituting scientific objectivity.

4. *Towards the concept of research programs in art history. Brief comparison of Fülep and Lakatos*

I think that there are more than prima facie similarities between the positions of Fülep and Lakatos. At the same time, Fülep's stances are clearly less mature and less elaborate.[5] In what follows, I present the blueprint of their parallel agendas and I do so by staking out four similarities (S) and two differences (D) between them. The last two will, hopefully, outline how a research programme in art history should be understood.

(S1) Inner history (intellectual history) and outer history (social history) are complementary (Lakatos 1980: 102). Rational reconstruction of this inner discourse enhances the relevance of certain empirical data.

(S2) Inner history is primary in understanding what the specificity of the discourse is. Therefore, "aesthetic value" is primary to the (n.b.: necessary) outer conditions under which aesthetic value emerged (Fülep 1974: 458).

(S3) There is no historical discourse without a communal theoretical bias (Lakatos 1980: 15, 120). In addition, it is easier to admit one's minimal theoretical commitments, then to let them return unconsciously (Fülep 1971: 23).

(S4) Therefore, one must impute to art history a *hard core* of theory and a *positive heuristic,* "which defines problems and delimits anomalies" and, accordingly, outlines a plan how the integrity of this theory should be kept.

(D1) As already mentioned, there is at least one crucial concern about the decisive status of *progression* and *degeneration* in art historical research programmes.[6] Lakatos says, if we consider the

[5] Their similarities could be traced back to a common Hungarian intellectual background. The general idea, that an inner, intellectual and an outer, social history should be interconnected, were both emphasized in the young Georg Lukács's writings, respectively in Lakatos' view on the development of scientific knowledge. For the outline of such a comparison see Demeter (2008).

[6] For the role of progressive and degenerative problem shifts in aesthetics see Nanay (2017: esp. Chapter 4). This is, to my knowledge, the most complex essay on framing aesthetics through Lakatosian concepts. A programme is thus degenerating

> research programme to be the "unit of mature science" (Lakatos 1980: 179), then we will also have to stipulate the conditions of appraising them. In pursuing a research programme, we regularly modify some elements of the inner history to protect the hard core of the theorem, and to keep in balance the normative and empirical side of research. The hard core is a limited set of main ideas that our research is built upon. If these ideas need to be repeatedly multiplied to yield a minimal empirical growth, then it is very likely that our research programme has started to degenerate.

But, Lakatos is mainly committed to analyse the evolution of natural science. A research programme in the natural sciences also has to keep the balance of inner-normative and outer-empirical histories. If the empirical growth is staggering, then a modification of the inner-normative hard core will constitute a legitimate move to improve its performance. Such a research programme could be theoretically progressive if "each [such] modification leads to new unexpected predictions" and could be empirically progressive "if at least some of these predictions are corroborated" (Lakatos 1980: 179). The status of (corroborated) predictions and of the ability to explain new facts both depend upon the central role, which Lakatos confers to cognitive value.

when adding too many *ad-hoc* hypotheses to protect the hard core of the theory. Nanay clearly allows for degenerativity and progression in theories of art, because he is less worried about the methodological distinction I still make between cognitive and aesthetic value. His quest for a new discourse on aesthetically relevant properties, clearly, calls for no such distinction. Alethically relevant properties yield a difference in our experience, and are usually more accurate than the, so Nanay, sometimes puzzling notions of beauty, ugliness, serene, moving, and sublime (Nanay 2017: 70). More accurate and straightforward (Nanay 2017: 71) concepts can multiply the number of fruitful analyses in the complicated relation of the perceptive and the aesthetic regarding the whole universe of artistic production. The difference in our experience is thus delivered by new evaluative and critical practices helping us to understand aesthetic phenomena: "Hence, if a research programme in aesthetics is consistent with and can explain our critical and evaluative practice, we have some (not necessarily conclusive) reason to consider it to be progressive. If it can't do that, it is likely to be degenerative." (Nanay 2017: 78) Something very similar is stated a few pages later: "A research programme is likely to be progressive and not degenerative if it can explain new phenomena and open up new research directions." (Nanay 2017: 83). If progression or degenaration hinges on introducing new and more accurate evaluations and critiques of the matter discussed, then one will instantly comply to the thesis that art historical research could also be both degenerative and progressive. But, if this also includes the acceptance of a second thesis on the less accurate nature of aesthetic properties, one would also beg to differ. Classical pieces of art could be accurately grasped by their aesthetical properties for they have an outer history of conforming and opposing to regularly changing standards of beauty and ugliness. How to hold and, respectively, how to lose the aesthetic property of beauty would be a question underlying research programs that have not overspent their budget. They are not cognitively compelling but still evaluatively very rich. As long as art history can raise interest in this traditional discourse through a research program, it would not have to be replaced.

According to these principles, predictive-explanatory progression guarantees the sustainability of research programmes in the natural sciences. But, I think it would be more accurate to adopt a different agenda in specifying the sustainability of art historical research programmes. I think that, in order to be sustainable, art historical research programmes need only to just be *viable*, where viability means to be efficient in arousing interest in equally old and new problems and values by not necessarily demanding epistemic novelty.

Viable research programmes in art history are concerned less with making predictions, because they are less concerned with cognitive value. They usually make inquiries into how the cooperation of artists and commissioners succeeded to materialize seemingly abstract aesthetic qualities. This is why progressive or degenerating problem shifts could be unintelligible to art historians. So long as inner history usually reflects aesthetic value, its purport would depend neither on epistemic novelty, nor on the success of predictions. This informs us about a second major difference between scientific and art historical research programmes.

(D2) Lakatos' concept of *heuristic power* also remains problematic here. If one investigates the history of materialized aesthetic properties, it will be less important how *many* ensuing new facts could be produced, regardless of these fact's "capacity to explain their refutations" (Lakatos 1980: 52). While an art historian constitutes a normative-theoretical history she is less focused on the *amount* of new facts. She is, or has to be, concerned with the most plausible, and sufficiently interesting connection between aesthetic properties and the existing artworks reflecting these properties.

But let us just imagine a case, where epistemic novelty keeps its central role. That is, let us imagine a case where, in the context of predictability, the issue of new data still remains highly relevant. However, new data could be defined in, at least, three different, ways: (a) as empirical information or new sources of empirical information; (b) as new diagnoses of a given constellation (c) as new evaluative and critical practices pertaining to a set of phenomena. But none of them could, strictly speaking, be predicted. No such new data could be predicted to occur unexpectedly, let alone repeatedly or regularly in a determinate future. There are no new art historical discoveries that are guaranteed to be perfectly in line with the initial conditions reconstructed by specially trained scholars. No theorist of art historical practice could predict which relevant stone-fragment of the original façade an archaeological excavation would reveal. She can only suggest that a decisive finding—without determining its exact condition, shape, or colour—is very likely to occur.

If a research program is a normative methodology that fulfils the basic need for coupling inner and outer histories in art historical research, then it has no need to prove itself as progressive or as degen-

erating, for it does not claim to be able to predict the future, or if it does so, in a very limited sense, something like: it can foreshadow that new evaluations of the matter will be available soon, although the exact markers of that novelty are still uncertain (c); it can conjecture that new proofs will be given, if the researcher follows a given direction (b), or, and most possibly, the research will be more sensitive to phenomena resembling the case that has just been studied (a). This sensitivity-conditioned enterprise could equally be positive and negative. Positive, if it facilitates interesting discoveries or evaluations of them and, respectively, negative, if it makes this evaluation too easy, schematic and, consequently, uninteresting.[7]

What would constitute, in conclusion, a viable research program for the practice of art history? A good recipe is joining inner and outer history so that it would rouse interest in the scholarly achievement. But there is one more factor that determines our definition.

If we define the practice of art history by the conditions under which it could be classified as a scholarly achievement, we have to stipulate these conditions, partly, as conditions of resonance. The quality of a scholarly achievement could be evaluated according to the level of its intellectual resonance, or to put it other words according to how it resonates with different people and communities over time. Sociologically speaking, the extent of the population constituting the reception of an intellectual work (also an inquiry in the history of art) is crucial to the evaluation of this very work. If an intellectual product aroused a sense of urgency in the public and if it was widely received and discussed, it would have more chance to survive as a constituent of the general discourse on a certain topic. It would thus have a far better chance to be evaluated as scholarly relevant, disputable or even thought-provoking. But what conveys those intensional criteria that could trigger an extensive reception? It depends on the nature of the matter disputed. But, indifferent of this specific nature, intensional criteria have to meaningfully reflect the characteristic position of the historian concerning the relation of "intellectual" and "social" history. Art historians usually tell the story of the ubiquitous and necessary outer conditions under which artworks, bearing an aesthetic property, have been made.

Accordingly, RP in art history is determined by *two factors* (a) a (normative) theoretical framework to steer the research process, and (b) an (instructive-sociological) picture that, properly drafted, makes its findings accessible to a learned audience with a relevant, but not

[7] This resembles the way Clifford Geertz found place for the concept of prediction in his methodology of thick description. A cultural anthropologist could not *strictu sensu* predict the occurrence of phenomena. She can—by using a semi-fledged form of clinical inference—diagnose them or, „the very most", anticipate that they are very likely to happen (Geertz 2000: 26). This is due to the fact that cultural sciences could not generalize across different cases but can only use a more general idea in the particular case themselves: "The essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities, but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them" (Geertz 2000: 26).

identical form of scholarly expertise. But, at any rate, great scientific achievements (Lakatos 1980: 110) in art history are research programs because they can accommodate a larger spectrum of problems, answers, and various historical cases of unpredictability.

5. *Framing the case of Balogh. Possible research programmes*

In the example conveyed by Balogh, we can discern at least two viable research programmes. These programmes have otherwise no exclusivity. Different possible ways could be also pursued unless they deploy a positive heuristic and rouse interest in the scholarly public, while the research programmes, which are discussed in what follows, could be easily abolished if they prove themselves unviable.

5.1 *Questioning the Prosperity Theory*

Prosperity Theory states that the incontestable achievements of high Renaissance art could be understood against the backdrop of local economic wealth (Burke 1986: 37–38). This was deemed to be wrong by Robert Sabatino Lopez at the beginning of the 1950s, although we have no evidence that Balogh knew about these critical assessments of his Italian-American Colleague, or about the outlines of such an RP in art history.

Lopez's main point consisted in the remark that humanistic culture was a form of investment, even if not a purely economic one. In high Renaissance and Humanism "culture […] tended to become the highest symbol of nobility, the magic password which admitted a man or a nation to the elite group. Its value rose at the very moment that the value of land fell. Its returns mounted when commercial interest rates declined. Statesmen who had tried to build up their power and prestige by enlarging their estates now vied with one another to gather works of art" (Lopez 1959). Some distinguished statesmen of the Renaissance era in Italy, like the mighty Lorenzo de Medici received their "halo of respectability" through their patronage of art and not through the sustainability of their business matters. As far as we know, Balogh traced a similar path in her naïve treatment of Tamás Bakócz's role as a patron, which makes this core idea useful for the outer history it can adumbrate. When a surplus of power could not have been generated by the rulers of a certain community (e.g. by Lorenzo de Medici in Florence or by Tamás Bakócz in Hungary) or through economic excellence, then it was granted by investment in symbolic means. The outer history would tell us how the patrons themselves were conscious of this endeavour of investing in symbolic means and how they managed to implement them under different conditions. If this research program succeeds, it could also cast new light on the historical role of East-Central European patrons: they were lagging behind their Western col-

leagues probably not due to their economic inferiority, but due to the different consequences of their endeavours to acquire symbolic power.

5.2. *The Wölfflinian way*

Some recent work on Heirich Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* have revealed the twofold importance of his contribution to a formalist method of art history (Gaiger 2015). The first issue concerns the so-called history of vision claim, while the other assesses the parallel issue of the notions of pleasure. The pairs of concepts governing a discourse on the history of vision are necessarily coupled with another history of decorative appreciation:

> It is dangerous to speak only of certain «states of the eye» by which conception is determined: every artistic conception is, of its very nature, organized according to certain notions of pleasure. Hence our […] pairs of concepts have an imitative and a decorative significance. (Wölfflin 1959: 16)

To understand this stance on principles of art history, one need not be excessively knowledgeable in the historiography of the discipline. But a short excursus on Alois Riegl's conception on the scientific status of art history could be of some use.

Riegl was loudly concerned with the inflated scholarly meaning of technical inquiries. In his ironic assessment of then-contemporary research in applied arts, he remarked that, according to recent scholarship, all forms of production in art industry could be treated as the outcome of specific technical conditions and, accordingly, could be criticized as such. But to which ends does one act when praising or scolding the technical conditions of applied arts? Does it have to reemphasize the initial idea, that art industry is clearly controlled by the level of technical development (Riegl 1924: vii)? The same could be asked about the psychological path to art. What is the scholarly gain of describing art as the world of artefacts produced by artists, who have a certain set of inner (creative) capacities? What is the scholarly gain of stating that the artists are in good or bad command of their truly existing abilities or that they are adept or not adept at doing something? Riegl rather pursued the goal of scientific art history, which lacked reductive or circular argumentations and, therefore, formulated the question: what fulfils these scientific needs? His answer was a synthetic inquiry into the reconstruction of artistic volition (*Kunstwollen*), which is the reconstruction of what art producing agents *wanted* to express through their activities by opposing technical and psychological burdens (Riegl 1927: 9) Riegl's expressly corrective-scientific goals were equally endorsed by his advocates (e.g. Benjamin) and opponents (e.g. Gombrich), regardless of how they came to terms with *Kunstwollen*. Without entering into a heavily laden discussion of the topic, I just hope to signal that the same question motivated Wölfflin's *Principles*: I wish just to resolve what the science of art history is and which methods it should deploy to secure the specificity of the aesthetic. The answer emerges bluntly. The

envisaged scientific status of art history has to be provided by a careful analysis of historically changing visual capacities. But, this analysis needs to be underscored by a parallel history of the sensitivity for beauty. This latter history clarifies how artists of different generations were reassessing the works of others. When artists of a certain period have found the works of their predecessors' worth discussion, reconstitution, re-enactment, or reproduction, they have also laid bare a certain sensitivity for the aesthetic properties of these works. To settle the most pertinent regularities of these histories should be the main task of an art scholar: "[…] men have at all times seen what they wanted to see, that does not exclude the possibility that a law remains operative throughout all change. To determine this law would be a central problem, the central problem of a history of art" (Wölfflin 1959: 17).

We can also fabricate a viable research programme if we put this thought into effect and analyse the historically changing sensitivity for aesthetic properties in the works of others. Along these lines we could have some robust tools to deal with the issue of how works of art could survive the most problematic ages. Mutatis mutandis, we will understand how the Chapel has managed to survive. This case of the Chapel is modelling a key aspect of the autonomy of art, that is, the historical development of the conception of beauty. Following this reading, the long-lasting success of the Chapel could be understood as a history of how it was adapted to various views and conceptions on being "decorative". To put it differently, in various ages there were various ways of "longing for beauty", and some distinguished artworks were able to similarly fulfil these changing endeavours and to connect artist of different pedigrees and sensibilities. The Chapel proved itself worth re-assessment in different ages and among different social and material conditions.

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Through both of these examples, we can make the above-mentioned features of art historical research programmes understandable. One of these features is the basic conundrum of predictability. Let us see how this all works here.

In the case of high Renaissance Hungarian commissioners of artworks, one could not predict that three more tokens of investment in symbolic means of power would be discovered. No one could necessarily state that financers kept on commissioning marble chapels since they were unable to purchase marble quarries. In this case, as in the vast majority of such cases, it is enough to be clear and consequent in joining inner and outer histories. The rate of symbolic investments in culture rises when economic growth is on the wane. This is the inner core, which is exemplified by various historical cases (that prove or refute it), that will conjure a viable research program. It is important though, not to generalize across data recorded before, but rather to use inner history as a useful tool in understanding these discoveries.

The position of predictability in the Wölfflinian programme is very similar. We cannot foresee that a highly acknowledged piece of Renaissance architecture will survive another siege or another structural relocation thanks to the "beauty" it is endowed with, but we can conjecture that the pleasure it causes could be a serious topic of discussion when locals would have to decide whether keeping, destroying, or rebuilding it. If the physical existence of an artwork is closely attached to a discussion on its aesthetic properties (which it can possess or not possess), one could deploy at least a research programme, which joins the history of ideas with the history of wanting them materialized. This programme would prove itself viable if new ways of joining inner and outer histories kept the interest in it alive.[8]

6. *Conclusions*

After careful reconstruction and reconsideration, it can be concluded that Balogh's work can be employed to infer in both a descriptive and a normative manner. But, due to a complete lack of clearly formulated viable research programmes, her theses are still relevant while less defensible against refuting facts and concurrent (i.e. coherent) research programmes.

As a sociological corollary, without research programmes, art historical works have less chances to be received, discussed, and, consequently, will be unable to enter a wider community. To prevent this, one has to redeem art history's basic need for theorizing. In addition, the constitution of viable research programmes puts historians of art in an even better posture. By deploying these programmes, historians would be able to join both characteristic sides of art scholarship: an endeavour for facts and, respectively, the predilection for well-known but sometimes vaguely presented aesthetic properties. One cannot prove the specificity of the aesthetic, if its values are not checked against the changing material conditions under which they were put into practice. Viable research programmes could be extremely helpful in fulfilling this task.

[8] More recent scholarly work on the Chapel has never reached a wider audience probably due to lacking a viable research programme. But, it has never forsaken theory in general. E.g. Miklós Horler (1990) followed a decent Marxist interpretation of Renaissance man's urge to create or to finance creating artworks (see Heller 1978). However, to render this theoretical commitment into a viable programme, he would have had to couple inner history informed by the Marxist theory of estrangement with an adequately reconstructed outer history. In other words, he would have had to trace the historically changing patterns of dealing with this very phenomenon of estrangement, which he did not.

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Aesthetic Possibilities of Cinematic Improvisation

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Contrary to the skepticism of some authors about the artistic potential or even the possibility of films being improvised artworks, I argue that not only is it conceptually possible for many elements of the filmmaking process to be performed in an improvisatory manner, but that a number of existing films and filmmaking practices provide examples of the realization of such possibilities. Further, I argue that these examples show that improvisation by filmmakers can enhance the aesthetic or artistic value of a film. As well as its artistic potential, I consider some social and ethical implications of improvisatory approaches to filmmaking, and by extension to art in general.

Keywords: Improvisation, improvised filmmaking, philosophy of film, cinema aesthetics, social aesthetics.

1. *Introduction*

In 1980 Virginia Wexman noted that filmmakers' use of improvisation[1] has received little critical attention, and since then the question of improvisation in cinema has continued to be largely unaddressed, both by philosophers of art and by scholars writing on film in other disciplines. In the philosophy of art, this should be understood in the context of a general lack of attention to improvisation, where most of what philosophers have written on improvisation has focused on music.[2] In

[1] My focus will be on fictional narrative cinema, bracketing documentary and experimental film, partly to keep the paper to a manageable length but also because the authors I respond to focus on fictional narrative films.

[2] On the scarcity of philosophical articles on improvisation, see Alperson 2014, and note that where Alperson shows a disparity between articles in aesthetics journals on music and those dealing with musical improvisation, topic searches in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, and the *British Journal of Aesthetics* (as of April, 2018) show that, of those articles that

writing on film from other disciplines, including 'film theory' and more practically-focused books on filmmaking, there is slightly more to be found, although nearly all is in reference to specific filmmakers with reputations for having their actors improvise, such as John Cassavetes or Mike Leigh. Less than a handful of papers discuss improvisation in cinema more generally, with their authors—Wexman (1980), Berkeley (2011), and Froger (2017)—also focusing primarily on actors' performances and dialogue, without considering *other* ways in which a film might be improvised, in addition to the acting.[3]

With this paper I hope to demonstrate that improvisation in the medium of cinema is not only an issue of philosophical and aesthetic interest, meriting greater attention than has hitherto been paid to it, but that improvisational filmmaking practices can be artistically valuable and can result in aesthetically rich audience experiences.[4] I consider how filmmaking can involve improvisation in ways that include, but go beyond, a film's actors improvising, looking at opportunities for those 'behind the scenes'—e.g. camera operators, editors, directors, etc.—to improvise in their roles in creating a film. How does counting films among improvised artworks affect our understanding of improvisation or of cinema as an art form? As well as the potential artistic value of such practices, what social or ethical possibilities might be realized by improvisational approaches to filmmaking instead of the traditional model employed in the mainstream commercial filmmaking industry as well as in many independent and student productions?[5]

deal with improvisation in the arts, the majority of them discuss improvisation in music as opposed to other art forms (cf. Bresnahan 2014).

[3] The exception to this is Sterritt (2000). While Froger notes that a cameraperson recording improvising actors must adapt to their performances and so must also improvise, she doesn't explore this point further. As for practical writing on filmmaking, Michael Rabiger's *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics* (2003), which is otherwise open to alternative approaches, mentions improvisation only in the context of working with actors, mainly in terms of 'warm ups' in rehearsals or collaborative story creation (Rabiger 2003: 114–18, 164–66), with no discussion of how other elements of a film might be improvised.

[4] This is not to say that taking an improvisatory approach to making a film will always, or even often, lead to an artistically or aesthetically positive result—only that it can, and that when it does, *what* the results are and *how* they work (and what this can tell us about cinema more broadly) are worth attending to.

[5] In this 'traditional model', films are scripted and largely pre-determined in their content and form (e.g. through storyboarding), with the production involving a hierarchical division of labour. Finding citations to support my claim that this model is employed in most independent and student productions (at least in North America) would be possible but time-consuming and, ultimately, no less anecdotal than references to my own experience. I will simply note that in my experience on low-budget film shoots during and after film school, the degree to which people felt they had to imitate 'Hollywood' or television industry methods of production, when there was no external pressure to do so and when they thought they were doing something 'alternative', was striking.

Before discussing what improvisational approaches to filmmaking can involve, it is necessary to address arguments against the claim that films *can* be improvised in any meaningful sense, and against the potential for improvisation in filmmaking to be of artistic value. I begin in §2 by defending the possibility of a genuinely improvised film and its potential for artistic value against criticisms from Marianne Froger and, to a lesser extent, Wexman. After showing their arguments for these criticisms to fail, in §3 I draw on Gilbert Ryle's (1976) broad understanding of improvisation along with more recent work on improvisation in the philosophy of art by Philip Alperson (1984, 1998), David Davies (2004, 2011), and Aili Bresnahan (2014, 2015), to offer an account of what it takes for a particular work to count as *an improvised artwork*.[6] In §4, I discuss how various elements of the filmmaking process might be improvised in this sense, and explore their potential for contributing positively to a film's artistic value, considering the effect they can have on viewers' experiences of a film and the difference this can make to how non-improvised films are typically experienced. I conclude in §5 by considering the social or ethical potential of these forms of cinematic improvisation.

2. *Challenges to the possibility and artistic potential of improvised cinema*

In "Improvisation in New Wave Cinema: Beneath the Myth, the Social" (2017), Marianne Froger argues that statements made by New Wave filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard concerning the improvised status of their films were largely false, and "[i]n fact, improvisation was rarely practiced" (Froger 2017: 235). Even if true,[7] her contention that these films weren't improvised, or weren't to the extent that their makers claimed, would not count against the possibility that other films might have been, or that films in general can be improvised in their creation. Still, Froger presents three criticisms in the course of her discussion that cast doubt on the possibility of a genuinely improvised film, or, assuming such a film were possible, on its potential to be artistically successful.

2.1 *Froger's three challenges*

The first challenge follows from her definition of improvisation as "the act by which one simultaneously composes and executes a musical piece or ... simultaneously composes and utters dialogue" (Froger 2017: 234) and her additional claim that this definition "emphasizes the simultaneity of the time of invention, execution, and audience re-

[6] For simplicity, I use 'artworks' to refer to objects (paintings, poems, scores, etc.) and to performances, bracketing the question of whether a performance of a scripted or scored work is itself a distinct work of art.

[7] Unfortunately Froger provides little evidence to back up this claim.

ception" (Froger 2017: 234). Since there is nearly always[8] a temporal gap between a film's composition and execution and its reception by audiences, with the film's 'composition' including the selection and editing of shots from all the footage recorded, Froger suggests that it is impossible for cinema to be a genuinely improvisational art form, even if the actors were improvising, or if some other form of improvisation occurred during filming.

The second challenge counts against the possibility that any improvisation that occurred in front of the camera can contribute to a film's artistic properties, since even if "improvisation in what is filmed, or in the act of filming itself" does occur, it "is very difficult to detect in the viewing of a film" due to the absence of 'codes' or representational conventions to signal that what an audience is encountering was improvised (Froger 2017: 234). As such, part of a film that wasn't improvised might look as if it had been, and could be carefully staged to give viewers the impression of spontaneity without being spontaneously produced. While this objection allows that improvising can take place during a film's creation, by challenging whether it can be relevant to our experience or appreciation of the finished film, it counts against the possibility that a cinematic work overall can be *an improvised artwork* in any robust sense.

Froger's third challenge, a version of which is also found in Wexman, holds that even if improvisation occurs during parts of the filmmaking process, and even if viewers are aware that what they are watching was improvised, this awareness is likely to contribute *negatively* to the film's artistic value. Froger claims that improvisation "would have to remain invisible in order that it not break what film theorists have called the 'effect of the real' of the cinematic image" (Froger 2017: 236), referring to an alleged disposition of the medium to lead viewers to experience the characters and events they are encountering as if they are real and being witnessed through an invisible window or 'fourth wall'. Froger suggests that this failure to maintain the 'effect of the real' "explains the commercial failure of Truffaut's second film [*Tirez sur la pianiste/Shoot the Piano Player* (1962)], which was much more characterized by improvisation than his first" (Froger 2017: 236). Similarly, Wexman writes that improvised scenes "can detract from a film's impact by presenting experience that has not been shaped with an audience in mind" (Wexman 1980: 30), faulting directors such as Cassavetes and Jacques Rivette for being "insensitive to the desirability of making their creation accessible to [the] public" and for "indulging the actors at the expense of the audience's needs" (Wexman 1980: 31). The worry is that if improvisation is detected in a film (and hence could count as part of the film's artistic properties) it will risk alienating

[8] Exceptions include live television or internet broadcasts, which Froger doesn't consider. However, artworks in this form are rare, and are beyond the scope of her concern with French New Wave filmmaking.

viewers by straying too far from familiar cinematic conventions, or by lacking the technical polish that Froger and Wexman take to contribute positively to a film's artistic value.

Taken together, these criticisms cast doubt on whether films can be genuinely improvised artworks, given the nature of the cinematic process, including the temporal gap between creation and reception and the role played by editing, and, if they can be, on whether this possibility would be worth realizing. Even if the first challenge were to be met and cinema was demonstrated to be an artform that allowed for works to be improvised, the other two challenges would still need to be addressed in order to show that the possibilities for improvisation that cinema allowed were worth attending to. Fortunately, all three can be met by showing that the arguments given for them are flawed, requiring the acceptance of positions that are too strong or implausible.

2.2 *Response to the second challenge*

Froger's second challenge—i.e. that improvisation during the making of a film can't be artistically relevant because audiences can't know that what they are seeing was improvised, since an improvised performance could be perceptually indistinguishable from a scripted one—is too strong, since it would also count against improvised live musical or theatrical performances, for which there are also no distinct 'forms of representation' that allow audiences to know that what they are seeing or hearing is being spontaneously generated as opposed to having been pre-scripted and rehearsed to appear spontaneous. Musical performances (e.g. some of Anthony Braxton's or John Zorn's pieces) can be thoroughly composed and tightly rehearsed but designed to sound extemporaneous and free-form, or even disorganized, as can theatrical performances. Even when there are established practices or 'codes' in a genre that would signal to knowledgeable audience members that what they see or hear is improvised, these could also be incorporated into a script or composition and be part of a pre-planned work rather than an actual improvisation. For instance, a performance done in the style of a Second City comedy improv could make use of actors planted in the audience who suggest themes on which the actors then appear to improvise, with everything, including the on-stage actors' solicitation of themes from the audience and the ersatz audience member's suggestions, being part of the script. Thus, the fact that a film's audience might only be aware that what they were watching had a feeling of spontaneity, but be unable to *know* that what they were seeing was improvised, does not count against the possibility or artistic relevance of improvisation in cinema without also counting against the possibility or artistic relevance of improvisation in *any* medium.

Furthermore, this challenge assumes that only those features of an artwork that are manifest to audiences are relevant for that work's artistic value, but this is also implausible, since it would discount any

aspects of a work's creation that were not perceivable in the finished product. However, aspects of a work's creation can generate the perceptible properties of the finished work, and so can be artistically relevant for the work's ontological status and its aesthetic value, without themselves being perceptible. One example would be the choice of lens, shutter speed, or film stock for a particular shot; while such a choice affects how the shot will look, and so should count as an artistically relevant choice, an audience member seeing the shot in the finished film will not be able to perceive the technical choice that resulted in what they are seeing, especially since the same effect can result from digital manipulation during editing, with digital filters mimicking the look of certain film stocks or lens types. Additionally, facts about the creative process that are not manifest in, and don't directly lead to the appearance of, an artwork can still be relevant for the status and artistic value of that work. The fact that Rodin initially conceived of his sculpture of Balzac as a nude before deciding to present the figure draped in a form-concealing cloak is relevant for understanding and evaluating this sculpture, even though this aspect of the work's history can't be seen from viewing the finished sculpture.[9]

2.3 *Response to the third challenge*

If this is right, then, assuming Froger's first challenge can be met and that it is possible for films to be improvised artworks, the fact that a film was improvised will be relevant for a proper understanding of it as an artwork and hence for a proper evaluation of its artistic value. This leaves open the possibility, however, that it will count *negatively* towards its artistic value, so Froger's third challenge—also raised by Wexman—still needs to be met in order to show that improvisation is an artistically interesting or desirable possibility for filmmakers to avail themselves of. However, it isn't difficult to meet this challenge, since both Froger and Wexman appear to conflate *commercial* success, or audience popularity, with *artistic* quality. This can be seen most clearly in Froger's point about Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player*—the fact that it was less financially successful than Truffaut's first film, *Les quatre cents coups*/*The 400 Blows* (1959), or even less successful with critics at the time, does not count against its *artistic* quality; critical judgment can be mistaken, especially when a work is new, and when it comes to audience popularity, the 'customer' can be wrong. While *Shoot the Piano Player* may not be as artistically successful as *The 400 Blows*, whether or not it has less commercial success because it featured more improvisation doesn't mean its artistic value will be lower for the same reason.

[9] For the example of Rodin's *Monument to Balzac* and the aesthetic relevance of the history of a work's creation, see Wollheim (1980: 188–99). See also Davies (2006) contra the 'aesthetic empiricism' Froger must presuppose in order to hold that properties of an artwork must be perceptible in order to be relevant for its artistic value.

While Wexman is right to maintain that improvisation requires discipline to carry out in a way that is artistically successfully when presented to an audience rather than occurring privately in rehearsal, and that simply making things up at random can result in incoherence and artistic failure (Wexman 1980: 30–31), this is no more a problem for improvisation in cinema than in other artforms.[10] In order to avoid incoherence, jazz musicians will also need to improvise with discipline and active attention to what they are doing at any moment, to how it fits with what they've just done, and to where it might be leading in terms of possible directions for the development of themes or ideas contained in what they're currently playing, and must do so on the basis of skill and a strong working knowledge of their art form.[11] Moreover, a work that can seem incoherent to an audience can in fact be internally coherent, highly complex, and artistically successful, with the audience missing these features of the work because of its novelty or its failure to conform to expectations based on familiar patterns from other works. As Eric Lewis (2017) describes, the genre-mixing improvisations performed by the Art Ensemble of Chicago in Paris in 1969 were initially met with confusion by critics and many audience members, although what appeared at first to some as incoherence was understood by others in terms of complex aesthetic strategies of hybridity and what Lewis calls "aesthetic thickening" (Lewis 2017: 135–36). This shows how a work that is coherent on its own criteria can be mistaken for 'mere chaos' by those who expect it to follow a criterion of coherence alien to that particular work.

Thus, even if an artwork—whether improvised or not—is coherent and artistically successful, it can be mistakenly judged to be incoherent by audiences who fail to apprehend what the work is in fact doing and instead assume its author was aiming to do something else, but failing.[12] This suggests that the problem Wexman claims for the directors she cites—Cassavetes, Robert Altman, and D. A. Pennebaker—may in fact be a problem with the audience members' reception and judgment of their films, and not a problem with the films or the filmmakers' practices. In Kendall Walton's terms in his "Categories of Art" (1970), this would be a matter of an audience member approaching, experiencing, and evaluating a work as if it belonged to one 'category'—e.g. 'scripted classical narrative film'—when it belongs to, and is properly judged within, another 'category'—e.g. 'improvised ensemble film'. The same properties of a work that, in Walton's terms, count as 'standard' and 'contra-standard' for one category could count as the reverse for anoth-

[10] This is also no more a problem for *improvisation* than for any artistic technique or method, since each requires discipline or at least judgment to employ successfully, and any can be used poorly, resulting in artistic failure.

[11] Cf. Alperson (1984: 22): "Even the freest improviser, far from creating *ex nihilo*, improvises against some sort of musical context."

[12] Cf. McLuhan (1964: 239): "When they are initially proposed, new systems of knowledge do not look like improvements and innovations. They look like chaos."

er (see Walton 1970: 338–42). For instance, scenes between characters in classical narrative films standardly contain non-overlapping dialogue where each character, in turn, clearly and concisely articulates a statement which is made in order to further that character's goals and dramatic motivation in both the scene and the narrative overall.

Where it might be a 'mistake' for a film *in this category* to contain a scene of dialogue that 'goes nowhere' or in which actors deliver lines in a way that makes it difficult for the audience to hear every word, these things might not be contra-standard, but might in fact be standard, for scenes in a film of a different type made with different artistic aims. Hence, it can be a category mistake on the viewer's part to judge an extended scene of dialogue in, say, Cassavetes' *Husbands* (1970), Jacques Rivette's *Out 1* (1971), or Altman's *Nashville* (1975), in which characters talk over one another, struggle to express themselves, and speak and act without 'advancing the plot', as being artistically flawed if this judgment is based on their approaching the film with the expectation that it will be like other films with which they are more familiar and that it will aim to do what these films do. Such expectations can get in the way of the viewer seeing what the film *is* doing, and seeing how such a scene can be 'meaningful' or even coherent in a different way. Just as improvised musical or theatrical performances call for different forms of engagement and evaluation by audiences, even if the fact of improvisation is not directly perceptible without some background knowledge of the process by which it is produced, and just as certain properties that might count as artistic flaws in a non-improvised work might not count as such for an improvised one (cf. Sparshott 1982: 255), films that make use of improvisation will call for being experienced and judged differently than traditionally scripted films.

So far my responses to these challenges have assumed that films can be genuinely improvised artworks, where this is what Froger's first challenge calls into question. This challenge still needs to be addressed in order to fully counter Froger's skepticism about improvised cinema.

2.4 *Response to the first challenge*

With regard to this challenge—that the temporal gap between a film's creation and its reception, including the editing that the recorded images and sounds go through, do not allow for films to be improvised artworks—it is puzzling that the definition of improvisation on which this challenge is based limits improvisation to musical pieces and to dialogue. It is also odd that Froger claims her definition "emphasizes the simultaneity of ... audience reception" with creation and execution (Froger 2017: 234), when it makes no mention of audience reception. Nevertheless, assuming that Froger accepts the possibility of improvisation with respect to more than just music and dialogue, such as dance, or an actor's movements and not just speech, her position would seem to be *either* that two things—composition and execution—*or* that

three—these, plus audience reception—must be simultaneous for improvisation.

The latter position, which is what she seems to endorse when read literally, would entail that recorded as opposed to live musical performances can't be improvisations, but this seems false and fails to accord with actual practices surrounding improvised music.[13] It is implausible to hold that a listener who is present at a performance of a free improvisation hears an improvised piece of music, but that someone listening to a live recording of the performance after it has occurred, and who hears the same sounds, does not. Hence, a definition of improvisation that requires all three factors to be simultaneous is not plausibly tenable. But if only the simultaneity of a work's composition and its execution are taken to be necessary for that work to count as improvised,[14] there is no reason to discount the possibility of a film being an improvised artwork so long as what was recorded, and what the viewer subsequently sees, was something the improviser came up with in the moment of recording. Thus, in order to succeed, Froger's objection would need to rest on an implausibly narrow definition of improvisation, and so the possibility of improvisational cinema cannot be discounted for this reason.

Even if the temporal delay between a work's composition and execution and its reception doesn't discount it from being an improvised artwork, the fact that a film's composition encompasses more than the camera recording what is occurring in front of it, including the selection and editing of the recorded material later in the production process, could be seen to raise a further challenge to the possibility of a film as a whole being an improvised artwork. This may be the point of Froger's comment about how the "after-the-fact construction of a story's spatio-temporal continuity" (Froger 2017: 234–35) can impede the audience's ability to encounter, *as improvisation*, any improvising recorded by the camera. And more than just the story's spatio-temporal continuity can be constructed during the editing of a film, including interactions between characters. Actors can be filmed on separate occasions speaking their lines to an empty room and the shots cut together to present an interactive conversation between the characters, and even the expressive tone of the 'performance' of a single actor can be created through combining different takes, when the actor's performance lacked this tone in any one of these takes. What the audience encounters as *the cinematic work* is ultimately the result of the editing process and not just, or primarily, of what went into recording the parts that are edited, with many of the work's artistic properties having to do with the selec-

[13] A frequently discussed, and useful, example of a record of an improvised musical performance where listening to the record is widely accepted as listening to an improvisation is Keith Jarrett's 1975 *Köln Concert*. See Davies (2011: 135–43) for a discussion of this work and the issue of recordings of improvised performances.

[14] This would allow for recorded music that no one other than the performer(s) hear(s) in the moment of its playing/recording to count as improvised, which certainly seems plausible.

tion and arranging of recorded images, and the combination of these with sounds that are recorded separately and subjected to further editing and rearrangement. As such, it might seem that even if improvisation occurred in the moment of filming, a film *qua* film cannot *itself* be an improvised, rather than a designed and planned, artwork.

While this objection wouldn't discount the possibility of a film that consisted of a single unbroken shot being an improvised work if the acting and filming of this take were improvised, such films are rare, and restricting cinematic improvisation to these films would be overly limiting. A definition that included only these films would exclude nearly all of the films that in practice are considered to have been improvised, whether those by Cassavetes and Rivette mentioned by Wexman, the ensemble comedies of Christopher Guest (*Best in Show* [2000]) or Chris Lillie (*Summer Heights High* [2007]), or more recent independent 'mumblecore' and 'micro-budget' films by directors such as Joe Swanberg (*Hannah Takes the Stairs* [2007], *Nights and Weekends* [2008]), Aaron Katz (*Quiet City* [2007]), Chris Smith (*The Pool* [2007]), and Sean Garrity (*Zooey & Adam* [2009], *Blood Pressure* [2012]). As David Davies has argued in favour of what he calls the "pragmatic constraint" (Davies 2004: 17–20), when an ontological theory of art contrasts with how practitioners understand what they are doing or making, the burden of proof is on the advocate of the 'revisionary' position to present an 'error theory' explaining the misunderstanding. While Froger claims something like this with respect to Godard's early films, more support is needed for this claim than Froger gives for it to meet the aforementioned burden of proof in Godard's case—and it still wouldn't count against others' claims that their films were improvised to some significant extent.

Additionally, the objection relies on two assumptions that may be common but which are not beyond question: (i) that an artwork counts as an improvised work only if *all* of its constitutive and artistically relevant properties result from simultaneous composition and execution; and (ii) that the selection, arrangement, and editing of material is incompatible with improvisation, or is not something that can *itself* be improvised. If these assumptions are rejected—and both are challenged by Sterritt (2000) in his consideration of the writing practices of Beat authors Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs alongside paradigmatic examples of improvisation by bebop musicians—it opens the way for allowing genuinely improvised cinematic works. Ultimately, in order to endorse *or* oppose Froger's challenges, and so to answer the question "Can films be improvised artworks?", the questions of what makes any artwork count as an improvised work, and how this might apply to cinematic works in particular, must be answered.

3. *What makes an artwork an improvised work?*

Some artworks can include improvised elements without plausibly counting as improvised works on the whole—e.g. a concerto that in-

cludes an improvised cadenza but which it not otherwise improvised by its performers—whereas others such as Jarrett's *Köln Concert* more plausibly count as improvised works. Distinguishing between improvised artworks and artworks that merely involve some amount of improvisation requires a theory of improvisation in general. Gilbert Ryle (1976) presents an account of improvisation in relation to everyday actions and speech, emphasizing that his account goes beyond any special concern with artistic creation (Ryle 1976: 69–70). For Ryle, improvisation is a central part of intelligence having to do with our ability to be innovative, original, and unmechanical in thinking and acting. This is a factor in all 'higher-level' thinking, which Ryle argues cannot simply be a matter of direct step-by-step progression from one thought to another but must involve a certain degree of 'ad hockery' (Ryle 1976: 71–72). We improvise, in this sense, when we respond to a particular situation in an unplanned and unrehearsed way, not following any prior model; "in a conversation or a debate, since what I am to say to you next depends partly on how you are going to complete your current sentence, *I can harbour no internal 'tape'* already impressed with my impending remark or retort" (Ryle 1976: 74, my emphasis).

Such action is intentional insofar as we are not acting unconsciously or automatically from habit, but is, as he puts it, a "*thinking-up* of a wanted something without the execution of any successive pieces of *thinking-out* or *thinking-over*" (Ryle 1976: 71, my emphasis). While our action will not be entirely without precedent, drawing on our past experience and the "know-how" we've gained from it (Ryle 1976: 77), it will be particular to the occasion on which it is done or uttered; "[t]o a partly novel situation", he notes, "the response is necessarily partly novel, else it is not a response" (Ryle 1976: 73). Since in everyday life we frequently act or speak without carrying out the steps of a pre-formed, *specific* plan 'to a T', but instead think *as* we act or speak, modifying as we go any 'plan' we may have had in mind, improvisation is an everyday ability that every mentally competent adult will exercise to some degree. As Ryle puts it, improvisation is essentially the capacity to be "not a tram, but a bus" (Ryle 1976: 69)—i.e. not to be limited to following a track laid down in advance, in a fixed direction and towards a predetermined destination, but to be able to choose, and to change, one's course.

When applied to artistic creation and performance, Ryle's account supports Froger's emphasis on the simultaneity of composition and execution, if 'execution' is understood as making the choices and carrying out the actions that go into forming, or performing, a work, and if composition is understood as 'invention' or 'planning', i.e. as conceiving, contemplating, and deliberating about these choices and actions and their anticipated results.[15] This fits Alperson's definition of improvisa-

[15] While Froger most frequently uses the term 'composition', she also uses 'invention' synonymously, and seems to mean by both something equivalent to 'conception', 'planning', or 'designing'.

tion as spontaneity in creation (Alperson 1984: 17), along with Curtis Carter's similar characterization of improvisation as involving the "suspension of set structures for a practice and the introduction of non-traditional elements [requiring] the power to invent new forms spontaneously" (Carter 2000: 181), and Aili Bresnahan's definition of improvisational artistry as "thinking-while-doing [...] a sort of spontaneous agency that involves both conscious and spontaneous artistic choices that take place during performance" (Bresnahan 2014: 87, 91).[16] Spontaneous creation is not creation *ex nihilo*, but creation resulting from a set of actions that was not entirely pre-meditated but was conceived and intended by the agent in the moment of carrying them out. On all the accounts mentioned above, we can say that a part of an artwork is improvised insofar as the artist conceives of that part of the work as being a certain way (composition) *in the course of* performing the action that realizes it in this way (execution), rather than following a pre-existing plan. For instance, part of a musical performance will be improvised if and only if what the musician is playing is not 'thought out' in advance, but 'thought up' in the moment *as* she is playing it; likewise, part of a painting will be improvised if and only if the decision to apply a particular colour to a particular part of the canvass with a particular manner of brush stroke, etc., occurs simultaneously with the painter's hand and arm moving the brush in this manner.

If a creative decision is improvised when it is unpremeditated in this way, then most, and arguably all, artistic creation involves improvisation to some degree. Regarding dance, Bresnahan argues that "the setting and conditions of a live performance *always* require the performer to be aware of his or her performing environment in an 'online' way, *making on-the-spot adjustments* either to improve a performance or to correct a problem if something goes wrong" (Ryle 1976: 92, my emphasis). Even live dance performances done according to a pre-established choreography, she notes, involve *some* improvising in how the dancers move to interpret the choreography in the moment, insofar as their movements aren't mechanical reproductions of the choreographer's instructions and insofar as interpretation is involved in translating these instructions into actual bodily movements. Similarly, Gould and Keaton argue that this holds for musical performance and score interpretation, and R. Keith Sawyer goes further to argue that, at least on certain understandings of art such as those found in Dewey (1934) and Collingwood (1938), *all* artistic creation involves improvisation in Ryle's sense, at some point in the creative process, insofar as the work is a (new) creation and not a reproduction of an already-existing form (Sawyer 2000: 152). Despite his distaste for aesthetics, Ryle agrees, noting that "verse composition cannot be merely a well-drilled opera-

[16] Gould and Keaton (2000) challenge spontaneity as a necessary part of improvisation, but see Davies (2011: 151–54) for a reply to Gould and Keaton and a defence of spontaneity being a necessary part of improvisation.

tion [since] if Wordsworth's seventh sonnet had been a repetition of his sixth sonnet, it would not have been a new sonnet, and so not have been a new composition" (Ryle 1976: 70).

This may explain what it is for an artist to improvise during part of the creation of a work, and so for part of a work to be improvised, but we need more to classify an artwork as *an improvised artwork* overall. I suggest that this is a matter of degree and that it is helpful to think of a spectrum with works that involve a faithful adherence to a pre-existing plan or model at one extreme—e.g. a hyperrealist painting made by copying a blown-up photograph, like Chuck Close's *Self Portrait*—and works for which *all* artistically significant properties are the result of simultaneous and spontaneous invention and execution—e.g. Jarrett's *Köln Concert*—at the other. A work as a whole, then, will be more or less improvised *qua* artwork to the extent that more or fewer of its artistically relevant properties are brought about through improvisation on the part of the artist(s), and to the extent that the properties so brought about contribute to the artistic character and value—whether positive or negative—of the work itself. Not *all* of a work's aesthetically relevant properties need to result from improvisation, then, in order for the work to count as *an improvised work*, just some significant number, and to some significant degree. What this number and degree are, and what will count as significant, will plausibly differ from one work to another, and it is plausible that they will be relative to the medium and genre of the work; the criteria for determining what will count as an improvised dance or musical performance may differ from the criteria for determining what will count as an improvised painting or novel. While the exact threshold may be 'fuzzy', the standards established within a particular practice and for a particular medium or genre can go some way towards settling whether certain works are improvised—e.g. many Charlie Parker solos—or whether they merely involve improvisation—e.g. concertos featuring cadenzas.

One virtue of this definition of improvised artworks is that it is open enough to include many works that are generally considered improvised but which a stronger account that required *all* aspects of a work to be simultaneously invented and executed would exclude, without having to include *every* original artwork, given the distinction between improvised works and works involving improvisation. Another is that it allows for different artforms to have different criteria for works to count as improvised. The lack of attention paid by philosophers of art to improvisation in certain artforms may be due to an assumption that the criteria for what counts as improvisation in artforms based in live performance, such as music, dance, and theatre, are the criteria for all artistic improvisation, leading to artforms that result in 'products' rather than performances—e.g. painting, literature, etc.—being thought not to admit of improvised works. This difference between performance-based and product-based artforms, and of how they are commonly thought of in relation to improvisation, is noted by Sawyer, who

suggests that this has to do with what *execution* in these artforms involves. "Product creativity generally involves a long period of creative work leading up to the creative product," he writes, while "in improvisational performance, the creative process *is* the product; the audience is watching the creative process as it occurs" (Sawyer 2000: 149). Cinema is a medium of 'product creativity' in this sense, with the creation and execution of a film involving a drawn-out process of pre-production, production, and post-production, with the activities and decisions made at each stage being meant to result in a fixed product, i.e. a film.

To determine how a film might be an improvised artwork, then, we need to ask what it would mean for something created over a length of time, usually with temporal breaks in the processes of composition and execution, and which results in a fixed product, to be improvised. Sawyer's example of a five hour improvised painting session by Picasso (Sawyer 2000: 149–50) is relevant to consider, as are Sterritt's examples of the 'improvisatory' writing of Kerouac and Burroughs (Sterritt 2000: 163–64, 167–69). In the case of Picasso, Sawyer suggests that a painting is an improvised artwork just in case the artist's process of painting it is done "free-form, without preconceived image or composition" (Sawyer 2000: 149). Regarding the Beat authors, Sterritt notes that Kerouac's self-styled 'spontaneous writing' may not have been entirely separate from or opposed to "planning, deliberation, pre-conceptualization, and other mental activities that are [not] wholly spontaneous ... in the ways suggested by idealized discourses of extemporaneous invention" (Sterritt 2000: 163). He argues, however, that "a look at the actual methodologies of some paradigmatic practitioners," such as bebop musicians, "suggests that spur-of-the-moment creation may not be nearly as divorced from preconceived ideas, prerehearsed techniques, and prearranged effects as its advocates frequently appear to believe" (Sterritt 2000: 164). Musical improvisers, e.g. Parker, draw on personal repertoires of musical phrases made familiar through practice, so accepting their performances as improvised requires accepting that improvisation, *qua* in-the-moment composition, is not opposed to *some* amount of "preparation and precomposition", even in the genres of musical performance most commonly accepted as improvisational (Sterritt 2000: 166). Hence, Sterritt implies, the presence of a degree of preparation and precomposition in the practices of the Beat writers, including Burroughs' use of existing materials to which he gave coherence through rearranging and revising, should not automatically count against claims that their writing was spontaneous or improvised in its execution.

These examples show that: (i) if the creative process that results in a finished product is improvised, the product itself can count as an improvised artwork even though it is fixed and enduring in a way that a live performance is not; and (ii) a creative process can involve improvisation alongside some amount of preparation or even precomposition of some parts of the work, alongside 'on-the-fly' revision. On the definition offered above, the resulting work will count as an improvised work

provided that enough of the work's salient artistic properties result from improvisation in the creative process and not from precomposition, with what counts as 'enough' being determined on a case-by-case basis. This gives us some guidelines for what it would take for a film to be an improvised work: some significant part(s) of the film's creation must be carried out in an improvised way, with the results of these improvised parts of the creative process counting as significant for the film's character as an artwork and contributing to its artistic value. Just what these parts of the creative process might be, and how they might be improvised, will be the focus of the next section.

4. *Possibilities for cinematic improvisation*

Ryle's remark, quoted above, about there being no 'internal tape' of one's action or utterance when these are improvised (Ryle 1976: 74) hints at what may be one reason for skepticism about the idea of a film itself being an improvised work—in effect, a finished film *is* such a tape, whether literally, in the case of a film strip imprinted with the still frames that comprise each shot, arranged in a fixed order, or figuratively, in the case of a digital file containing virtual 'imprints' of the film's images in the form of bitmaps. The film print (or file) already contains what the audience will see before they see it, with each proper screening of that print repeating the same predetermined images (and sounds) in the same predetermined, linear sequence.[17] In this respect, films are analogous to Ryle's "trams" (Ryle 1976: 69). However, as the point above about how 'products' can be improvised artworks shows, even a fixed sequence of images like this can be an improvised artwork on the above definition, provided the creative process of which the film is the result involved significant improvisation on the part of the film's maker(s).

4.1 *Some ways in which a film's creation can be improvised*

Given the near-universal focus on acting in the existing discussions of improvisation in cinema, not much needs to be added here. It is worth noting how improvised acting overlaps with writing, insofar as actors who improvise what their characters do and say are, in effect, the authors of their performances, or at least parts thereof, being responsible for the same things—dialogue, actions, reactions, the dramatic beats and progression of a scene, etc.—for which screenwriters are responsible in scripted filmmaking. Other ways in which the writing (or rather, the 'plotting') of a film can be improvised extend beyond dialogue and actions. If improvised scenes are shot in chronological order without a full script, what will happen in any one scene need not be determined

[17] An *improper* screening would be one in which the sequence of images and sounds determined by the filmmaker is not presented; e.g. if reels are projected out of order, if a DVD skips over a significant number of scenes, etc.

in advance but can follow from what the actors have done up to that point. In this case, the actors might not only be the authors of their characters' actions and words, but can contribute to shaping the narrative as a whole. Films where both the narrative and the words and actions of the characters are improvised are rare, given the requirements of time, money, equipment, and the coordination of multiple schedules, along with the uncertainty of whether anything good will result from the process. Something between such a fully improvised narrative and a traditionally pre-scripted one could involve someone—likely the director—who has a general idea of the narrative trajectory of the film, including the ending, with the actors improvising each scene and with the scenario being open to revision in response to the improvisations within each scene as it was filmed.[18]

Cinematography—encompassing the framing and composition, movement, adjustments to the lens and focus (e.g. zooming, racking focus from foreground to background or vice versa, etc.)—also offers the potential for improvisation by the camera operator, who can adjust these elements 'on the fly' in response to whatever is occurring in front of and around the camera. Improvising actors will almost certainly require the camera operator to improvise along with them, adjusting framing and focus and moving in response to their movements,[19] but a camera operator can also improvise these elements independently of the actors, whether or not the actors are themselves improvising—e.g. deciding to pan away from the actors at a certain point or not to follow them with the camera and allow them to leave the frame, or spontaneously deciding to zoom in or out or change position, etc.

Just as the camera operator following and responding to actors can be considered improvised shooting when the movements are not blocked out in advance, the sound recordist/boom operator will also need to improvise in order to follow the actors with the microphone, both in traditional shooting and when actors are improvising, since the microphone will need to be redirected, with minimal time delay, to pick up the voice of each actor as he or she speaks. There does not, however, seem to be the same *artistic* potential here as there does for improvising with the camera, since the sound recordist will be limited to following the actors without being as free to improvise the direction of the microphone.[20] Similarly, while the choice to have actors improvise a

[18] This is how Berkeley (2011) describes the process through which he made *How to Change the World* (2008). Garrity's *Zooey and Adam* (2009) and *Blood Pressure* (2012) were also made by taking a similar approach.

[19] See Carney (1999: 72), on the camera operator's need to improvise during the filming of *Shadows* (1959).

[20] This assumes that no artistically interesting effect can be created by the sound recordist spontaneously deciding *not* to record some part of a scene, whereas one might be had from not following them with the camera. This difference comes down, I think, to the differences between visual and auditory experience, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine this further.

scene will affect how the scene will be lit, there doesn't seem to be room for the lighting itself to be improvised in any sense; rather, there will be *less* room for expressiveness on the part of the lighting crew, since the way to ensure that actors' performances, which can range across the space of the scene in unpredictable ways, will be properly exposed is to light the whole space as evenly—and hence, flatly—as possible.[21]

A director might seem limited in his or her ability to improvise during the shooting of a film since, whereas the camera operator and sound recordist are performing their roles simultaneously with the actors' performances to which they can respond in the moment, a director's response to what the actors or crew do during a take typically comes after the take is finished, through feedback and direction regarding what they should do differently in the *next* take. However, there are ways for a director and the actors, or the crewmembers, to watch, listen, and respond to one another in the moment as a take is being filmed. Furthermore, a director can give verbal feedback or cues while a take is being filmed so long as they edit out their voice afterwards, limiting them to talking only in moments where none of the actors is speaking.[22]

Despite the temporal gaps involved in the director giving direction between the takes, there is room for a director to carry out her role with spontaneity, openness and responsiveness—especially, but not only, when the actors and crew are themselves improvising their roles. If a director goes into the staging and shooting of a given scene without a pre-established plan for exactly how it will unfold—e.g. working without fixed storyboards or shot lists—she can discover the way she thinks the scene should be shot by having the actors and crew do it various ways before settling on one that she thinks works. This way, aspects of both the 'form' and the 'content' of a scene can emerge during filming rather than being decided upon beforehand. If the director's primary role is to have a sense of how each element will fit together to form the whole film and to make sure that what is done at various points in the process will result in a coherent whole (cf. Wexman 1980: 34), the directing can be considered improvisatory when the director's idea of the whole to which the parts will add up is open and evolves in response to what occurs during shooting.

Although Wexman focuses on acting, she observes that a director or an editor "can maximize the impact of an improvised scene by subjecting it to imaginative editing" (Wexman 1980: 32), in effect creating a new 'performance' by assembling footage taken at different moments, which can alter the meaning or effect of what an actor said or did. While this might be done based on a prior plan, with the editor thinking that a certain effect would fit well at that point in the scene and

[21] See Carney (1999: 237–38), on Cassavetes' way of lighting scenes to give actors maximal range of movement.

[22] David Lynch can be seen directing Laura Dern in this way in the behind-the-scenes footage on the DVD of *Inland Empire* (2006).

then looking through the footage that was filmed in order to find pieces that could be assembled to create this effect, it might equally be done spontaneously, with the editor assembling filmed footage 'intuitively' such that a new, unforeseen meaning or effect emerges from the combination. There seems no reason not to call this way of working 'improvisational editing'.[23] There is a precedent for this in Cassavetes' remark that, after shooting multiple takes of each scene, with each take being done in a different way, the editing room was the real place of *his* improvisation, where he "was able to reshape the film ... making wholesale changes in every aspect of it in light of what the film itself revealed to him as he worked on it" (Carney 1999: 178).[24] If the director's idea of the whole that each part will come together to form can remain open to revision and evolve during shooting, it could also continue to be open and evolve after the film has been shot but before editing is complete.

If these are some ways in which elements of the filmmaking process might be improvised, with the 'execution' of the film as a whole consisting of the execution of these parts of the process, then, combined with the above discussion of improvised artworks, it follows that for a film to count as *an improvised work*, rather than a work that involves improvisation, some number of these elements will need to have been improvised to a significant degree, and in a way that makes an important difference to the artistic character and value of the film as a whole. The extent to which a film is improvised will admit of degrees, allowing it to fall on a spectrum running from tightly pre-scripted and controlled productions on one end to entirely spontaneous productions on the other. For example, Ingmar Bergman's *Shame* (1968), which contains one scene in which the lead actors improvise their conversation,[25] would be higher on the spectrum than a film in which everything, including framing, camera movement and how shots will be combined in editing, is worked out in advance—e.g. through storyboarding—and executed to conform to these plans. A pre-scripted film in which actors had freedom with *how* they spoke their lines and moved on set, but where *what* they said and did was scripted, would fall somewhere in between.

A film like *The Interior* (Trevor Juras, 2015) would be above *Shame* on the spectrum, since two-thirds of the scenes were filmed based on a loose outline, with the particulars of what the lead actor did and said and the blocking of the movements and composition of the image being worked out in the moment.[26] However, it would be below a film like *Best in Show* (Christopher Guest, 2000), since the specifics of what

[23] The 'jump cuts' in Godard's *À bout de souffle/Breathless* were the result of an off-the-cuff suggestion made by Truffaut during the film's editing as a way of picking up the pace of a scene that dragged. If the idea occurred to Truffaut in the moment, there would seem to be no reason not to count this as an improvised editing choice.

[24] See also Carney (1999: 242–43) for other, similar remarks from Cassavetes.

[25] Liv Ullmann discusses the improvised nature of this scene on the DVD features for the MGM release of the film.

[26] Personal correspondence with the filmmaker.

the actor acts in the former film don't contribute as significantly to the film's overall character as do the actors' improvisations in the latter. And *Best in Show* would fall below *Punishment Park* (Peter Watkins, 1971), a film in which non-professional actors engage in real political argument on camera, role-playing exaggerated versions of their own political stances, and in which the camera operator, sound recordist, and director themselves improvised the recording and, in places, their interaction with the on-camera actors (see Rapfogel, 2007). Near the top of the spectrum would come a film like *Zooey and Adam* (Sean Garrity, 2009), which was made working from a three page idea of the characters and the basic dramatic situation, with nearly every element of the filmmaking process being improvised and with the overall narrative, its structure, and the characters' dramatic development evolving during the production process.[27] Given what I have argued above, films closer to the top end of the spectrum, like *Punishment Park* and *Zooey and Adam*, should be counted as improvised films, while those near the other end, like *Shame* and *The Interior*, will count only as films that involve improvisation, being more like concertos with cadenzas than the *Köln Concert*.[28]

4.2 *The positive artistic potential of improvised filmmaking*

From interviews and statements about their own work, many filmmakers who use improvisation do so to gain a sense of realism, i.e. to have the actors' performances or other aspects of the film such as the camerawork feel 'fresh', 'raw', or 'natural'. For instance, when Leo Berkeley (2011), an independent filmmaker and media professor in Australia, discusses the use of improvisation in his film *How to Change the World* (2008), he notes that he was motivated by seeing the performances in films by Altman and Rivette, being "drawn to the sense of uncertainty and unpredictability captured in these films, where moments of performance were intensely 'watchable' in ways that seemed independent of the needs of the plot. They seemed to more successfully reflect the complexity in the interaction between two people when they relate, with the uncertainties, miscommunications, hesitancies, contradictions and confusions that can be apparent on many levels, in what is spoken and what is unspoken." As he explains, he chose to have his actors improvise from an outline, rather than scripting dialogue or interactions in

[27] Personal correspondence with the filmmaker. The website for the film, www.zooeyandadam.com, also contains information on the process by which this film was made.

[28] Films that fall in the middle of the spectrum, like *Best in Show*, may be ambiguous. Relative to films lower on the spectrum, they could be considered improvised, but relative to films higher up, they could be considered only to involve improvisation (though to a high degree). My instinct would be to say that, as a film overall, *Best in Show* is not itself an improvised work if the acting/dialogue were the only elements that were improvised, but that it *may be* if other elements, e.g. the editing or the development of the narrative, were also improvised.

advance, as a way to "[capture] these dimensions of human interaction" (Berkeley 2011: 3).[29]

While talk of 'freshness' or 'rawness' can be simplistic if referring to just an appearance of naturalism in the acting, or naive if it is thought that improvisation is sufficient, or even necessary, for achieving this appearance,[30] it can sometimes refer to a more substantial—and more artistically interesting—position that goes beyond the actors' performances *looking like* 'real life' human behaviour and their dialogue *sounding like* 'real' conversation. The interest here has to do with presenting human behaviour in a way that is *ontologically* closer to, or even identical with, 'real' behaviour; in contrast, acting that achieves a naturalistic *appearance* when the actor is carrying out what was already conceived and worked out in the script is, in effect, a simulation of behaviour.[31] Thinking about an action and doing it are different processes, and anything that can be conceived of in advance by a writer for a fictional character to do involves the former, not the latter. Rather than presenting viewers with a pre-interpreted action whose meaning and place in the story are worked out in advance, improvisation presents viewers with something that was done as it was conceived, and before it is interpreted or understood. In this respect, it is ontologically on par with ordinary behaviour, which is rarely planned in advance and is often understood and interpreted, by those observing it and by the agent himself, only after it has been performed.

One artistically interesting example of a moment achievable only through improvisation, in which an actor's performance and a character's action in the story coincide, is found towards the end of Garrity's *Zooey and Adam*. In the scene, the character (Zooey) comes home to find her son gone with her ex-husband (Adam) and is told that Adam had earlier been talking to the son about a location that featured prominently earlier in the film. What the improvised process of the film's production allows that a scripted and rehearsed film would not is for the audience to witness the actor playing Zooey figure out, in real time, what has happened to her character's child by actually making the connection herself between this message and her memory of the mention of the location in a scene filmed some time earlier.[32] The inference the

[29] For another representative example, see Dowell (2008) on the motivation behind the child actors in the sitcom *Outnumbered* being encouraged to improvise, forcing the actors playing the parents to improvise *their* reactions.

[30] Improvised acting is not necessarily naturalistic acting; witness the highly stylized improvised performances in *Céline et Julie vont en bateau / Celine and Julie Go Boating* (Jacques Rivette, 1974).

[31] Cf. Ryle (1976: 70): "The remark I am engaged in making now is not, except sometimes, the repetition of anything I have heard or said before. It is, though usually a perfectly unsurprising remark, a fresh remark composed *ad hoc*, namely to fit a fresh conversational juncture."

[32] It is important that it was the first take of actress playing this moment in the scene that was used. As director Sean Garrity has said in personal correspondence, he will often choose to use a take in which an actor is reacting for the first time

actress makes and the realization it leads to are equivalent to what the character in the story does in this moment, and although we can't *see* a person's thought process, we *do* see her body language and outward reactions as her cognitive and emotional processes occur, where much of her embodied response occurs unconsciously. Thus, the audience encounters a fictional event of a character going through a thought process, inferring something, and reacting emotionally by encountering an actual person actually doing these things.[33]

When it comes to interactions between multiple characters, improvised scenes will be realistic in other ways. For one thing, actual human interaction involve a meeting, and at times a clash, of genuinely different perspectives, understandings, interpretations, beliefs, etc., each coming from a different person. However, a single writer scripting the actions of a large number of characters is limited to presenting his or her own version of these perspectives, as imagined from his or her perspective, drawing from one set of personal experiences and understandings rather than having a different set—i.e. each actor's—be the basis of each character's actions and utterances.[34] For another thing, when each actor improvises her or his part without knowing what the other actors are thinking or what they will do, how they will respond, etc., the actors are put into the same position people are in when interacting with others in real life—where this is the position of the characters they're

to a significant story event previously unknown to them, even if there are minor technical imperfections in the shot and even if the actor's observable reaction is not particularly overt, in order to have the film allow the viewer to see the actor's experience in the moment and the character's experience in the world of the fiction coinciding. As he says, even if there is no discernable difference between such a take and a scripted performance, it nevertheless makes a difference to *what it is* that the audience is encountering—or, in philosophical terms, to the ontological status of the performance seen through the filmic recording.

[33] Something similar may occur in Mike Leigh's *Vera Drake* (2004), in a scene in which the lead character's family is surprised by a revelation about this character, with the actors (other than the lead playing Vera) first learning this information as their characters do, though I am uncertain whether the surprise occurred for the *actors* during the filming of the take that we see in the finished film or whether it occurred earlier, e.g. during the filming of a previous take, or in rehearsal.

[34] Watkins' *Punishment Park*, and even moreso his film *La Commune: Paris 1871* (2000), are good illustrations of this. In the first, non-professional actors of different backgrounds and political persuasions—young radicals, middle-aged, middle-class conservatives, and those with an actual military or police background—are allowed, as their characters, to express their own viewpoints and responses to what the other cast members say, which allows for the expression of a genuinely wider set of perspectives than if a single author, e.g. Watkins, had come up with what each character would say in defence of their 'side'. In the second film, a quasi-documentary re-enactment of the titular Paris commune, the documentary research was largely conducted by the cast members (also non-professionals) who then were able express their own thoughts on what they had researched and how they thought the historical situation and conditions related to their contemporary lives, as well as role-playing members of the commune engaged in what would have been their historical counterparts' daily tasks.

playing within the fictional world. On the other hand, when there is a script that lets each actor know, in advance, what the other characters will say or do, this element of real human interaction is no longer part of the process the actors are actually going through in acting out the scene, and so must be 'faked'.[35] Having the story or the content of scenes emerge through a collaborative process of rehearsal, in the way Mike Leigh's films (e.g. *Secrets and Lies* [1996], *Vera Drake* [2004]) do,[36] helps overcome the first limitation, but insofar as what exactly is performed in front of the camera has to been worked out in advance, as in the case of Leigh's films, the second limitation can still apply.

This approach to presenting characters' behaviour makes it easier to avoid the essentializing tendencies and reductive 'psychologizing' of most screenwriting manuals, where writers are encouraged to work out what a character says and does based on an inevitably narrow conception of the character's defining psychological traits and dispositions, including his or her primary motivation and goal(s) in the narrative. While this approach predetermines and locks down the meaning of events in a film's story, improvisation in the processes of 'constructing' the scenes, narrative, and characters allows this meaning to emerge from, and in response to, the particular events, actions, and interactions in which they are situated, where these constitute the context in which they 'mean' anything at a pragmatic level.[37]

While these last paragraphs have discussed improvised acting, and the improvisation in the 'writing' of a film that this overlaps with, their point also applies to improvisation in the other elements of filmmaking discussed in §4.1. What is at issue is, in effect, the difference between what Ray Carney calls a "discovery model" vs. a "blueprint model" of artistic creation (Carney 1994: 187–88).[38] Whereas the latter model involves presenting pre-interpreted experiences that stay within an artist's existing 'horizon' of understanding, the latter involves forming new understandings and interpretations by undergoing the experi-

[35] Cf. Ryle (1976: 74), and the line about the "internal tape" quoted above. To run with the metaphor, a pre-written script is just such a 'tape', with acting from a script facing the problem of working out how to behave as if one hasn't seen this tape in advance of doing it when, in fact, one has.

[36] It is Leigh's use of improvisation in rehearsal, and not during the actual filming (at which point a script is used), that has garnered him a reputation for improvisational filmmaking (see Movshovitz [2000]). See also Carney (1994: 26), on the reputation of Cassavetes' first film, *Shadows* (1959), for having been entirely improvised. In fact, it was an earlier version of the film, developed from improvisations by the actors in a way that sounds similar to Leigh's approach and shot in 1957, that had more of a claim to this status, but the second version of the film that was shot in 1959, which is the version commonly known and currently available, was mostly made from a script Cassavetes wrote based on the first, improvised version after being dissatisfied with the first.

[37] Cf. Wittgenstein's (1953) arguments against ostensive definition and for an alternative 'meaning-as-use' account of language.

[38] Cf. Collingwood (1938) on the art/craft distinction.

ences involved in making the artwork, allowing for a responsiveness to this flow of experiences *from within*, rather than from an intellectual position 'above' it. As Carney writes, "Cassavetes' style shows us what it looks and feels like to be *in* an experience, puzzling over it, emotionally involved in it, intellectually responding to it (and adjusting one's responses to it) as it happens" (Carney 1994: 189). Beyond the acting, improvisation in the camerawork or editing can contribute to the production of a film being a discovery by those making it, rather than the executing of a blueprint. Instead of replicating the framing and movements worked out in a storyboard in order to realize a predetermined understanding or effect, an improvising camera operator, by searching within the visual space of a scene as it is played out and interpreting it through the details selected—and the ways chosen to pick them out, in terms of the framing, the movement of the camera and lens, etc.—can play a part in creating the understanding of the action that the film will present to viewers. And an editor searching through footage that has been shot and closely attending to each take (both perceptually and empathetically), making intuitive connections between them instead of working from a shot list or a 'paper edit',[39] is doing something similar.

While improvisation can result in a naturalistic look, it can also be used for anti-naturalistic purposes, e.g. to disrupt what Froger refers to as 'the effect of the real'. The aim of some filmmakers who use improvisation to get away from the 'blueprint' model of creation can be to work against expectations and disrupt familiar patterns—'blueprints' for experience—in the narrative, in its cinematic presentation, and in the audience's cognitive and emotional reception of the film. As Carney explains, "Cassavetes forces [viewers] to grapple with unanalyzed and unexplained expressive surfaces. The viewer is put in the position of not knowing quite who the characters are, why they are behaving in the way they are, or exactly how to interpret their specific expressions. [...] The consequence is to force the viewer to abandon the attempt to trace expressive behaviour back to a reductive set of 'essential' intentions, feelings, and attitudes (that is, if it doesn't send him scurrying out of the theatre in bewilderment)" (Carney 1994: 10).[40] Leigh makes a similar point in an interview, saying that "[w]hatever film you watch, assuming you've seen a film before, you immediately go into one program or another, or plug into an expectation system, [but if] the film is any good, these expectations are constantly confounded" (Movshovitz 2000: 65–66).[41] Regardless of whether improvisation, and the unconventional experiences it can give viewers, will result in a film's popular-

[39] A 'paper edit' is a script made for the editor based on footage that has already been shot, indicating an order in which the shots should be assembled.

[40] This suggests, contra Froger and Wexman, that the 'confusion' or 'alienation' that may be felt in response to a film that offers an unconventional viewing experience is a failure *of the viewer*, not of the film.

[41] Note that Leigh's claim "if the film is any good..." implies a reversal of the criteria of artistic value that Froger and Wexman seem to assume.

ity or commercial success, I contend that they are *artistically* interesting and can be valuable, potentially adding positively to a film's artistic properties in a way similar to Lewis' notion of "aesthetic thickening" mentioned above.

5. *Conclusion: Improvisation and ethical implications for creation and reception*

In the previous section I have argued that, on the account presented in §3 of what it is for an artwork to be an improvised work, there are various ways for a film not only to involve improvisation in its creation, but to be itself an improvised work, and that improvisation can contribute positively to a film's artistic value. Of course, improvising during the making of a film is not guaranteed to contribute positively in this way; as with any technique or approach in artistic creation, and in any artform, it can be done well or poorly. I hope to have shown, partly through the cinematic examples I have discussed, that it has the potential to be artistically interesting, that a number of films that employ it are artistically successful because of the ways in which their making was improvised by those who made them, and that this aspect of such films is worth attending to more than it has been by film scholars and philosophers of art.

As well as its artistic potential, improvisatory approaches to filmmaking could be said to have potentially positive social or ethical dimensions.[42] A typically hierarchical model of production with an industrial division of labour can be made more collaborative, with each member of the cast or crew having more substantial input into the creation and shaping of a film than they would if carrying out a pre-assigned role, since being asked to improvise calls on one to engage all one's skills and capacities for attention and judgment in the performance of one's role, and can generate a sense of shared responsibility for a communal project. Moreover, the ways of relating to others involved in improvisation—close attention, openness, listening, empathy, imagination, thoughtfulness, etc.—mirror those involved in *ethical* relations, where improvising can involve exercising and strengthening these capacities and dispositions. Following Hannah Arendt (1971), thinking beyond the 'blueprints' formed by one's existing beliefs and interpretations, i.e. being able to evaluate and judge the appropriateness of an action to a situation in ways that go beyond any codifiable set of ethical rules or fixed principles, is arguably essential for living ethically.

In addition to potentially exercising and strengthening socially and ethically positive dispositions in those making the film, artworks that are created through a 'discovery' rather than a 'blueprint' approach

[42] As with the artistic benefits of improvisation, these social or ethical benefits are only potentially realizable; not all productions of films that involve improvisation will necessarily realize them, and they can be realized in non-improvised productions. I am discussing tendencies and potential here, not necessary and sufficient conditions.

have a similar potential for audiences. If, as Arendt insists, thinking and acting from a fixed mental schema or blueprint can lead to ethical failings, works that *don't* give their audiences neatly packaged understandings and perspectives that fit into familiar categories, but instead require audiences to grapple with experiences, feelings, perspectives, ideas, etc. on their own terms and in their particularity, can give the viewers practice in what Arendt calls 'real thinking', along with the ethical skills and dispositions mentioned above. Contra Froger and Wexman, I contend that it shows more respect for audiences *not* to pander to them by organizing and presenting events and experiences in familiar, conventional ways, since this assumes they will only be able to process and understand the familiar and the conventional—and moreover, denies them an opportunity from which they could learn. Even if many viewers may likely resist such an opportunity, actively wanting the familiar and conventional, I would argue that it is more ethical to resist this resistance than give in to it for commercial success.[43]

I would also argue that there is a further ethical dimension, and perhaps even a cognitive benefit, to audiences being open to approaching a work on *its* terms or trying to get on *its* wavelength, as opposed to expecting it to cater to *their* expectations and conform to *their* existing categories and modes of understanding. This comes down to an attitude of engagement with, rather than the consumption of, art. Obviously, a work need not be improvised in order for a viewer to approach it in this way, but the unpredictability and transcending of familiar conventions that improvisation often involves requires viewers also to transcend their expectations and familiar categories. By adapting their cognitive and emotional engagement to a film that, through its use of improvisation, makes available new forms of understanding, new ways of perceiving, or new patterns of thinking and feeling, viewers can make those ways of understanding, perceiving, thinking and feeling their own, and so can gain—or strengthen—new ways of experiencing and engaging with not only films or artworks, but life in general.[44]

[43] An anecdote recounted in Carney (1994), concerns a conversation with Cassavetes in which the filmmaker, "imitating an imaginary viewer watching one of his films ... slouched down in his chair and flailed his arms wildly in front of his face, as if shielding his eyes from the fury of an atomic blast, while chortling: 'A new experience? Oh, no! Save me! Anything but that!'" (Carney 1994, 2).

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Tasting the Truth: The Role of Food and Gustatory Knowledge in Hannibal

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The paper provides a philosophical analysis of the role of food and eating in Hannibal. *In the classical epistemological paradigm of detective fiction knowledge is linked with the sense of sight. This means that knowledge required for solving a detective mystery is objective and intersubjective in its nature. I argue that in order to understand Dr. Lecter's motives, it is necessary to adopt the different epistemological model whereby valuable information is acquired through the senses of taste and smell. The protagonist displays mastery of the two senses through the use of his culinary skills. This fact explains how Lecter can control over the whole intrigue through the series.*

Keywords: Gustatory knowledge, philosophy of food, lower senses, epistemology, detective fiction, Hannibal Lecter.

1. *Introduction*

Hannibal (NBC 2013—2015) is a TV series that few viewers can afford to ignore. The story is drenched in cruelty, manipulation and over-the-top, visual, fatigue-inducing aesthetic. Many viewers appreciate memorable dialogues, complex intrigue, and superb acting skills of the actors playing main characters. But what arrests the viewer's attention the most is, firstly, a rather peculiar way in which the protagonist—Dr. Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikklesen) exercises control over all the scheming that goes on, and, secondly, highly intense scenes—in terms of both quantity and quality—involving cooking and eating. The aim of this article is to show, by applying philosophical framework, how these two characteristics of *Hannibal*'s combine and interact. Thus, the article offers a detailed philosophical discussion on the role of food and gustatory knowledge in *Hannibal*.[1] It is argued that, in order to un-

[1] For the sake of this paper, I assume that at least some of serial narrative dramas have aesthetic and artistic qualities which make them works of art, see e.g.

derstand Lecter's motives, it is necessary to adopt the epistemological model whereby valuable information is acquired through the senses of taste and smell. The protagonist displays mastery of the two senses through the use of his culinary skills. It is also suggested that *Hannibal* interestingly illuminates issues that are currently under scrutiny within philosophical aesthetics.

The story, simplifying greatly, traces a rather peculiar relationship between Dr. Hannibal Lecter and FBI special agent Will Graham (Hugh Dancy).[2] Graham is a profiler whose job is to help FBI retrace the motivation, emotions and steps taken by serial killers. Unfortunately, his work takes a toll on Graham leading to a gradual decline of his mental health. Enter Dr. Hannibal Lecter, who is tasked with helping Graham regain control. Lecter is a renowned psychiatrist, food connoisseur, art lover, and of course a serial killer. In a total of three seasons, viewers gain an insight into the complicated relationship between Lecter and Graham. The pair solve murder mysteries together, eat, cook and discuss art and morality. The viewer forms an awareness of Lecter's true nature starting from episode one. Lecter is unquestionably highly intelligent, has a refined palate for food and is a talented cook; he is moreover an experienced anatomist and surgeon, a lover and student of a number of art forms, and a person with fixed ideas about the way he dresses. He is also a schemer, liar and a ruthless killer. Lecter applies his formidable skills to manipulate Graham and the whole of the FBI, Jack Crawford (Laurence Fishburne), Graham's boss, in particular.

The article is structured in the following way. In §2, I briefly sketch out the classic model of the epistemology of detective fiction and the role visual experience plays in it. Next, §3 provides an analysis of Will Graham's working methods and the nature of operational knowledge he acquires. This part also highlights the doubts Will Graham has about the effectiveness of the classic epistemological paradigm. After that, in §4, I take a close look at Dr. Hannibal Lecter's motives and actions intended to help him take control over the web of intrigue throughout the series. In particular, I focus on the role of food and gustatory knowledge which is twofold: they incite murder and they are a catalyst for the assertion of an alternative epistemological model. I suggest as well that this model should be also understood in aesthetic terms. The conclusions I reach help me examine the possibility of an epistemological paradigm shift by Will Graham and the potential consequences of his actions for his identity (§5). The article ends with a brief summary (§6).

Nannicelli (2012; 2016). In particular, I treat *Hannibal* as a token of audiovisual work of art. However, I leave aside the question of what *kind* of art this TV series is — high, low or mass art since it remains irrelevant for the purpose of this paper.

[2] The series is an adaptation of the so-called Hannibal's Universe, i.e., it is loosely based on the characters in the novel *Red Dragon*.

2. *Epistemology of Detective Fiction*

In detective fiction, the investigator's principal aim is to find the murderer and thus to restore order in a world which the murder threw out of balance. This aim is achieved by rational detection (in particular, deduction) and scientific methods (Smajić 2010, Dechêne 2018). Detective deduction, as a rational procedure, is not a result of instinct or mere coincidence (Jenner 2016: 18). That is, it is vital for the detective to be able to isolate (and, have good *reasons* to do so) a "piece" of reality from a given sequence of events and objects which is relevant to the case at hand. This "piece" represents a clue which must be thought of as an effect (or at least part of an effect) of an as yet unknown cause (i.e. the murder). It does not have to be a physical object (e.g., a blood-stained knife). The overall atmosphere obtaining at the murder scene may well do (we'd be dealing with a situation then) or the behaviour of the people suspected of the murder (in which case we'd refer to a process or event). In detective fiction, a clue is equated with information (Weiss 2014: 2). Relying on what can be observed and measured (the effect), the detective forms a hypothesis which explains how the current state of things has come about (the cause). A clue alone is not enough to solve a mystery. A wider context is needed for it to become meaningful, i.e., to become reliable evidence. In Nancy Horrowitz's words: "the problem of what to look for, how to direct the inquiry, which clues are important and which are irrelevant, what 'truth' is being sought after" (1984: 194). What it is, is a kind of normative epistemological approach showing us which information scattered in the story is relevant to solving the mystery. To put it another way, which of the information we have been presented with can be dignified with the label *knowledge*. Thus, detectives are "inevitably concerned with the problem of knowledge" (Hutter 1983: 235).

Getting to the truth itself is a kind of process whose essential part is the process of seeing. Vision has traditionally been treated as the most objective of all senses (Korsmeyer 1999: 11–37). This is because of the distance that must exist between the organ facilitating vision (the eye) and the object it experiences (hence acquires knowledge about). Hans Jonas describes three characteristics which make it an "objective" sense (1954: 519). These are: (1) simultaneity in the presentation, i.e., vision's ability to capture the object of its cognition instantaneously, (2) dynamic neutralisation, i.e., vision's ability to learn about the object without interfering with the object,[3] and (3) distance. It is no coincidence that vision is traditionally connected with the notion of knowledge, i.e., the most perfect knowledge comes from the information supplied by visual perception and vision itself is a metaphor for knowledge (see e.g. Jay 1993, Merleau-Ponty 1993). Traditional epistemology of detective fiction is based on the ability of the detective to *see*

[3] Jonas believes that the lower senses interfere with the objects which are perceived through them (1954: 515).

facts which others cannot see, and to expose them. The detective's job then is to pick up clues in the reality in which they are embedded and to objectively reconstruct the chronology of events as they took place (e.g., the murder method and the motives behind it). So detection is to make the invisible visible.

3. *Will Graham: Erring ocularcentrism*

By far the most important ocularcentric component in *Hannibal* is the way in which the deductive method is presented. The series begins with a scene in which Will Graham establishes the cause and the course of the murder of a married couple.[4] Graham closes his eyes, then opens them and sees the sequence of events he is interested in uncovering. (The events, however, are in a reverse chronological order, i.e., "from last to first".) In this way, not only does Graham reconstruct the events as they happened, the kind of weapon used in committing the murder, the temporal relationship between each stage of the murder, but he also discovers the motives and intentions of the murderer. The effect is enhanced by the fact that in the course of his deduction Graham steps into the murderer's shoes, as it were, (itself a consequence of his being endowed with 'pure empathy' and 'having a lot of mirror neurons' (1.1; 1.10).[5] At this juncture, the very presentation of the deduction process reasserts the primacy of vision as a cognitive sense. Thanks to vision, the FBI profiler's mental processes take on a palpable quality. (The camera does frequent close-ups of Will Graham's eye movements before showing a scene in which he reconstructs the events.) In many novels, TV series or detective movies, we are regaled with portrayals of exceptionally talented detectives. As viewers or readers, we often marvel at very convincing analyses of the main characters. However, the stages of this process are presented in the form of an account of the detective's reasoning (such as that of Sherlock Holmes's, to take one example). Will Graham's case is fundamentally different. Visualisation of the deductive process is not an illustration of Graham's reasoning; it is in fact the reasoning process itself, which in our eyes turns the profiler into a person possessing extraordinary powers (see Casey 2015: 556).

The deductive method described above allows Graham, and other famous detectives, to obtain more information that is key to the investigation, which ultimately leads to solving many mysteries. It is worth noting too that ocularcentrism in Graham's deduction is sharply reflected in his (and more generally in Jack Crawford's and the rest of the

[4] It is worth noting that the very first scene introducing a fictional character usually tells viewers a lot about his/her identity as well as allows the viewers to learn how to approach and understand the character. Cf. Pearson (2008), Smith (1995), and Elder (2010).

[5] All references to primary sources in the series follow the following convention: the first number refers to the season, the second to the episode in that season, e.g., "1.2" refers to Season One, Episode Two.

FBI's) way of interpreting evidence of the crime. In Graham's world, evidence explains everything (1.1). A clue represents evidence and becomes relevant to the solving of the mystery. It is noteworthy that for Graham evidence is a physical and observable element of reality.[6] (This does not mean, however, that in his reasoning Will does not use other elements, i.e., motivation, etc.). Adopting this kind of epistemology allows Will to discover the truth about Abigail (Kacey Rohl) and her role in the murders committed by her father Garrett Jacob Hobbes (Vladimir Jon Cubrt) (1.9).

Trusting his eyes and the process of deduction as well as prioritizing the visual aspect of the evidence make Will Graham a modern equivalent of the Great Detective. What marks him out from other Great Detectives though is his ability to see the limitations of his ocularcentrism. Reflecting on Hobbs's murder and on his powerlessness to save Melissa, Graham says: "I tried so hard to know Garrett Jacob Hobbs. To *see* him. Past the slides and vials, beyond the lines of the police report, between the pixels of all those… Printed faces of sad, dead girls." (1.4). In much the same way, while examining the body of the nurse murdered by Dr. Abel Gideon (Eddie Izzard), Graham finds that, based on the effect (the evidence before his eyes), he is able to *see* The Chesapeake Reaper, but he is not able to feel his presence (1.6). Graham knows that, despite his regular use of the deduction method, he is not able to fill in all the details of the event by relying solely on visual evidence. The deduction method itself becomes a double-edged sword for the profiler. An attempt to step into the shoes of the murderer to better understand his motives and his actions fails to the extent that Graham loses the ability to distinguish his own actions from those of the murderer (1.10).[7]

Ocularcentrism, which is at the heart of the epistemology of criminal investigation, also becomes the cause of the accusation leveled at Graham for being the Copycat Killer and of his being committed to a mental health hospital for criminals in Baltimore (1.13). Throughout the entire series and in particular Season One, Dr. Hannibal Lecter tampers with the evidence in such a way as to throw Jack Crawford and the FBI off the scent. This specifically concerns Will Graham himself. In diagnosing the cause of the profiler's ill health, Lecter destroys or conceals all existing evidence that might point to Graham's encephalitis (1.10). As long as there is no visual evidence (e.g., in the form of an

[6] This is also evident in numerous scenes showing visual analyses of whatever evidence has been gathered.

[7] For the purpose of simplicity, my discussion is limited to *mainly* the so-called "rational-scientific" methods of detective detection such as deduction or scientific examination. Thus, I am not much focused on other methods of detection sometimes presented in detective fiction genres — novels, movies or TV series — that are "irrational-subjective" methods such as "gut feeling". See Jenner (2016: 14–38). However, it seems that both kinds of methods are, at least in *Hannibal*, equally linked to the sense of sight.

MRI scan), it is impossible to establish the cause of Will's feeling unwell. The manipulation culminates in depositing the body parts of the Copycat Killer's victims in Graham's home and in making the profiler (by means of narcosis) swallow Abigail Hobbs's ear. When, in the presence of Lecter, Will loses his memory after a spell of fever, he begins to doubt his sanity and his identity. (He is apt to accept that he is guilty of the murders blamed on the Copycat Killer.) While examining Graham, FBI agent Beverly Katz (Katharine Isabelle) says, having found Abigail's blood under Will's fingernails, that: "[c]ertainty comes from the evidence" (1.13). This echoes Graham's own claims of the importance of the visual aspect of the evidence (1.1).

As we can see, Dr. Hannibal Lecter is fully aware of the epistemological paradigm which is at the bottom of Will Graham's deduction method, and which underpins the modus operandi of Jack Crawford and the FBI. During the FBI's search of Lecter's house, brought on by Will's claims that Hannibal is the Chesapeake Reaper / Copycat Killer, Dr. Lecter turns to agent Katz saying that any evidence they find at his place will lead them to Graham (2.1). Then, realizing that the whole justice system is effectively based on the primacy of vision and its role in interpreting the clues, Lecter uses this fact to his advantage trying to (obtain the) release (of) Will Graham. This can be seen in particular when the court is presented with the ear of one of the profiler's purported victims. This helps set in motion the process of exonerating Will Graham. In passing a comment on the turn of events which affirms Lecter's embroilment, the hapless man says to him: "I know there is no evidence against you" (2.3). Graham voices similar doubts about traditional epistemology while inspecting the place of agent Katz's murder, saying that the murderer has left no "visual evidence" (2.5).

To sum up, Will Graham, unlike Jack Crawford and the FBI, is a character who abides by the epistemological paradigm based on the primacy of vision. However, as the events in the TV series unfold, he realises that this paradigm is not sufficient to prove Lecter's guilt. In other words, Graham gradually accepts admissibility of information from the lower senses and, as we shall see next, an attempt to understand and come to terms with the reality (or at least some of its aspects) in which Lecter operates.

4. *Dr. Hannibal Lecter: non-ocularcentrism, concealment of the truth, cannibalism*

I shall now turn to the role of culinary dishes and the process of eating in the story of *Hannibal*.[8] Before saying more about that, it is worth noting that philosophical tradition holds that the so-called lower sens-

[8] It is worth noting that only 6 out of 39 episodes are not named after culinary dishes. What is more, Hannibal Lecter is firstly introduced to the viewers in the scene presenting food preparation.

es, i.e., taste, smell, touch, are not credible sources of knowledge and as such they are not particularly relevant to epistemological and aesthetic theories.[9] Unlike vision and hearing, these senses are too closely tied to the body, which implies that they are more likely to be subjective and prone to error (see e.g. Scruton 1975: 303; 2010). However, it seems that nowadays aesthetics is more and more open for including taste, smell and touch within a philosophical theory (Diaconu 2006). Such a movement is rooted, I think, in two tendencies.

Firstly, the growing field of everyday aesthetics constantly reminds us about the importance of the so-called lower senses into our everyday life — with special attention to everyday aesthetic choices, experiences and judgments (see e.g. Saito 2007, 2015; Leddy 2012; Melchionne 2013). Secondly, emerging art forms and newly establishing artistic practices quite often rely on factors that are bodily and experience-oriented. That is, they try to question the aesthetic and artistic irrelevance of taste, smell and touch in art and beyond. As Carolyn Korsmeyer says:

> Challenging the clean distinction between the mental and the physical and recognizing the impact of somatic responses to art also pave the way for blurring the distinction between distal aesthetic and proximal nonaesthetic senses, for it legitimizes bodily sensation as an aesthetic response. (2017: 25)[10]

Successfully challenging the above distinction seems to be essential not only for the aesthetics of food, but most importantly to the process of acquiring gustatory knowledge. By "gustatory knowledge" I understand simply propositional knowledge of food. That is, knowledge *that* something tastes like this or that (see Meskin and Robson 2015). This kind of knowledge is a necessary basis of formulating (critical) judgments and having arguments over cuisines' and spirits' properties and values.

Taken the purpose of this essay, the most interesting case is when gustatory taste is not only a mere metaphor for aesthetic one, but rather a bodily sense that should be granted aesthetic and cognitive standing (Meskin and Robson 2015: 24).[11] I argue that, contrary to the traditional epistemology of detective fiction, food and the lower senses are a key interpretative tool in trying to understand Dr. Hannibal Lecter's actions, especially in how they affect his relationship with Will Graham, the FBI, and the victims that are eaten. I shall propose to distinguish three areas where food plays a crucial role: anti-ocularcentrism, concealment of the truth, and cannibalism.

[9] For a detailed analysis of the history of the hierarchy of senses see Korsmeyer (1999).

[10] Quite similar on that point: Brady (2012: 73).

[11] See also: Telfer (1996); Perullo (2016); John (2014).

4.1. *Non-ocularcentrism*

A viewer who avidly follows Hannibal's story will rack his brains over an interesting yet puzzling question: *Why* are Will Graham and the FBI not able to find out the truth about Dr. Hannibal Lecter? After all, representatives of the Behavioural Science Unit have extensive experience, skills, access to a whole range of technologies, and money. Despite that, they often find themselves very far from discovering the truth.

The answer is that the way in which Lecter operates is motivated by a different epistemological paradigm. I propose to call this paradigm *non-ocularcentrism*. Non-ocularcentrism does not rank the sense of vision above the other senses but promotes the latter as a valuable source of acquiring knowledge (Le Guérer 2002; Press and Minta 2000). It must not be thought of, however, as an outright denigration of the sense of vision. (Lecter frequently uses information coming *also* from this sense). Non-ocularcentrism does not break the hierarchy of senses in itself but rather reconfigures the relations between the senses within the hierarchy.

Thanks to the lower senses such as taste and smell, Lecter is able to acquire information which is critical to how the events unfold throughout the entire series.[12] Such is the case when, from the smell of Phyllis "Bella" Crawford's breath (played by Gina Torres), he is able to detect that she suffers from lung cancer (1.5). This allows him to gain control over Bella's mind, then nudge her towards a suicide attempt, in order to ultimately save her life. The whole exercise is intended to help him get closer to Jack Crawford and gain his trust. Something of the same kind happens when Will Graham contracts meningitis. Hannibal observes that meningitis smells of "a fevered sweetness" (1.10). Knowing so much and keeping it secret allows Lecter to convince Jack Crawford and the FBI that Graham's problems are of a psychological, not physiological, nature. This then becomes grounds for declaring Graham a psychopathic murderer (The Copycat Killer). His ability to acquire information from other sources than visual perception ultimately helps Lecter avoid capture in the last episode of Season Two. Having detected the smell of copper on Dr. Alana Bloom (Caroline Dhavernas), an FBI psychiatrist and consultant, Hannibal figures out that the journalist, Fredericka "Freddie" Lounds (Lara Jean Chorostecki), allegedly killed by Graham, is alive. Armed with this information, Hannibal can see through the whole set-up which Graham and Crawford have put together (2.13). It is worth noting too that Hannibal has been acting very cautiously for some time, ever since he detected the smell of gunpowder on Dr. Bloom's hands, which indicated that Bloom had been doing shooting practice before a large FBI operation (2.11).

The non-ocularcentrism described above clearly departs from the paradigm based on the higher sense, that is, vision. Lecter cleverly

[12] There are over a dozen scenes like this one in the whole series. Here, I focus only on a few—those I consider most relevant.

manipulates the evidence and the expectations which characterize the traditional epistemology of Will Graham and Jack Crawford. Ocularcentrism focuses on the objective and inter-subjective properties communicated by things. Non-ocularcentrism plumbs the subjective, hard to describe impressions such as taste and smell. However, it does not mean that these senses lack any sort of normativity. To the contrary: taste and smell could be cultivated through time and practice and this—as well as suitable categories—allow for critical judgment over food's and spirits' flavours.[13] Lecter masterfully harnesses the lower senses thanks to his culinary skills. He is also able to put knowledge about how food and drinks taste into a broader (not only culinary) context and gain important information about non-gustatory facts. On numerous occasions during the whole story, Hannibal can be seen smelling or tasting food ingredients, finding out about their origin or state of decay in the process. As Will Graham and Dr. Alana Boom remark, Dr. Hannibal Lecter has a very refined palate and a talent for describing his olfactory and gustatory sensations (2.10; 3.4). Of some interest is also Jack Crawford's appreciation of the role played by the taste and smell of food. When dining with Hannibal Lecter, Crawford is often shown smelling food and alcohol. Unlike Lecter though, Crawford is not able to obtain any useful information from his smell and taste perception. Lecter alone has the ability to turn ostensibly subjective, physical, fleeting and hard to describe olfactory and gustatory experiences into information that helps him take control over the whole intrigue.[14]

4.2 *Concealment of the truth*

The dishes served by Lecter are characterized by high artisanship both in terms of their presentation and taste. They provide an insight into life's finer pleasures and the personality of the eponymous character of the series, Lecter. I believe they also play a different yet equally important role. They help Lecter conceal the truth about himself. I propose to distinguish two levels (or forms) of this "concealment", i.e., physical and personal.

The physical level is the more direct and literal of the two. It concerns concealing the evidence of the murders. As mentioned earlier, the epistemological tradition relies to a large extent on visual (physical) evidence. The lack of such evidence points to a gap in the cause-effect chain being the basis of the process of deduction. Lecter eats the evidence of his deeds. Throughout the entire series and in particular Season One and Season Two, Lecter prepares dishes from his victims (e.g.,

[13] For a philosophical account for such aesthetic appreciation see Skilleås and Burnham (2014).

[14] The character of Abigail Hobbs may be a small exception here. Judging by the taste of the dishes served by Hannibal, the girl realises that Hannibal eats human flesh (1.9). Abigail can recognise the taste of human flesh because she was fed human flesh by her father Garrett Jacob Hobbs.

1.1; 1.3, 1.5, 1.6; 2.1, 2.5, 2.10, 3.1, 3.4). He does so also in the presence of Will Graham and Jack Crawford. Frequently he serves them body parts of the victims whose murders the FBI has been investigating (e.g., 2.2; 2.5). It could be said—pun intended—that Lecter serves the evidence of his guilt to the investigators "on a plate". They, in turn, are responsible in a way for his "exoneration". (Whichever way we look at it—they eat the evidence of Lecter's guilt.)

The personal level is somewhat more complex. It has to do mainly with building relationships and trust of the people Dr. Hannibal Lecter wants to get close to. Lecter loves inviting friends and acquaintances over to dine with him. It is equally evident that his guests enjoy Hannibal's cooking immensely. (The whole thing has an air of the macabre about it given that human flesh is often an ingredient of the dishes being served.) Take for example one of Lecter's friends who insists on him hosting a dinner party. She craves the show as much as the dishes. ("It's an entire performance.") The psychopath says: "I cannot force a feast. A feast must present itself." (1.7). Indeed, watching the scenes of preparing, serving and consuming the food, we get the impression that Lecter follows a kind of logic and cohesion which is unfamiliar to others. The dishes reflect the main character's moods and the situations he finds himself in (e.g., 1.10, 2.1; 3.3). The purpose may be to achieve some sort of "mirroring" of everyday reality in the dishes he prepares.[15] Cooking for others and for himself is a way of indulging his passion. When Will Graham, somewhat surprised, asks Lecter why he has changed his job from a surgeon to an amateur cook, Hannibal replies: "I transferred my passion for anatomy into the culinary arts" (1.7).

Hiding the truth by means of culinary dishes is especially evident in the process of restoring Will Graham's memory. Locked in a small cell at the Baltimore State Hospital for The Criminally Insane, the profiler experiences a vision where one of the dishes on the sumptuously laid table at Lecter's dinner is Abigail Hobbs's ear. Lecter himself appears as a deformed horned creature.[16] In the same episode, while eating a simple prison meal, Will remembers being put in a state of altered consciousness and then force-fed Abigail's ear (2.1). At this moment, Will begins to realize that the meals served by Hannibal were a clever tool for manipulation. The intention was to hide the truth about the origin of the ingredients (most dishes are prepared according to traditional recipes, e.g., human leg is prepared in the same way as a veal shank), as well as implicating the people sharing meals with Hannibal in the murders he has committed. (Cannibalism is a crime after all.) The process culminated in force-feeding Abigail's ear to Graham. In this way,

[15] This nicely matches a point made by Kevin Melchionne (2013) that food and cooking is one of the basic dimensions when we encounter everyday aesthetic qualities and attitudes.

[16] It is a common image of Hannibal-the murderer appearing in Will Graham's visions.

Will was made to take the blame for the murders committed by Hannibal, which led to the FBI bringing charges against him.

Eating prison food cures Graham of his malady and restores his self-confidence. He is no longer deceived by Hannibal's sophisticated dishes, which are in fact the processed evidence of Hannibal's crimes. The stark contrast is apparent in the scenes showing Will eating his breakfast and Hannibal and Jack eating theirs. Graham eats a simple dish while Lecter and Crawford are savouring a multiple-course English breakfast. As Will reassures himself in his conviction about Lecter's guilt, Jack Crawford remains completely in the dark—he even pronounces Hannibal a "wonderful friend" (2.5).

4.3 *Cannibalism*

There is little doubt that one of the main themes concerning eating in *Hannibal* is the cannibalism of the eponymous character. For the sake of analysis in this work, I propose to use the classification of types described by William E. Arens (1979). He distinguishes three basic types of cannibalism: gustatory cannibalism, which involves eating human flesh for its taste; magical or ritual cannibalism, which endows the cannibal with the spiritual / physical powers of the victim; and survival cannibalism. *Hannibal* is peppered with scenes depicting all three types of cannibalism. Our attention is first drawn to the so-called classical cannibalism, i.e., magical or ritual cannibalism, involving the assumption that the spirit of the victim is being eaten.

Garrett Jacob Hobbs has an irresistible urge to kill his daughter Abigail. The only way he can hold himself back from doing so is to systematically kill girls who resemble his daughter and who are the same age as her (1.1). Hobbs executes his murders (with Abigail's help) with undisguised relish, but he also feels he owes respect to his victims. Each part of their body must be "treated with respect"; otherwise he'd be committing common murders (1.3). Hobbs is convinced that by eating the girls' bodies he acquires special powers, which help him resist his murderous urges towards Abigail.

A somewhat different kind of cannibalism is involved in the case of Mason Verger (Joe Anderson), who seeks to eat Hannibal Lecter in revenge for having been maimed by him. To Verger, the style in which he wants to eat the serial killer matters as much as the act of eating itself. He wants to eat Lecter "piece by piece". Verger hires Dr. Cordell Doemling (Glenn Flesher) whose job is to prepare, season and serve a variety of dishes from parts of Hannibal's body (3.6). Verger believes that eating Lecter will make him an "alpha male", and that the act of eating will not be simply consumption of human flesh but a form of "transubstantiation". Mason Verger is clearly motivated by his desire to take revenge. This is most apparent in the scene depicting the roasting of Hannibal. The making of the "roast" and the presentation of the "dish" bear close resemblance to the closing scene in the movie *The*

Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover (Peter Greenway, 1989) where Albert Spica (Michael Gambon) is forced by his wife Georgina (Helen Mirren) to eat the roasted body of her lover Michael (Alan Howard). Verger's motives contain a homoerotic element as well. Being aware of the close relationship that has developed between Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter, Verger wants to eat Hannibal while wearing Will's face transplant (3.7). Such a perverse fantasy can be explained by Lecter's rebuffing of Verger's advances (2.10).

In the entire series, there is only one example of cannibalism intended to sustain life. It involves Dr. Abel Gideon, who was fed by Lecter on dishes prepared from his own flesh (2.6). Hannibal "fattened" Gideon with oysters, sweet wine and acorns to improve the taste of the meat. The fact that Dr. Gideon often complimented Hannibal on his culinary skills and the exquisite taste of the dishes he dined on adds a certain perverse piquancy to these macabre goings-on (3.1).

I shall now focus on the types of cannibalism Dr. Hannibal Lecter indulges in. The first thing to note is that Lecter almost never eats human flesh for reasons of magical cannibalism. There is only one instance of such cannibalistic practice and it concerns Dr. Roman Fell (Jeremy Crutchley). After eating him, Hannibal assumes his identity (3.1). The incident is not provoked by some sort of metaphysical transformation but by a desire to dispose of the body. Moreover, Lecter does not make much of his new identity. In the series, Lecter travels around Europe under many names and surnames, which he often changes.

An entirely different attitude is evident in the case of gustatory cannibalism, i.e., cannibalism which explores the gustatory and nutritious properties of human flesh. Lecter obtains the macabre ingredient of his dishes in two ways. The first involves collecting as many calling cards as he can get hold of, e.g., from doctors, lawyers, people working in services (1.7; 2.6). Hannibal keeps them in a special catalogue beside his cookbook. Whenever he wants to make a dish, he chooses a recipe and a calling card. (The process of choosing a card that suits the recipe seems almost automatic.) Next, using the contact details on the card, he tracks down his victims and kills them. The other method involves harvesting organs from victims that have been killed by Lecter or another killer (2.1; 2.2; 2.4). This method is rather more spontaneous than the first one but is used only for obtaining selected body organs. This is because in the latter case the victims' bodies are displayed for public view (they are intended to get across some message from the killer), while in the former, they are only a food source.

Most murders committed by Dr. Hannibal Lecter are rooted in his culinary pursuits. Analysing the murder pattern of the Chesapeake Ripper, Will Graham conclude that he kills in quick succession up to 3–4 people at a time, "[b]ecause if he waits too long, then the meat spoils" (2.6). It is apparent that Hannibal's desire to have a steady supply of fresh "meat" has a direct bearing on the frequency with which he

kills. Moreover, in one of the episodes the viewer is treated to scenes of Hannibal laying up supplies in a very professional manner—he quarters a body, places the parts in vacuum packs, and freezes the lot (1.7). Just before her ill-fated face-off with Hannibal, agent Beverly Katz discovers a well-stocked larder in the basement of his house (2.5). It's worth noting that, unlike magical cannibalism, gustatory cannibalism does not prescribe any particular rules in handling the body, attaching any metaphysical qualities to it, etc. The direct consequence of such an approach is that Hannibal treats human bodies in a very matter-of-fact way. He is able, for example, to separate the "best" cut from a human leg and discard the rest as "waste" (2.2).

Lecter's flippant attitude to the human body is apparent in his views. Talking to Jack Crawford, he admits that "he does not feel any guilt regardless of what he eats" (2.1). When he forces Mason Verger to eat parts of his own face, Hannibal proclaims that "[t]aste is housed in parts of the mind that precedes pity. Pity has no place at the table." (2.12). According to Lecter, "people are like pigs" (1.7). Lecter shares his most interesting observation perhaps in his conversation with Dr. Abel Gideon, when the former is serving Able's own leg to him in the form of an elaborate dish (3.1):

Gideon: And with these verified dishes you so carefully prepared, do we all taste different?
Lecter: Everyone has their flavour.
Gideon: Cannibalism is a standard behaviour in my ancestors; a missing link which is only missing because we ate them.
Lecter: This isn't cannibalism, Abel. It's only cannibalism if we are equals.
Gideon: It is only cannibalism if you eat me. But you just feel it's a natural order of things. Everybody gets eaten.

As can be seen, Lecter's cannibalism is purely of the gustatory nature. It is an important, though not the only, motive for the murders he commits. It is not an exaggeration to say that, with Lecter, at least some criminal choices are determined by his culinary choices.

5. *Will the Cannibal: A Metamorphosis*

I shall now look at two consecutive scenes (2.10) which are of the utmost relevance to the role of food in the *Hannibal* series. They illustrate, in the most striking way, the role of gustatory knowledge and aesthetics in trying to understand the world presented in the series. They also show that it is impossible to change the paradigm with reference to the epistemology of criminal investigation. The first of the two scenes shows Will Graham coming into Hannibal Lecter's kitchen. He puts a packet of meat on the table and says:

Graham: I provide the ingredients; you tell me what we should do with them.

Lecter: What's the meat?
Graham: What do you think?
Lecter: Veal? Pork, perhaps.
Graham: She was a slim and delicate pig.
Lecter: I'll make you *lomo saltado*. We will make it together. You slice the ginger.

When the meal is ready, they proceed to the dining room. The scene is largely made up of long close-ups of particular parts of the dish and Graham's facial expressions, while Mahler's Adagietto is playing in the background. Lecter tries the meat and passes his verdict:

Lecter: The meat has an interesting flavour. It's brazing. Notes of citrus.
Graham: My palate isn't as refined as yours.
Lecter: Apart from humane considerations, it's more flavourful for animals to be stress-free, prior to slaughter. This animal tastes frightened.
Graham: What does frightened taste like?
Lecter: It's acidic.
Graham: The meat is bitter about being dead. (*Smiles*)
Lecter: (*Smiles*) This meat is not pork.
Graham: It's long pig.

We must remember that in the above scenes Will Graham is desperately trying to prove Lecter is guilty. His previous experience suggests that the epistemology he has chosen and which is based on the primacy of vision and visual evidence is not proving very successful. (Strictly speaking: it has failed.) That is why Graham has decided to adopt some of Lecter's ways. He does so for two reasons. Frist, to win Lecter's trust and, second, to understand him better. Graham has reached the conclusion that the best way to achieve his aims is to copy Hannibal's culinary practices. He mimics his gestures and his way of speaking. In other words, Will Graham adopts some elements of Hannibal Lecter's style, which involves a change of the epistemological paradigm, i.e., deautonomisation of vision and greater reliance on information supplied by the lower senses.[17]

The most important point though is that the two scenes combine all three roles of food, gustatory knowledge and aesthetics I have discussed here. First, they illustrate non-ocularcentrism. The taste of the dish provides information about the circumstances (*or* situation) in which the victims lost their lives. It also supports my claim that Hannibal's criminal choices are determined by his culinary choices. (Victims must be killed in such a way as to ensure the desired taste of the meat.) Secondly, the theme of preparing food in the company of others

[17] We could say as well that Graham tries to adopt Lecter's attitude to the everyday. As Ossi Naukkarinen points it out: "[…] everyday consists of certain *objects, activities, and events,* as well as certain *attitudes and relations* to them. Everyday objects, activities, and events, for me and for others, are those with which we spend lots of time, regularly and repeatedly." (2013: § 2). Italics in the original.

must involve concealment of the truth. Graham wants to make Lecter believe that the meat comes from the body of Freddie Lounds (in fact, it is part of the body of Randall Tier (Mark O'Brien)). The profiler is successful to the extent that Lecter refers to Freddie's red hair. Thirdly, it is pure and simple cannibalism. In Graham's case, it manifests itself twofold. On the one hand, it is the gustatory type of cannibalism, as Graham savours the meat which is part of a culinary dish. On the other, the experience puts him in a kind of liminal state whereby he is able to get close to Lecter.

Adoption of Lecter's dining habits gives Graham a better insight into his mind. It makes the two men similar. In other words, it will not be going too far to say that Graham decided to copy some of Lecter's ways to prove the protagonist's guilt. Adopting another's style (or strictly speaking: "the parts" that make up the whole) automatically leads to the assumption of their personality. This theme is flagged up in the last few seconds of the episode. In a scene showing him eating, Will's face turns into Hannibal's. This is the price Graham is prepared to pay for adopting Lecter's culinary paradigm (as is the case, also his epistemological paradigm), hoping this will help him apprehend the killer. Will nearly manages to do so.[18] Unfortunately, as we know from the season, Lecter has seen through Graham and Crawford's plan, not least thanks to his anti-ocularcentrism.

6. *Conclusion*

In the article, I have sought to show how food and gustatory knowledge find their embodiment in *Hannibal*. I have argued that the intrigue which forms the backbone of the series does not lend itself to easy interpretation in the light of the traditional epistemology of detective fiction because it categorically rejects the primacy of vision. Indeed, the whole series can be seen as a conflict between alternative epistemological models. In the end, the approach I have referred to as "non-ocularcentrism" assumes dominance. It is an approach that ranks all senses equal. This alternative epistemological paradigm manifests itself most strikingly in the attitude of the main character to culinary dishes and eating as such. Dr. Lecter, an eminent food connoisseur and cook, has the knack of transforming the ostensibly irrelevant stimuli experienced during cooking and eating into full-blown, legitimate knowledge. This point is interestingly similar to issues touched by the contemporary aesthetics — for example, the cognitive status of touch, smell and taste or the aesthetic dimension of food and drinks. Of course, the discussed television drama cannot be treated as providing a philosophical argument on behalf of the role of lowers senses or gustatory knowledge in

[18] One could say — using the framework of everyday aesthetics — that adopting someone's attitude to the everyday without fully making it our *own* always brings some kind of inauthenticity.

aesthetics (or philosophical inquiry in general).[19] However, philosophical aesthetics here is a tool that enables us to understand this particular audiovisual work. What is more, it seems that the arts (here, *Hannibal*) emphatically illuminate the problems that are currently under scrutiny in aesthetics and suggest that also popular culture is gradually more concerned about the role of food and gustatory cognition in our lives. By a detailed analysis of *Hannibal*'s plot and dialogues I have tried to show that the process of eating in the series is not only an aesthetic mise-en-scène but a key to Dr. Hannibal Lecter's inner self—it speaks of his style of comporting himself, refinement, deviation and his attitude to other people.[20]

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[19] Cf. Livingston (2009).

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Literary Fiction and the Cultivation of Virtue

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Many philosophers have claimed that reading literary fiction makes people more virtuous. This essay begins by defending the view that this claim is empirical. It goes on to review the empirical literature and finds that this literature supports the claim philosophers have made. Three mechanisms are identified whereby reading literary fiction makes people more virtuous: empathy is increased when readers enter imaginatively into the lives of fictional characters; reading literary fiction promotes self-reflection; and readers mimic the prosocial behaviour of fictional characters. The paper concludes with a caution: there is a danger that readers could mimic antisocial behaviour displayed in literary fiction. If they do, reading some literary fiction could make readers less virtuous.

Keywords: Literary fiction, virtue, aesthetic cognitivism, aesthetics.

1. *Introduction*

The hypothesis that reading literary fiction cultivates virtue is an old one. Its origins can be traced to Aristotle and it was widely adopted in the eighteenth century, when Charles Batteux (1746/2015) and Adam Smith (1759/2002) defended it. More recently, Gregory Currie (1995), Martha Nussbaum (1990), Elisabeth Schellekens (2007), and other philosophers have defended the view. Even more recently, psychologists have turned their attention to the hypothesis and sought empirical evidence for it. This essay will critically examine the psychological literature. It will conclude that psychologists have succeeded in mustering

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considerable evidence for the claim that reading literary fiction cultivates virtue. At the same time, however, this essay will conclude that some of the claims that philosophers have made about literary fiction and the promotion of virtue may need to be qualified.

Two preliminary points are in order. The first is that evidence that individuals display increased empathy and prosocial behaviour will be taken as evidence that individuals have become more virtuous. Certainly, arguments can be given against the view that empathy and prosocial behaviour are indicators of good character or virtue. Nevertheless, this essay will assume that they are. This assumption is widely held and certainly not outlandish.

The second preliminary claim, on which this essay depends, is that the hypothesis that reading literary fiction cultivates virtue is an empirical hypothesis. (For the sake of brevity, I will henceforth call this hypothesis *H*.) As an empirical hypothesis, *H* ought to be testable by empirical and, indeed, experimental means. That is, an examination of readers of literary fiction should show that they are virtuous, relative to those who do not read literary fiction. Moreover, it should be possible to establish a causal relationship between reading literary fiction and virtuous actions.

While it may seem obvious that *H* is empirically testable, some writers have denied that it is. The argument for denying that *H* is testable runs as follows. According to *H*, readers of literary fiction do not acquire, or do not only acquire, propositional knowledge about how they ought to act. On the contrary, as we shall see, the moral benefits accruing to readers of literary fiction are largely non-propositional. Readers of such fiction become better able to understand other people, more able to empathize with others, and better able to recognise the mental states of others. These capacities, in turn, make them more inclined to engage in prosocial behaviour.

Putnam suggested that the sort of knowledge acquired from the reading of literary fiction is of a sort different in kind from that provided by science and, consequently, "inaccessible to scientific testing" (Putnam 1978: 89). Mikkonen (2015) endorsed the view that reading literature does not provide propositional knowledge. On his view, literature provides a sort of understanding or an ability to see significance. He is sceptical about the suggestion that we can test whether readers of literary fiction have this understanding or ability. He writes that, "The enhanced understanding gained by reading fictional literature is akin to happiness, marital satisfaction, or a mechanic's comprehension of carburetors in that it can be conceived only from inside" (Mikkonen 2015: 277). Some things, he holds, simply do not lend themselves to empirical investigation and the sort of understanding acquired from literary fiction is one of them. We are invited to conclude that empirical investigation, at least of the sort in which psychologists engage, cannot confirm *H*.

This argument is unsuccessful. Grant that reading literary fiction provides readers with a non-propositional knowledge: a way of understanding, or certain abilities, of the sort that Mikkonen and Putnam have in mind. Grant, moreover, that this sort of understanding or ability is what makes readers of literary fiction more virtuous. The argument shows at most that we cannot express in words what it is like to have this understanding or ability. This is not surprising. Many things cannot be expressed propositionally. For example, it is not possible to capture in words what it is like to be able to ride a bicycle or what being happy is like. Nevertheless, the argument still fails. It is obviously still possible to determine empirically whether someone is able to ride a bicycle or whether someone is happy. This is done on the basis of a person's actions and other observable factors. Similarly, one can determine whether readers of literary fiction become more virtuous by reading literary fiction. We just need to observe a correlation between reading literary fiction and virtuous behaviour. This will not tell us what it is like to have the understanding that makes virtue possible, but it will give us reason to believe that reading literary fiction makes people virtuous.

2. *The philosophical origins of H*

Although *H* has only recently received strong experimental support, it has long been widely adopted by philosophers. As already noted, *H* can be traced to Aristotle but it was widely held in the eighteenth century. Smith, for example, was of the opinion that literary fiction could make an important contribution to moral education. Moral education, he believed, was largely a matter of cultivating emotional responses. Imagination plays a role in the cultivation of sympathy and other innate moral responses. Smith writes that fellow feeling is not only aroused by the actual suffering of one of our fellows. Rather,

> an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator. Our joy for the deliverance of those heroes of tragedy or romance who interest us, is as sincere as our grief for their distress, and our fellow-feeling with their misery is not more real than that with their happiness. (Smith 1759/2002: 13)

In this way, Smith believes, literary fiction cultivates fellow-feeling and makes readers more virtuous.

Batteux was another eighteenth-century writer who believed that reading literary fiction can cultivate virtue. In part, poetry (by which he means literature or literary fiction) does so, on his view, by cultivating a capacity for fine-grained perception of social reality. Batteux also agrees with Smith that literature can arouse the emotions required by a virtuous person of good character. Batteux writes that,

> in order to give us a perfect and enduring pleasure, it [literature] should only arouse emotions that it is important that we feel intensely and that are not enemies of wisdom. Abhorrence of crime followed by shame, fear, and

> repentance among other tortures; compassion for the unfortunate, which has an application nearly as extensive as that of humaneness; admiration for great exemplars, which inspire virtue in the heart; heroic and, consequently, proper love: these, everyone allows, are the emotions that poetry should address. (Batteux 1746/2015: 77)

Batteux suggests several things in this and related passages. For a start, literature represents certain situations or actions and these situations arouse certain emotions. These emotions track the moral qualities of the actions represented. Most importantly, poetry inspires virtues in its readers. Batteux also holds that literature can set up valuable exemplars, worthy of emulation.

Contemporary philosophers have also considered the possibility that reading literary fiction promotes virtue. Nussbaum (1990) was among the first contemporary philosophers to maintain that literary fiction is a valuable source of moral knowledge. On her view, reading literary fiction helps readers understand social situations and understand the complexities of making moral decisions. Similarly, Currie (1995) believes that imagining ourselves in the situations of fictional characters can lead to moral growth. Other philosophers have also suggested that dealing with the hypothetical situations presented in fiction can assist in the acquisition of an ability to act morally. For example, Elisabeth Schellekens holds that reading works of fiction, readers simulate experiences that they can encounter in real life. This experience prepares readers to respond appropriately. Schellekens takes the example of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and writes that, persons like Emma Bovary "have, do, and will exist in reality." After reading the novel, readers "stand a greater chance of coming to know those who in real life show similarities with Emma Bovary, and may alter [their] actions and judgements accordingly" (Schellekens 2007: 51).

Several themes emerge from the philosophical literature. Philosophers have maintained that, in reading literary fiction, people acquire insight into the lives of others by walking a mile in their shoes. In other words, readers simulate participation in social interaction. They gain practice in such interaction and, consequently, understand others and their motivations. Literary fiction can also provide exemplars of moral behaviour. Practicing social interaction leads to increased understanding of, and empathy with, others. Moreover, readers of literary fiction emulate moral exemplars. As a result, readers of literary fiction are more inclined to engage in prosocial behaviour. In short, they are more virtuous. Let us turn now to the question of whether the empirical literature supports *H* and the conclusions of philosophers.

3. *The empirical evidence*

In recent years, many experimenters have found that reading literary fiction is associated with increased empathy. Often the psychological literature distinguishes between cognitive empathy (or a capacity

to see matters from other people's perspective) and affective empathy (or a feeling of sympathy for other people). Various experiments have found that reading literary fiction leads to increases in both cognitive and affective empathy. Experiments have also found evidence that reading literary fiction promotes prosocial behaviour. In short, the empirical evidence seems to support *H*.

A typical experiment is that conducted by Johnson (2012). Test subjects were given the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) to assess their initial mood. Next they read a story designed to provide readers with a good example of prosocial behaviour and to arouse feelings of compassion for the characters in the story. After the subjects read the story, then the PANAS was administered again, together with an instrument measuring affective empathy. Test participants were asked to use a five-point scale to rate the degree to which they had been moved and experienced compassion, sympathy, soft-heartedness, tenderness, and warmth while reading the story. Next, the degree to which readers had been transported by the story was measured. (Transportation is the feeling of being lost in a book. William James was among the first psychologists to speak of this phenomenon. Referring to Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Ivanhoe*, he wrote that, "Whilst absorbed in the novel, we turn our backs on all other worlds, and, for the time, the Ivanhoe-world remains our absolute reality" (James 1891: vol. II, 292–3).) Finally, the subjects were told that they had to retrieve the debriefing forms. As they returned, the experimenter pretended, in full view of the participants, to accidentally drop six pens. He then recorded which of the participants helped pick up the pens.

Johnson (2012) found that test subjects experienced increased affective empathy. Those who experienced higher degrees of transportation into the story showed higher degrees of empathy. Increased empathy translated into increased prosocial behavior: those test subjects who experienced the highest degree of empathy were significantly (almost twice) more likely to engage in the prosocial task (assisting with retrieving the pens that the researcher had pretended to accidentally drop). However, it should be noted that another study did not confirm all of Johnson's results. It found an increase of cognitive empathy after reading a literary short story, but only for subjects with certain personality traits. This study did find that people who frequently read fiction perform better on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, which measures affective and cognitive empathy (Djikic, Oatley, and Moldoveanu 2013).

Johnson's results have received support from a series of experiments by Kidd and Castano (2013). Their experiments were designed to distinguish between the effects of literary fiction and popular or genre fiction. They randomly assigned subjects the task of reading works of literary fiction (in this case, winners of literary prizes such as the PEN/O. Henry Award). Control groups read genre fiction (selected from among Amazon.com bestsellers) and works of non-fiction. The subjects who

read the works of literary fiction scored higher on tests of cognitive and affective empathy (the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (MIE) and the Yoni test). It is worth noting, however, that scepticism has been expressed about the value of these tests as predictors of prosocial or compassionate behaviour (Koopman 2015: 63).

The studies just considered measured the increase of empathy and prosocial behaviour as a result of exposure to a single piece of fiction. It seems unlikely that reading a single piece of literary fiction will have a huge impact upon a person's character and virtuousness. Kidd and Castano (2013) suggest that reading a single story is unlikely to teach subjects much about other people. Instead, they speculate that reading literary fiction "recruits" (or starts working) their Theory of Mind (ToM). ToM is the "capacity to identify and understand others' subjective states…. It allows successful navigation of complex social relationships and helps to support the empathetic responses that maintain them" (Kidd and Castano 2013: 377). More recently, other experimenters have duplicated these results (Black and Barnes 2015). These authors also found that the benefits of reading literary fiction seem to be limited to improved capacity to understand and respond to social situations. In particular, they found that reading literary fiction does not improve results on the Intuitive Physics Test.

Kidd and Castano (2013) only studied the effects of reading a single piece of short literary fiction. They suggest, however, that extensive reading of literary fiction improves ToM. Let us consider the possibility that regular reading of literary fiction increases empathy and improves character.

Several experiments have measured the impact of a habitual practice of reading fiction. One such study (Mar et al. 2006) began by administering the Author Recognition Test (ART), which provides a measure of what, and how much, individuals read. As revised for this test, the ART provided a measure of how much fiction and how much non-fiction test subjects read. Subjects were also assessed by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, which measures empathy, the MIE-revised, and the Interpersonal Perception Task-15 (IPT-15). The IPT-15 has subjects view a series of videos of unscripted interactions between two or more individuals. Subjects then answer a series of questions to determine whether they understand the interactions. It is regarded as a good test of sensitivity and social skills. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index measures, among other things, engagement with narrative (which is akin to transportation).

The researchers found that reading a lot of fiction was correlated with the ability to perform tasks such as the IPT-15 and MIE-revised test. Readers with a high degree of narrative engagement (or transportation) performed particularly well. Reading a lot of non-fiction was correlated with poorer performance on these tests. It should be noted, however, that this test did not distinguish works of fiction and works of

literary fiction. Moreover, this experiment does not rule out the possibility that empathetic people are more likely to read literary fiction and that the readers of fiction do not owe their empathy to their reading of fiction. We will consider this possibility below.

A complex study by Koopman (2015) also suggests that familiarity with literary fiction is correlated with increased empathy. In this study, test subjects read texts on either depression or grief. Three sorts of texts were used for each sort of emotion: literary narratives, non-fiction first person narratives, and expository texts. Koopman hypothesized that personal narratives would lead to increased empathy and prosocial behaviour as well as literary fiction does. She also predicted that the texts concerned with grief would have more marked effects on persons dealing with grief. Readers were hypothesized to find it easier to imagine themselves in a position where they feel grief than they can imagine feeling depressed. The experiment controlled for a number of factors, including antecedent empathy, exposure to literature, and personal experience of grief or depression. A questionnaire was used to measure empathetic understanding.

Subjects were then asked about the extent to which they agreed that insurance policies should cover treatment for grief and depression and the extent to which they understood the plight of those suffering from grief and depression. The experiment also built in a practical measure of prosocial behaviour. Test subjects were given the option of donating some or all of the fee (€10) they received for participating in the study to a charity serving those who suffered from grief or depression.

Koopman found several interesting results that are relevant to present concerns. Those who read personal narratives of depression or grief and (to a somewhat lesser extent) those who read a fictional narrative were more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour than those who read an expository text. This gives limited support to the hypothesis that reading literary fiction promotes prosocial behaviour. Personal familiarity with grief or depression was positively correlated with donations. While the type of text the subjects read was correlated with prosocial behaviour, no correlation was found between familiarity with literature and prosocial behaviour. Exposure to literature did, however, predict increased empathetic understanding. Those with a high exposure to literary fiction were inclined to be in favour of insurance coverage for treatment for depression. On the whole, Koopman's findings are in keeping with those of other researchers. (The number of test participants contributing to charity was small in all conditions. Likely the small number of people donating was affected by the fact that all were students for whom €10 is a significant sum and a considerable incentive to participate in the study.)

Philosophers and psychologists have hypothesized that reading literary fiction makes readers more empathetic and prosocial since, readers of this genre simulate experience of social situations and practice

dealing with them. This hypothesis receives support from the study of the brains of people engaged in reading literary fiction. Our brains have what psychologists call the "default network," a collection of regions of the brain that are responsible for simulation. Simulations include mental constructions of social contexts while reading. If reading literary fiction involves simulating experience of social situations, and practicing dealing with social situations, we would expect that the default network would be engaged. This turns out to happen.

In a recent study, test subjects underwent fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) scans while reading passages drawn from novels and a variety of non-fiction sources, including newspapers, magazines, and self-help books (Tamir et al. 2016). The passages were contrasted along two dimensions: from vivid to abstract and from descriptive of a person's mental content (social) to non-social. Vivid and social works are taken to be literary. (I take it that, in this context, to say that a work is vivid is to say that it employs figurative language.) The fMRI results revealed that vivid passages and passages that describe the mental content of a person or persons recruited the default network. This adds to the empirical evidence in favour of *H*.

4. *Criticisms of* H

While the empirical evidence seems to suggest that reading literary fiction makes people virtuous, someone might object that this evidence is misleading. Possibly highly empathetic people read literary fiction, and this is why reading literary fiction is associated with higher degrees of empathy. In other words, perhaps the causal arrows lead from high empathy to the reading of literary fiction rather than from reading literary fiction to increased empathy. As well, some philosophers have objected to H on grounds that reading literary fiction takes readers away from the real world in which they can practice virtuous behaviour.

The possibility the causal arrows lead from being empathetic to reading literary fiction has been anticipated and ruled out in the experimental literature. In one experiment, the empathy of test subjects was measured prior to the experiment, immediately after they had read the text (either a work of fiction or, in the control group, a work of non-fiction), and one week after reading the text. The researchers found that higher empathy measurement post-experiment was correlated with the degree to which subjects were transported into the story. They ruled out the hypothesis that increased empathy post-experiment can be explained by higher empathy pre-experiment (Bal and Veltkamp 2013). Another study arrived at a similar result. This study tested subjects for the "Big Five" personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism/stability, and openness. The subjects were then given the ART and the MIE test. Openness was the only personality trait associated with reading fiction. Performance on the MIE test was also correlated with reading literary fiction. The

researchers concluded that they needed to control for openness when gauging the impact of reading fiction on empathy. Analysis of the experimental data revealed that, after controlling for gender (women are more empathetic than men), age, English fluency, and openness, the degree of people's exposure to fiction predicts they will perform better on a test of empathy (Mar, Oatley, and Peterson 2009).

Some philosophers have also objected to *H.* Candace Vogler has criticised the hypothesis that reading literary fiction leads people to become more virtuous. She believes that, on the contrary, time spent reading literary fiction is, from a moral point of view, wasted. Time spent reading literary fiction is time not spent engaging with one's fellow human beings. The only way to become more virtuous she believes, is to perform virtuous acts. She writes that if, for example, "I seek to cultivate generosity, I *give*…. Since silent reading induces *retreat* from my circumstances, silent reading is the *opposite* of habituating myself to noticing what's going on in my world *by* noticing" (Vogler 2007: 33).

The flaw in this sort of reasoning is now apparent. To a certain extent, at any rate, simulating engaging in virtuous and prosocial acts assists people in becoming more virtuous. This should not be surprizing. One becomes a better pilot by flying aircraft. But one can also become a better pilot by training on a flight simulator. Similarly, the empirical evidence suggests that a person becomes more virtuous by reading literary fiction and simulating acts of empathy with other people. By reading literary fiction and simulating interacting with other people, readers can learn how to interact better with others.

5. *How literary fiction makes people virtuous*

The mechanisms by which literary fiction makes readers more virtuous, and improves their characters, are likely imperfectly understood. Still, the psychological literature is beginning to provide insight into these mechanisms. This section will address three mechanisms that appear to be at work. For a start, readers become caught up in a story and imagine themselves in a social situation. This gives them practice in dealing with, and reflecting on, social situations, especially when readers are transported into a story. In particular, readers can practice "perspective-taking," seeing the world from the perspective of others. This practice, in turn, helps readers understand other people (that is, it increases cognitive empathy). This leads to increased emotional empathy with a wide variety of people and, in particular, people unlike ourselves. Secondly, literary fiction provides opportunities for self-reflection. In other words, fiction provides readers with the opportunity to examine their own lives and this leads to improved character. Emulation is the third mechanism whereby literature leads to the cultivation of virtue. Humans have a tendency to imitate the actions of others, including others imitated in fiction.

As we have seen, empirical evidence indicates that readers of literary fiction simulate social interaction. This evidence includes fMRI results that show that reading fiction recruits the default network. In simulating social interaction, readers of literary fiction are led to engage in what is known as perspective taking. Perspective taking involves adopting the perspectives of others and imagining what it is like to see the world from their points of view. Readers have the experience of walking a mile in the shoes of a variety of people, and of people quite different from themselves. Having imagined themselves living the lives of others, they acquire more cognitive and affective empathy for a variety of people. That is, they understand the perspective of, and feel for, these people.

That seeing the world from the perspective of others promotes virtue, is supported by the research of Kaufman and Libby (2012). These authors conducted an experiment in which three versions of a story were used. In one, the protagonist was revealed early in the story to be gay (gay-early story). In another, he was revealed late in the story to be gay (gay-late story). In the final version, he was revealed to be heterosexual (straight-story). All test subjects identified themselves as straight. The experimenters found that readers of the gay-late story were more transported than were readers of the gay-early story. Likely this was because readers found it easier to enter into the life of someone they perceived to be similar to themselves. Most interestingly, the readers of the gay-late story, having walked in the steps of a gay man, manifested positive attitudes towards gay people after reading the story. On a five-point scale of beliefs about gays, they had significantly more positive beliefs compared to readers of the gay-early and straight stories. Similar results were found with stories in which the protagonist was revealed early and late in a story to be African-American. Readers of the story in which the character was revealed late to be African-American were found to score significantly lower on a test of racist attitudes (Kaufman and Libby 2012). Another study indicated that readers transported into a story about a Muslim woman had increased empathy for Muslims, compared to those who did not read the story (Johnson 2013).

The effect of simulating social interaction is increased by transportation into a story. Several writers, including Johnson (2012) and Bal and Veltkamp (2013), have noticed that reading literary fiction is particularly associated with increased empathy when readers are transported into the story. When readers are transported, they "let go of key components of their own identity—such as their beliefs, memories, personality traits and ingroup affiliations—and instead assume the identity of a protagonist" (Kaufman and Libby 2012: 2). These protagonists can be quite various and different from the readers, in personality, characteristics, and situation in life. The experience of transportation makes perspective taking more compelling. The experience of

reading fiction becomes almost like being another. When these others are diverse, the extent of one's fellow feeling and empathy can be considerably extended.

Abundant evidence indicates that literary fiction's focus on the experience of individuals is one of the factors that increases its impact on readers' characters. Literary fiction focuses on individuals, while non-fiction tends to focus on groups of individuals. Human beings seem to be constituted in such a way that we are more affected by a story about an individual than a non-fiction report about a group of individuals. Consider for example an experiment that had one group of subjects read a chapter from Malikia Mokkeddem's novel *L'Interdite* (1994). This novel is concerned with the sexist treatment of an Algerian woman who returns to her homeland. Another group read an essay on the condition of women in Algeria (Hakemulder 2000). Readers of the selection from *L'Interdite* were significantly more concerned about, and inclined to resist, the condition of women in Algeria than were readers of the essay. The opportunity to see the world from the perspective of another human, to be transported, is plausibly held to be the factor that makes literary fiction contribute to increased empathy and prosocial attitudes.

Literary fiction provides readers with a better opportunity to practice simulation of social behaviour than does popular fiction. The fictional worlds of literary fiction have the complexity of the real world. They are not over-simplified and full of caricatures such as Mary (or Marty) Sues. (A Mary Sue (masculine: Marty Sue) is an implausible, over-idealised character.) Since the worlds of literary fiction are realistic, negotiating them is like negotiating the real world.

Consider now the second mechanism whereby literary fiction contributes to the cultivation of virtue. Recently Koopman and Hakemulder (2015) have suggested that reading literary fiction enables readers to engage in contemplation and self-reflection. Here they are building on a remark by Yann Martel, the author of *The Life of Pi* (2001) and other novels. Martel suggested that literary fiction provides readers with the opportunity to reflect on their lives. In particular, Martel spoke of the "stillness" provided by reading literary fiction. It is hypothesized that readers who are more reflective are more likely to avoid purely self-regarding behaviour.

Some evidence indicates that readers of literary fiction are reflective and Koopman and Hakemulder (2015) canvass some of this evidence. Other evidence is provided by an experiment that tracked the sorts of memories evoked by the reading of literary fiction as opposed to other sorts of texts. This experiment had one group read a short story by Pär Lagerkvist, a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Another group read an essay on the growth of the world's population. As subjects read the text they were asked to record the sorts of memories they experienced. Memories were divided into three categories: memo-

ries of events in which readers had actively participated; memories of events which readers had observed without participating in them; and memories of events that the readers knew only by report (Seilman and Larsen 1989). Readers of the short story were significantly more likely to recall memories of events in which they had actively participated than were readers of the expository essay. Another study has confirmed these results, and found that the memories evoked by reading fiction are more vivid than those aroused by reading non-fiction (Mar and Oatley 2008). The sorts of memories evoked by reading literary fiction, in comparison to those aroused by non-fiction, is evidence that reading fiction promotes self-reflection.

The question of how self-reflection assists readers in becoming virtuous remains to be addressed. Koopman and Hakemulder (2015) suggest that by promoting self-reflection, by leading readers to take a moment to think, readers avoid knee-jerk reactions. Readers of literary fiction have an increased opportunity to see some matter from a range of perspectives. If this is right, this capacity of literary fiction works in concert with its capacity to promote perspective taking and transportation. By engaging in self-reflection, readers of literary fiction are more likely to engage in perspective taking. As already noted, perspective taking is associated with empathy and prosocial behaviour.

The third mechanism whereby literary fiction improves character is by the setting of good examples that readers can emulate. As we have seen, Batteux long ago suggested that literary fiction functions by setting good examples, examples that readers can emulate. Certainly, a great deal of evidence suggests that humans tend to emulate or imitate the behaviour of other people. As two psychologists note in a survey of the experimental literature, "there is substantial evidence for facial, emotional, verbal, and behavorial mimicry. We mimic virtually everything that we can observe another person do, and even "catch" their affective states as well" (Chartrand and van Baaren 2009: 226). A good deal of evidence suggests that we do not only mimic real people. We also mimic fictional characters (Eder, Jannidis and Schneider 2010: 55, 57).

Given that mimicry is so common in human behaviour, and that there is evidence that readers mimic characters, it seems likely that part of the effect of literary fiction on character is due to the setting of good examples. This conclusion is suggested in one of the studies already discussed in this essay. Johnson suggests that the prosocial behaviour detected in his experiment was promoted by the fact that the main character in the story used in his experiment "modeled prosocial behaviour" (Johnson 2012: 152). Presumably, readers then mimicked this prosocial behaviour.

Other mechanisms are likely at work when reading literary fiction cultivates character. Several philosophers, including Young (2001) have suggested that the emotions evoked by works of literary fiction, and other works of art, can assist readers in understanding individuals and

social situations. This understanding has the potential to increase empathy and prosocial behaviour. Unfortunately, the role of emotions in cultivating virtue has not been subjected to sufficient empirical study. Some tantalizing pieces of information are available. For example, one study has found that reading a short story by Chekhov is associated with the changing of readers' self-perception of their personality traits and these changes were also correlated with emotional arousal (Djikic 2009). Johnson (2012) has also suggested that arousal of compassion, sympathy, soft-heartedness, tenderness, and warmth play a role in promoting virtue. The relationship between emotional arousal by literary fiction and the cultivation of virtue deserves further attention.

6. *Fiction and harm to character*

Many philosophers have suggested that literary fiction can make readers more virtuous, and we have seen that this hypothesis enjoys considerable empirical support. Few recent philosophers have, however, considered the possibility that reading literary fiction could make readers less virtuous, that is, more inclined to make moral errors. Currie is among the few who have considered this possibility. He writes that, while literary fiction has the potential to increase moral understanding, it also has "the capacity to induce moral error" (Currie 1995: 257). Almost no psychologists have entertained or tested this possibility. There is, however, reason to be concerned that some works of fiction could lead readers to be less virtuous.

If we carefully examine the psychological literature, we find that there is reason to worry that literary fiction could make people less virtuous. The problem is that reading literary fiction is a complex activity. In reading literary fiction, affective empathy seems to be induced and this leads to prosocial behaviour. Johnson (2012) is one of many empirical studies that supports this view. But he also found that the affective empathy aroused by a work of literary fiction is unable to fully explain the effect of reading fiction on prosocial behaviour. Another factor, namely the mimicking of prosocial behaviour, must play a role.

The problem is that fiction need not always set good examples. If it does not, then there is a chance that it would sometimes make people less virtuous. Surprisingly little effort has been made to test the hypothesis that works of fiction with immoral characters, who are treated sympathetically, could lead readers to emulate their behaviour and act immorally. Experimental results in other realms suggest that this worry is not groundless. Representations of violent behaviour on television have been shown to increase violence and antisocial behaviour in test subjects. A meta-analysis of the many studies of the effects of television violence on behaviour concludes that regardless of the ages of the test subjects, there is a strong co-relation between television violence and aggression and antisocial behaviour. The combination of violence with erotica has even worse effects on viewers and leads to "sexual callous-

ness" (Paik and Comstock 1994: 537). A meta-analysis of the psychological literature on violent video games found that exposure to such games was "positively associated with aggressive behavior, aggressive cognition, aggressive affect" (Anderson et al. 2010: 167). Exposure to such games is also associated with antisocial behaviour and decreased empathy. These effects are found across cultures. In contrast, prosocial video games lead to prosocial thoughts and behaviour (Greitemeyer and Osswald 2010).

As already indicated, little empirical evidence is available to test the hypothesis that literary fiction that approvingly represented persons who are engaged in violent, aggressive, or antisocial behaviour could make readers less virtuous. However, given that violent television and violent video games have deleterious effects on empathy and prosocial behaviour, it seems likely that literary fiction that favourably or sympathetically represents immoral characters will similarly be associated with aggressive and antisocial behaviour. This is a concern that has been around since Plato's *Republic*. Plato was deeply concerned that people would imitate immoral behaviour that poets depict. Although Plato is sometimes ridiculed, we should not be surprised if some novels, like television programming and video games, lead to reduced empathy and prosocial behaviour. Ayn Rand's *Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* have undoubtedly had a deleterious effect on the characters of generation after generation of American teenagers.

Someone might deny that literary fiction has the potential to make readers less virtuous. One could deny, for example, that works that harm character are works of literary fiction. The suggestion that *Atlas Shrugged* is literary fiction is certainly tendentious. It is not a carefully observed, insightful exploration of society or personality. It is "morally incoherent." It is characterized by pontification, bombast, and "a naïve attitude towards history and philosophy that at times can only be described as sophomoric." It has been suggested that it is "an effective rather than a literary novel" (Bertonneau 2004: 296, 298 and 306). In this way, it can be argued that *Atlas Shrugged* is a work of fiction, but not an example of a work of literary fiction that harms character since it is not a work of literary fiction. One might similarly argue that any work that harms character is not literary fiction. On this view, works of literary fiction, by their very nature, express a genuine understanding of society and provide insight into morality. On such a view, reading literary fiction cannot lead people to become less virtuous.

I am sympathetic to this view. Literary fiction will typically be the product of careful observation. Any good observer of society and persons is likely to grasp moral facts. Nevertheless, I am not confident that we can so easily rule out the possibility that some works of fiction, plausibility classified as literary fiction, can harm readers' characters. At any rate, it still seems possible that some works of literary fiction could harm the characters of some readers by modeling immoral behaviour in a positive light.

7. *Conclusion*

The recent psychological literature provides empirical support for *H*, the hypothesis that reading literary fiction makes people more virtuous. At least, reading some literary fiction makes some people more virtuous. The mechanisms whereby literary fiction makes people more virtuous deserve more careful attention. Perhaps such attention will help address the concern that some literary fiction could have a deleterious effect on the characters of some readers.

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Introducing Cinematic Humanism: A Solution to the Problem of Cinematic Cognitivism

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A Cinematic Humanist approach to film is committed inter alia to the following tenet: Some fiction films illuminate the human condition thereby enriching our understanding of ourselves, each other and our world. As such, Cinematic Humanism might reasonably be regarded as an example of what one might call 'Cinematic Cognitivism'. This assumption would, however, be mistaken. For Cinematic Humanism is an alternative, indeed a corrective, to Cinematic Cognitivism. Motivating the need for such a corrective is a genuine scepticism about the very notion of the cognitive. Using historical reconstruction, I reveal how 'cognitive' has become a multiply ambiguous, theory-laden term in the wake of, indeed as a consequence of, Noam Chomsky's original stipulative definition. This generates a constitutive problem for cognitivism as both a research programme and a set of claims, and as such poses a trilemma for philosophers of film, art and beyond. I propose a Cinematic Humanist solution to the problematic commitments of cognitive film theorising and, in so doing, gesture towards a methodology I am calling 'philosophy of film without theory'.

Keywords: Cognitivism, cognitive film theory, Chomsky, cinematic humanism, philosophy of film without theory.

Cinematic Humanism is both an example of philosophy of film *without theory* and a commitment to a particular set of tenets about film. These tenets include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) Some fiction films illuminate the human condition and thereby enrich our understanding of ourselves, each other and our world;
(ii) Such understanding requires our sensitive, reflective, and critical engagement;
(iii) Such sensitive, reflective, and critical engagement requires appreciating the relations between a film's aesthetic and non-aesthetic features;

(iv) Fiction films are a medium that can be used in and for philosophical investigation.

With such tenets, Cinematic Humanism looks to characterise a fundamentally cognitivist approach to the content and value of film, where cognitivism about film is the view that film can be a source of knowledge. As such, Cinematic Humanism might reasonably be called 'Cinematic Cognitivism'. Furthermore, given the third tenet, which points to an important relation between a film's cognitive value and its cinematic value, Cinematic Humanism appears to offer the kind of full-blooded cognitivism found in the works of, say, Matthew Kieran (2004) on art, or James O. Young (2001) on literature.

Cinematic Humanism is not, however, an example of Cinematic Cognitivism, rather it is an alternative—indeed, a *corrective*—to it. The need for a corrective is motivated by scepticism about the very notion of the cognitive. For the terms 'cognition' and 'cognitive' are, in fact, theory-laden terms of art, and questionable ones at that. Appreciating this immediately generates two specific problems in the philosophy of film. In the first instance, if justified, scepticism about matters cognitive generates potential worries for the leading methodology of anglophone analytic philosophy of film: *cognitive film theorising*. Secondly, it raises questions about the fundamental assumptions that shape and direct debates about *cognitivism* in film (and beyond).

In this paper, I explore two scepticism-provoking ambiguities relating to the notion of the cognitive and diagnose their source in a pair of stipulative definitions made by Noam Chomsky. These are, I reveal, responsible for changing the meaning of the word 'cognitive' into a questionable piece of philosophical jargon. Having identified and articulated these concerns, I introduce Cinematic Humanism as an alternative to Cinematic Cognitivism. I also propose that the methodology of Cinematic Humanism—which I call an example of philosophy of film '*without theory*'—offers a viable way to resist the problems attendant on much of Cognitive Film Theorising, without being driven (back) into the arms of its methodological rival, Film Theory.

1. *The cognitive compromised*

Contemporary philosophy currently brims over with things *cognitive*: cognitive processes, cognitive abilities, cognitive mechanisms, cognitive agents, cognitive responsibility, cognitive virtues, cognitive gains, cognitive bloat, cognitive ooze, cognitive bleed, cognitive angst, cognitive dissonance, cognitive sandwiches and so on.[1] But just what is it to characterize something as cognitive? At first blush it looks like 'cognitive' is an adjective used to mean *of* or *pertaining to* knowledge, as 'hedonic'

[1] At the 7th Dubrovnik Philosophy of Art Conference (2018) James O. Young gave us cognitive *toxicity*, Dustin Stokes championed cognitive *penetration* and there was repeated reference to cognitive *gaps*.

means *of* or *pertaining to* pleasure. Things are not, however, quite so simple. For there are two key ambiguities at play in the contemporary philosophical use of the notion of the cognitive: a Scope Ambiguity and a Level Ambiguity. With the Scope Ambiguity there are inconsistencies as to what kind of knowledge is supposedly cognitive; with the Level Ambiguity there are obfuscations and equivocations as to whether or not the notions of cognition and the cognitive pick out *person-level* features, properties, or activities, or *sub-personal* ones. Moreover, such Level Ambiguities further compound the various ambiguities of scope. Before diagnosing the source of these difficulties, I take a look at each, in turn.

1.1 *The scope ambiguity*

The philosophical scope of the cognitive is, it would seem, as narrow or generous as the scope of knowledge itself. If one has a narrow philosophical conception of knowledge—say one limited to non-Gettierized justified true belief—this engenders a comparably narrow use of 'cognitive'. On such a view only that which is, or relates to, propositional knowledge can be correctly characterized as cognitive. According to Jukka Mikkonen it is just such a narrow scope of the cognitive that is the default position in Literary Cognitivism. "The traditional cognitive line of thought maintains that literature conveys propositional knowledge." (2013: 9)

Yet Cognitive Pluralists, such as Dorothy Walsh (1969), Catherine Wilson (1983), Eileen John (1998), Gordon Graham (2005), and Iris Vidmar (2013), have a broader, more diverse appreciation of what counts as knowledge. On their, and others', views knowledge is by no means limited to the merely propositional. Rather knowledge is also one or more of knowledge-what (something's like), non-propositional know-how, acquaintance knowledge, conceptual knowledge, understanding and, indeed, almost anything that is thought- or ability-enriching. The very elasticity of the potential scope of the cognitive makes it possible for some, more liberal, Literary Cognitivists to champion literature for its capacity to do any or all of the following:

> educate emotionally, train one's ethical understanding, call into question moral views, cultivate or stimulate imaginative skills and/or cognitive skills, 'enhance' or 'enrich' the reader's knowledge, 'deepen' or 'clarify' her understanding of things she already knows, 'fulfil' her knowledge or help her 'acknowledge' things, give significance to things, provide her knowledge of what it is like to be in a certain situation, that is, offer her a 'virtual experience', often of situations she could not or would not like to encounter in her real life, and so on… (Mikkonen 2013: 9–10)

Simpatico to such a view is Peter Lamarque:

> Who would deny that art is often involved with "exploring aspects of experience," "providing visual images," "broadening horizons," "imagining possibilities," "exploring and elaborating human ideas"? If this is cognitivism, then I too am a cognitivist. (2006: 128–129)

Yet this cognitive largesse is short-lived as Lamarque maintains his debate-shaping anti-cognitivist position by continuing, "But I don't think this has anything essentially to do with truth or knowledge or learning" (Lamarque 2006: 128–129). In so doing, he shuts the door on any hoped-for pluralism: the scope of the cognitive shrinks back once again to its default propositional borders.

If one looks to contemporary epistemologists for clarity on the topic, their philosophical focus on knowledge is almost exclusively on propositional knowledge. As a result, it is practically impossible to ascertain whether or not non-propositional knowledge is or may be deemed cognitive. Recent forays into the area of know-how by Jason Stanley & Timothy Williamson (2001) and Stanley alone (2011) argue resoundingly that knowledge-how is but a particular mode of presentation of what is fundamentally propositional knowledge. This so-called 'intellectualist' view of know-how is increasingly dominant, obscuring the extent to which non-propositional know-how might *also* be, characterised as cognitive. This difficulty continues in the work of leading virtue epistemologists, such as John Greco and Ernest Sosa, who characterise a virtuous knower as one whose *propositional* knowledge and belief-forming mechanisms are reliable. In Duncan Pritchard and Sven Bernecker's 2011 *Routledge Companion to Epistemology*, there are 900 pages containing sixty so-called 'state of the art' articles, every one of which is dedicated to the consideration of propositional knowledge. If, as is claimed, this book displays contemporary epistemology at its most comprehensive then there is no questioning, let alone avoiding, the hegemony of what, elsewhere (2013: 140ff.) I call "the propositional presumption" of epistemology. Unsurprisingly, in practice the notions of the cognitive and the propositional are regularly used interchangeably.

This need not, of course, prevent a philosopher of art who wishes to characterise both propositional and non-propositional knowledge as 'cognitive' from doing just that, and indeed a number of leading analytic aestheticians do so. Support though, for any such 'cognitive pluralism' is not to be found in contemporary epistemology. Indeed, for pluralists about knowledge who work in the philosophy of art it now looks like epistemology is not so much a possible resource for pluralist perspectives, but rather a philosophical area in potential need of them. The valuable direction of travel is perhaps *from* the philosophy of art *to* epistemology, and not vice versa. Were this Scope Ambiguity to be the only ambiguity at play with the cognitive, then I, for one, would willingly take up the cognitivist cause in the hopes of bringing to bear insights offered by so-called 'cognitive pluralists about art' on epistemology. Unfortunately, the second ambiguity—the Level Ambiguity—makes this tempting option not just problematic, but intractably so.

1.2 *The level ambiguity*

Level ambiguities about the relation between knowledge and the cognitive turn on confusions as to whether or not knowing and cognizing both occur at the personal level or one occurs at the personal level and the other occurs at the sub-personal level. As the demarcation between epistemologists and philosophers of mind blurs—as a consequence of the naturalizing ambitions of contemporary analytic philosophy—many philosophers in both areas work with a notion of cognition that is less a way of *characterising* our knowledge, and instead something that, supposedly, *explains* it. Instead of knowledge and cognition both being potential philosophical explananda, cognition is offered as an explanans for the explanandum that is knowledge. Moreover cognition, qua explanans, is conceived of as wholly sub-personal: cognitive sub-personal processes, mechanisms and states are theoretical constituents of a particular view of what the mind is, and how it works. One of the key commitments of this view is that to be minded is to engage in sub-personal information-processing over representational states. In other words, however (potentially) pluralist you might be, *au fond* such niceties disappear as knowledge bottoms out in sub-personal propositional knowledge. Appreciating this shift, helps to explain Stanley's insistence on the propositionality of all knowledge, including know-how, thereby showing that the level ambiguity and the scope ambiguities are internally connected. If cognition is now a sub-personal theoretical posit designed to explain person-level knowledge, then it is not, and cannot be, synonymous with knowledge. When and where did all this happen?

2. *Just say 'yes' to the history of philosophy*

There are four people whose historical confluence is crucial to turning 'cognitive' into, at best, a theory-laden term of art, and, at worst, a misdirecting piece of jargon. The four are Alan Turing, Warren McCulloch and Walter Pitts, and Noam Chomsky. Their work in, respectively, computing, neuroscience and A.I., and linguistics, is crucial to the creation, and location, of the perfect storm that changed the meaning of 'cognitive' and in so doing put the cognitive into cognitive science.

2.1 *Going cognitive*

The early clouds of this perfect storm gather with the analogy Turing draws between humans and machines, "We may compare a man in the process of computing a real number to a machine which is only capable of a finite number of conditions" (1938: 231). In other words, in considering ourselves as thinkers, as computers, we can think of ourselves as computing machines. In Turing's wake comes neurophysiologist and soon-to-be Head of MIT Cybernetics, Warren McCulloch who, together with colleague Walter Pitts, runs with Turing's suggestion in the provocatively titled paper 'A logical calculus of the ideas immanent in ner-

vous activity'. Here McCulloch and Pitts argue for an in-principle marriage between the firing of neurons and propositional representation.

> The "all-or none" law of nervous activity is sufficient to insure that the activity of any neuron may be represented as a proposition. Physiological relations existing among nervous activities correspond, of course, to relations among the propositions… (1943: 117)

McCulloch and Pitts' paper ends with a powerful vision of the potential of their proposal. "Thus both the formal and the final aspects of that activity which we are wont to call *mental* are rigorously deducible from present neurophysiology…" (1943: 132). That is to say, personal-level thoughts are (according to this theoretical proposal) *inferable* from sub-personal propositionally construed neuronal firings. Confirming this radical suggestion and thence exploiting such a claim is cognitive science's *raison d'etre*. It is the Holy Grail cognitive science has been chasing ever since its inception as a discipline born of a view of the mind as a localizable intercranial proposition-encapsulating neuron-firing computer. Indeed, by 1950 Turing is confident that computers can be made to "mimic the actions of a human computer very closely" (1950: 438). He suggests one way to bring this about:

> Instead of trying to produce a programme to simulate the adult mind, why not rather try to produce one which simulates the child's? ... Our hope is that there is so little mechanism in the child-brain that something like it can be easily programmed... We have thus divided our problem into two parts. The child-programme and the education process. (1950: 456)

The temptations of such a research project are clear: In the "child-machine… one might have a complete system of logical inference 'built in'" (1950: 457) And there's a footnote here: "Or rather 'programmed in" (1950: 457, fn1.) This, then, is Chomsky's cue, his springboard. For throughout the 1950s Chomsky synthesizes the ideas of Turing and McCulloch and Watts to develop his own claims that what it is to know how to speak a language *just is* to have such an innate sub-personal propositional-based language-constituting programme or mechanism. By the time he unleashes his castigating review of Skinner's 'Verbal behaviorism' in 1957, Chomsky is not simply engaging in methodological criticism he is simultaneously unveiling a brand new approach, and set of theoretical presumptions, applicable not just to language, but to all of our intelligent and intentional behavior:

> One would naturally expect that the prediction of the behavior of a complex *organism (or machine)* would require in addition to information about external stimulation, *knowledge of the internal structures of the organism*, the way in which it *processes input information* and organizes its own behaviour. (1957: 27, emphases added)

Chomsky presents his Universal Grammar as the first of these innate information-processing internal structures, proposing that we are born with a so-called 'Universal Grammar', whose individual 'initial state' incorporates a postulated fundamental structure of *all* languages. This

language faculty or organ then grows into its mature 'steady state'. Both the initial and the mature steady states are mental states represented in the mind/brain that are constitutive of the information-bearing, propositional representations and rules that we process, or compute. All this happens at the sub-personal level, "far beyond the level of actual or even potential consciousness" (1965: 8).

So we arrive at the critical move that spawns, and still shapes, today's ambiguity-ridden notion of the cognitive, namely: Chomsky's stipulative theoretical definition:

> I have been speaking of "knowing English" as a mental state (or a stable component of mental states), or a property of a person in a certain mental state, but… What is it that is known? Ordinary usage would say: a language—and I have so far been keeping to this usage, speaking of knowledge and learning a language, eg. English. But… this way of talking can be misleading… To avoid terminological confusion, *let me introduce a technical term devised for the purpose, namely "cognize"* with the following properties… The particular things we know, we also "cognize"… Furthermore, *we cognize the system of mentally-represented rules* from which the facts follow. That is we *cognize the grammar that constitutes the current state of our language faculty and the rules of this system* as well as the principles that govern their operation. And finally, *we cognize the innate schematism, along with its rules, principles and conditions.*
>
> In fact, I don't think that "cognize" is very far from "know"… *If the person who cognized the grammar and its rules could miraculously become conscious of them*, we would not hesitate to say that he knows the grammar and its rules, and this conscious knowledge is what constitutes his knowledge of language. Thus *cognizing is tacit or implicit knowledge*, a concept that seem to me unobjectionable… *cognizing has the structure and character of knowledge*… but may be and is in the interesting cases inaccessible to consciousness. *I will return to the terms "know" and "knowledge", but now using them in the sense of "cognize"… The fundamental cognitive relation is knowing a grammar*. (1980: 69–70, emphases added)

With this strategic announcement Chomsky separates knowledge and cognizing, making the latter a theoretical notion that is a constitutive part of a (naturalised) theory about what it is to know, or to know how to speak, one's first language. Moreover, by announcing his intention to return to using the terms 'know' and 'knowledge' *in ways that now mean* (or are synonymous with) this theory-laden notion of cognize, Chomsky and his heirs in the philosophy of mind, linguistics and cognitive science do not just equip themselves with their key theoretical posit, they commit to a practice that cannot but generate and embed the kinds of level and scope ambiguities that are constitutive of today's philosophical and cognitive science 'research'. By the time Chomsky's gives the 1969 John Locke Lectures at Oxford, Universal Grammar's central notion of cognition as unconscious, sub-personal propositional tacit knowing, is now the model on which most, if not all, scientific and naturalized philosophical attempts to understand not just language, but human intelligence and mindedness *tout court*. Chomsky success-

fully baits his hook with the familiar (person-level) concept *knowing*, then switches its meaning to a new (sub-personal-level) theoretical concept *cognising*, before reverting to the original nomenclature of knowledge to exploit person-level intuitions and conceptual connections relating to our more familiar notions of knowledge, language and mindedness.

One might think, however, that the concept *know-how* would be excluded from, or immune to, such deliberate theoretical repurposing. One might think it reasonable to characterise what it is we know, when we know how to speak our first language, as a kind of non-propositional know-how, an ability, and thus it is in some way untouched by theoretical proposals that reconceive person-level *propositional* knowledge as sub-personal propositional cognising. But non-propositional know-how offers no escape from Chomsky's 'bait-and-switch' maneouvre. For it turns out that there is no such thing as the non-propositional know-how of language.

2.2 *Reconceiving competence*

Having turned accessible personal-level knowing into inaccessible sub-personal cognizing, Chomsky makes a second, related stipulation that does not simply consolidate, it exacerbates, the dual-level ambiguity inherent in the notion of the cognitive. He first separates the notions of *competence* and *performance*. "We thus make a fundamental distinction between *competence* (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations)" (1965: 4, emphasis added). Chomsky then drives a theoretical wedge between such competence and performance, announcing: "…one might have the cognitive structure that we call "knowledge of English" fully developed, *with no capacity to use this structure*" (1975: 23, emphasis added). That is to say, that what it is to know English no longer means, entails or is constitutive of being able to speak English and understand other English-speakers. Instead, Chomsky proposes, or better he theoretically stipulates, that:

> …it is possible in principle for a person to have a full grammatical competence and no pragmatic competence, *hence no ability to use a language appropriately*, *though its syntax and semantics are intact*. (1980: 59, emphasis added)

With these stipulations Chomsky confirms his philosophico-theoretical claim that one can be linguistically competent in English, in other words you can *be* in a sub-personal cognitive state, yet unable to actually speak a language. To know-how to speak and understand English is no longer one and the same as having the ability to speak and understand English. Just as theory-laden *cognising* usurps (propositional) knowledge, *competence* usurps know-how. Only grammatical not pragmatic competence (a newly minted theoretical distinction) is required to know (or know-how) to speak or to understand a language. Moreover,

grammatical competence is, unsurprising, sub-personal, propositional and—by Chomsky's own lights—cognitive. Sub-personal cognition now supposedly *explains* personal level knowledge, understanding and ability. Yet, at the same time, the use of these notions and terms trades on our non-theoretical associations and assumptions about knowledge, understanding and ability.

3. *The double irony of so-called 'cognitive competence'*

Unperturbed by the implausibility (and dubious coherence) of this, Chomsky offers a further justification for the value of his newly minted, theory-laden terms:

> …my concept 'knowledge of a language' is directly related to the concept 'internalization' of the rules of grammar"… [and I have] tried to avoid, or perhaps evade the problem of explication of the notion 'knowledge of language by using an *invented technical term, namely the term 'competence'* in place of 'knowledge'. However, the term 'competence' suggests 'ability', 'skill' and so on, through a chain of associations that leads directly to much new confusion. *I do not think the concepts of ordinary language sufficient for the purpose at hand; they must either be sharpened, perhaps somewhat arbitrarily, or replaced by a new technical terminology.* (1975: 315, emphasis added)

With 'competence' joining 'cognising' as the twin pillars of Chomsky's new technical terminology, matters are poised for a third theoretical posit: 'cognitive competence'. Cognitive competence supposedly picks out sub-personal propositional knowledge whilst making no commitments to any person-level propositional knowledge, know-how or abilities. Not only that, but this product of Chomsky's double bait-and-switch is now tied to the denigration of our standard vocabulary, newly reconceived as 'folk psychological talk' and, as such, inadequate. 'Cognitive', 'competence' and 'cognitive competence' become key theoretical terms: tools of choice for naturalizing philosophers eager to 'improve' upon our ordinary language which has now been shown, supposedly, to be incapable of rising to the latest philosophical demands. But if any contemporary use of the term 'cognitive' and 'competence' cannot but consolidate theory-laden views where does this leave philosophers of art, or film? And what of cognitive film theorists? Are they unaware of the metaphysics of mind and language that are constitutive (thanks to Chomsky) of these notions or do they deliberately embrace it? And for those philosophers of art and film who might be cautious of making such commitments in the metaphysics of mind—what to do?

4. *A trilemma*

Do philosophers of art use the term 'cognitive' with all the ambiguities and attendant sub-personal commitments exploited by philosophers of mind or metaphysics-first epistemologists? If not, must they? Can a notion of the cognitive that is not theory-laden in the way outlined in the

previous section be identified and/or maintained? Do the silos of specialism in philosophical academia perpetuate nomenclature confusions or offer ways to transcend such worries, and if so, how? To what extent are, or might, these *intra*disciplinary conundrums be ramified by *inter*disciplinary engagement? Philosophers of art, including film, are, I suggest, facing a trilemma as to how best to respond to, and engage with, these theory-laden notions. Should the terms 'cognising', 'cognitive', and 'competence' (i) be embraced; (ii) be used but in only tandem with caveats and clarifications that modify and/or mollify concerns relating to scope or level ambiguities; or (iii) be eschewed altogether?

The first option—to continue unruffled, undaunted—can be seen in the standard practices of the majority of contemporary anglophone analytic philosophers whose work involves or overlaps with the philosophy of mind and naturalized epistemology. It is also the preferred approach of so-called 'cognitive film theorists.' For cognitive film theorists these theory-laden notions are key to their methodological *modus operandi*. Perhaps they have found a way to diffuse the scepticism that I propose compromises the very notion of the cognitive. To evaluate the merits of this diffusion, I first consider why cognitivism has been, and continues to be, so important to the creation and maintenance of cognitive film theorising.

4.1 *1996 and all that*

In 1996, Noel Carroll and David Bordwell's edited collection of articles, *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* brought together a range of critical challenges directed at the then dominant methodology of film studies—Theory. The editors' own contributions to the volume led the attack: the claims of Theory were not simply false (where coherent), but the Theoretical methodology was, itself, inadequate. Carroll invited the purveyors of Theory to justify their approach and rise to the scholarly responsibility of engaging in dialectic debate about their *modus operandi* and its products. The invitation has remained unanswered; the gauntlet unrun.

Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies opens with the editors' individual articles articulating and cataloguing the limitations of Theory, or as they sometimes call it 'Grand Theory'. At the same time, both David Bordwell and Noel Carroll champion their insistence on high standards of clarity, rigour, and rationality to which cognitive film theorising is to be accountable. Bordwell contrasts the cognitivists' own, "middle-level research programmes… based in evidence" (1996: 29) with the 'ethereal speculations' (1996: xiii) and "sedimented dogma" (1996: xvii) of Theory. He characterises the various manifestations of Grand Theory—be they Marxist, psychoanalytic, semiotic, structuralist, poststructuralist, postmodern, or feminist—as resulting from an "esoteric merger of antirationalist philosophy, unorthodox psychoanalysis and the frequently changing views of an official philosopher of the

French Communist Party" (1996: 14). The purveyors of Theory traffic in ideas that meet "no canons of reasonable inference" (1996: 23) and their theories are little more than "a bricolage of other theories" (1996: 25). Bordwell's historical reconstruction of Theory's highways and byways, from subject-position theory through to cultural studies, charts the "deep continuities of doctrine and practice" (1996: 13) that began in the 1970s and continue unchallenged up to this Post-Theory confrontation.

As well as cataloguing the failures, follies and inadequacies of the results of Theory, Carroll identifies methodological "impediments to film theorizing" (1996: 38). These range from the misconceived overextension of psychoanalytic theory (overextended because the standard clinical use of psychoanalysis is limited to explaining just those deviations that are recalcitrant to 'normal' understanding) to engaging in *ad hominem* attacks on any critic who refuses to acknowledge the supposedly ever-present politico-ideological dimension of a film; from using a notion of interpretation in such a way as to transform distinct films into the homogenous products of a "standard-issue sausage machine" churning out (readings of) films that look and smell the same (1996: 43), to inventing concepts of questionable use, such as "the male gaze" (1996: 45); and from incorrectly insisting that content-free formalism is the inevitable consequence of any attempt at political or ideological neutrality, to offering "arguments for suspecting science [that] are as feckless as those for suspecting truth" (1996: 59).

Carroll announces his hopes of engendering a "methodologically robust pluralism" (1996: 63); one that would encourage and enable cognitivists and Theoreticians to engage with each other, sharing agreed standards and protocols of reasoning; together facing the tribunal of empirical evidence. Such academic engagement fails to come to pass. Critical challenge as a route to pan-theoretical corrective is not, and was not, to be. Instead, Carroll's vision of robust pluralism gave way to the very thing he had hoped to avoid: "coexistence pluralism" (1996: 63). The result was—and indeed continues to be—not so much a live-and-let-live mutual respect, but a live-and-rarely-if-ever-mention disparagement.

The lack of any serious reaction from Theoreticians was perhaps unsurprising given Bordwell and Carroll's choice of language was not designed to cushion their critical onslaught. Calls to scholarly engagement are problematic when paired with declarations that the leading Theoretical emperors are not wearing any clothes. The dust jacket illustration of *Post-Theory* displayed a photograph of Laurel & Hardy 'teaching': surely little more than a pointed accusation of the clown-like hopelessness of Theory, and a motivating invitation for real, rather than buffoon, teacher-scholars to step up to the academic plate.

In extolling the virtues of cognitive film theorising Carroll announced that the new methodology would deliver rigorous argument

and clarity where Theory was awash with impenetrable, obscure prose. It would offer the authority of legitimate scientific investigation, where Theory just stumbled around, committing every sin in the Analytic Philosophers' Handbook. Carroll didn't hesitate to name and shame those whom he took to be the key culprits of Theory: Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan, and Roland Barthes. Nor did Carroll's condemnation stop there: he attacked profit-hungry over-productive university presses that pandered to the 'arcane peregrinations of Theory' by publishing anyone who had the audacity to draw not just from the well of their founding fathers, but from the writings of Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Pierre Bourdieu, Gilles Deleuze, '*maybe* sometimes" Jacques Derrida, and the list—like the 'juggernaut of Theory'—went on. (Carroll 1996: 37–40).

Since then, the division between these two camps has deepened: cognitivist film theorising blossoms in the soil of the naturalized analytic philosophy which is now the default paradigm of the contemporary analytic philosophical academia. Theory carries on unabashed and unabated, for the most part ignoring challenges to its ideological cornerstones, seemingly unperturbed by the fact that its prose style is incomprehensible to the uninitiated. The actual ongoing philosophical battle, as Carroll anticipated in 1996, is not, however, *between* these mutually exclusive methodologies, but *for* the undecided readership who have yet to make up their philosophical mind and/or who are still to be inculcated into the practices and norms of one or other of these camps.

Yet although Bordwell and Carroll target the trio of Althusser, Lacan and Barthes as the miscreant source of Theory's problems, they too have their own equivalent Triumvirate in Chomsky, Fodor, and Quine whose philosophical commitments—of method, substance and nomenclature—they embrace. For in rejecting Theory (with a capital 'T') as unscientific gibberish, cognitive film theorists turn to the representational and computational theories of mind that are constructed out of sub-personal semantic theories of content, 'cognition', 'competence' and intentionality. Furthermore, even when their work seems not to require any such commitments to such philosophies of mind, they are now exploiting the conceptual-theoretical resources and vocabulary sourced in, and constitutive of the metaphysical underpinnings of their methodological orientation. In other words, cognitive film theory is no less dependent on its own fundamental theoretical commitments as Grand Theory was, back in 1996. Yet for many, the very idea of sub-personal propositional knowledge, sub-personal notions of cognition and content is at best wrong, and at worst incoherent.

4.2 *Myths, broken dreams and cul de sacs*

The catalogue of unresolved charges filed against the various presumptions that shape the cognitivist metaphysics of mind includes the Chi-

nese Room Argument against the very idea of sub-personal semantic content (Searle 1980), the category mistake constitutive of attempts to *localise* powers (Ryle (1949), Kenny (1989) and Kenny (2009)), the Homunuclus and Merelogical Fallacies that mistakenly predicate of brains what can only be predicated of people (Kenny (1989), Bennett and Hacker (2003: 68–108)); the unfathomable challenge of showing how moods, skills and understanding might be sub-personally represented (Haugeland (1978: 22)); the impotence of sub-personal 'competence' to be, to replace or to explain public standards of correctness; the frame problem; accusations of scientism, etc., the list goes on. Yet cognitive film theorists such as Greg Currie, David Bordwell and Carl Plantinga not only embrace but readily acknowledge the importance of the very same theory-laden notions of cognition and competence laid out above together with the very representational theories of mind they enable and nourish.[2] They are undeterred by those, like Norman Malcolm, who regard the idea of understanding or explaining mindedness and intelligence using so-called 'cognitive processes' as nothing but a case of "replacing the stimulus-response mythology with a mythology of inner guidance systems" (1971: 392). They are undaunted by those, like Herman Philipse, who describe cognitivism as yet another misguided attempt to turn philosophy into science, the history of which he characterises as a "boulevard of broken dreams" (2009: 163). They are uninterested in the pronouncements of leading cognitive science apostates, such as Rodney Brooks (whose 1970s MIT team built one of the first robots to move around an 'ordinary' environment) who now acknowledges that computer "intelligence" is a primarily a matter of computational brute force rather than anything that involves meaning or is, in any way, comparable to understanding. Brooks recently announced:

> I believe that we are in an intellectual cul-de-sac, in which we model brains and computers on each other, and so prevent ourselves from having deep insights that would come with new models… The brain has become a digital computer; yet we are still trying to make our machines intelligent... When you are stuck, you are stuck. We will get out of this cul-de-sac, but it will take some brave and bright souls to break out of our circular confusion of models. (2012: 462)

They are entirely undeterred by Rorty's observation that, "[f]rom a Wittgensteinian perspective, the approach taken by Chomsky and his fellow cognitive scientists look like that taken by the man who searches for his missing keys under the lamp-post, not because he dropped them near there but because the light is better" (2004: 221).

That said, there has been a move by Greg Currie to step away from the (potentially problematic) nomenclature of the 'cognitive'. Unlike his fellow cognitive film theorists, Greg Currie has declared the label 'cog-

[2] See Currie's continued commitment to a Chomksy-informed understanding of matters cognitive. "Our speech-production runs… much slower than the cognitive processes that enable us to think and draw inferences from our thoughts" (2010:15).

nitivism' to be "of limited usefulness", even "burdensome". He suggests a better name would be "rationalism" (2004: 170). Though his preferred approach still welcomes "help from the empirical sciences" the crucial idea captured by rationalism is that it maintains a "commitment to reasoned and reasonable ways of thinking" whilst avoiding the requirement of maintaining allegiance to any specific theory of mind (2004: 170). This seems like a promising suggestion, perhaps one ready to acknowledge if not all the list of above-mentioned challenges, then at least some of the Scope and Level Ambiguities involved in the notion of the cognitive, and attendant assumptions of Cognitivism. Yet let it be remembered that Chomsky regards his Universal Grammar to be a case of what he calls Cartesian Linguistics: a 'Chapter in the History of *Rationalist* Thought' (2009). Currie's suggestion is perhaps more accurately appreciated as an attempt to re-brand Cognitive Film Theory, whilst holding on to its fundamental commitment—ie. the principle that cognition is subpersonal information-processing. In the preface to his 1995 *Image and Mind, Film and Cognitive Science*, Currie acknowledges that his book "owes much, in spirit at least, to the linguistics of Chomsky" (1995: xxiii). Nothing has changed; or is likely to.

4.3 *Back to the trilemma*

What to do, then, if one does not want to use the notion of the cognitive, or any related cognitivist methodology; if one wants to avoid the pitfalls of Scope and Level Ambiguity, and wishes to 'opt out' of the problematic cognitive-informed picture of the metaphysics of mind? The second option of the trilemma is to continue to use these notions, but suitably accompanied by the appropriate caveats, clarification and disambiguations. This is, indeed, a viable option. It does, however, come with its own difficulties: how best to engage with colleagues, interlocutors and philosophical adversaries who are neither interested in, versed in, nor see the need for, such clarificatory preliminaries? Is it practically possible to regularly and repeatedly rehearse questions about the meaning and implications of what, to many, are seemingly innocuous terms?

That leaves the third option: eschewing the cognitive. Perhaps it is time to acknowledge the merits of Gilbert Ryle's prescient advice. The "proper policy" when faced with the question *Is imagining a cognitive or non-cognitive activity?* is to "ignore it. 'Cognitive' belongs to the vocabulary of examination papers" (1949: 244). But can we do without the term and its associated notions?

5. *Doing without and doing away with the cognitive*

Resisting the use of questionable theory-laden notions such as cognition, the cognitive and cognitivism, is not easy. These notions pervade almost all of the various philosophical sub-disciplines that make up today's naturalized analytic philosophy. They are also part of the cur-

rency of contemporary cognitive science and so would appear to be prerequisites for any interdisciplinary engagement. Furthermore, just as evidence shows that fMRI imagery is taken, by non-specialists, to be more explanatory powerful,[3] so too, there seems to be a rhetorical authority that comes with the terminology of cognition. In the financial marketplace of contemporary academia it is all too easy, even for the sceptic, to embrace the rhetoric power of terms like 'cognition' which project a seemingly scientific robustness attractive to those non-specialists who often, and increasingly, hold the purse strings of 'research' grants. This may well be a sociological aspect of the slippery slope that goes some way to explaining the appeal of scientism. Nonetheless, individual philosophers of film, of art, and beyond, must still decide whether or not they wish to use the terms 'cognition', 'cognising', 'cognitive' and 'competence' and take responsibility for their role in maintaining and contributing to what these terms have come to mean. Cognitive film theorists once recoiled from the 'arcane peregrinations' that is the language of 'Theory', yet their own cognitivist picture of the mind is no less a product of a highly specialised practice of talking and writing into which its adherents have been inculcated. This is confirmed, unwittingly, by Stephen Stich, the cognitivist philosopher who originally articulated the theory-laden notion of the (supposed) sub-doxastic mental state.

> Though talk of [sub-personal] states representing facts is difficult to explicate in a philosophically tolerable way, it is surprisingly easy to master intuitively. *Even the barest introduction to work in artificial intelligence and cognitive simulation quickly leaves one comfortable with attributions of content or representational status to the states of an information processing theory*. (1978: 510, emphasis added).

Scientism comes, I suggest, with its own arcane peregrinations.

The historical reconstruction and arguments above are sufficiently worrisome, I believe, to justify why it is important to remain uncomfortable with what is ultimately a misguided picture of philosophising about knowledge, know-how and understanding, and to resist using the language that engenders it. For as Peter Hacker reminds us, "According to Chomsky, someone who cognizes cannot tell one what he cognizes, cannot display the object of his cognizing, does not recognize what he cognizes when told, never forgets what he cognizes (but never remembers it either) has never learnt it, and could not teach it. Apart from that, cognizing is just like knowing! Does *this* commend itself as a model for an intelligible extension of a term?" Bennett et al (2007: 138). I think not.

In resisting the language of the cognitive and its sister notion of competence, one is not merely turning away from scientistic jargon, but opening the door to the possibility of rehabilitating the value of

[3] See Weisberg et al. (2008) on the so-called 'seductive allure of neuroscience explanations.'

our ordinary, rich, person-level vocabulary and concepts: knowledge, know-how, experience, understanding, insight, judgement, explanation, appreciation, wisdom, reflection, consideration, taste, exploration, practice, imagination, etc. These are not the impoverished notions of some primitive folk psychology in urgent need of philosophical overhaul. They are the tools of our human trade and traffic, the raw material of some of our finest art, and the wherewithal with which we live our lives. Just saying no to the use of all things cognitive is not only a *solution* to the trilemma posed but an *opportunity* for the philosophy of film, and art, to find a different way forward in the 21st century: an opportunity I characterise as *humanist*.

Cinematic Humanism offers an alternative to the methodology of cognitive film theorising without being forced back into the no less questionable theoretical claims of (Grand) Theory and its heirs.[4] Cinematic Humanism is, instead, an example of a non-cognitive-involving way of doing the philosophy of film *without theory*, as well as a commitment to a set of tenets about the non-trivial value of fiction films. As a methodology it resists employing naturalized theories in the philosophy of mind, avoids the associated theory-laden vocabulary and jargon, and refuses to participate in the downgrading of the philosophical value of our ordinary language. The challenge Cinematic Humanists face is to discern and articulate the similarities, distinctions and reticulations that constitute that understanding of ourselves, each other and the world achieved in and through our sensitive, reflective and critical engagement with films. I would hope that supporters of what might be termed 'Cinematic Cognitivism' find much to support in the tenets of Cinematic Humanism, for—representational and computational theories of mind apart—there is a not insubstantial set of shared commitments. I further hope that by encouraging scepticism about the very notion of the cognitive Cinematic Humanist approaches offer ways for debate about 'cognitive' value to move beyond current stalemates. Cinematic Humanism is, and will continue to be, a solution to the constitutive problem of Cinematic Cognitivism by reminding us that it is at the personal and interpersonal levels, and not the sub-personal level, where our philosophical understanding of what it is to be human is to be found. It is at the personal and interpersonal level where the meaning, insight and value of our cinematic achievements are to be recognised, appreciated, and cherished.[5]

[4] I take 'film-philosophy' to be one such heir: an iteration of Theory triggered (in part) by the cognitive film theorists' original 1996 criticisms.

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Literature and Truth: Revisiting Stolnitz's Anti-cognitivism

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In this paper I address Jerome Stolnitz's famous article "On the cognitive triviality of art," with the aim of defending aesthetic and literary cognitivism against the charges Stolnitz issues at it therein. My defence of literary cognitivism is grounded in contemporary epistemology, which, I argue, is more embracive of cognitive values of literature traditionally invoked by literary cognitivists. My discussion is structured against Stolnitz's individual arguments, dedicated in particular to the problem of literary truth. After exploring what such notion might amount to, I move on to address the problems of applicability and triviality of literary truths, and I end by defending literature as a cognitively valuable social practice.

Keywords: Art, cognitivism, knowledge, literature, Jerome Stolnitz, truth.

1. *Preliminary remarks: literature's cognitive dimension*

Back in 1992 Jerome Stolnitz published "On the cognitive triviality of art," a paper which to this day remains one of the most famous and influential sources of arguments against aesthetic cognitivism (AC): a view that art is cognitively valuable. In conclusion, Stolnitz wrote:

> In either case, there is no method of arriving at [the truth] in art and no confirmation or possibility of confirmation in art. Artistic truths, like the works of art that give rise to them, are discretely unrelated and therefore form no corpus either of belief or knowledge. Hence formal contradictions are tolerated effortlessly, if they are ever remarked. Only rarely does an artistic truth point to a genuine advance in knowledge. Artistic truths are, preponderantly, distinctly banal. Compared to science, above all, but also to history, religion, and garden variety knowing, artistic truth is a sport, stunted, hardly to be compared. (342)[1]

[1] All quotes are from Stolnitz (2004).

In this paper, I analyse Stolnitz's anti-cognitivist arguments from the perspective of contemporary epistemology. I argue that his criticism of art's cognitive value rests on an oversimplified view of what constitutes such value: as evident from the quote, Stolnitz grounds it on the notion of artistic truth and sets up his paper as a list of difficulties involved in finding such truth. I believe his arguments can be met, which is what I am mostly concerned with here. However, my paper is indirectly intended as a contribution to the contemporary aesthetic and literary cognitivism, and therefore, its scope is greater than Stolnitz's. I presuppose that art's cognitive value is grounded not solely in its capacity to deliver truths, but in its capacity to sustain and animate many of our cognitive processes, such as thinking, reflecting, scrutinizing, understanding, developing opinions and exercising judgments.[2]

Given Stolnitz's focus, I concentrate my discussion on literature, with the aim of epistemologically providing a defence of its epistemic reliability. Following many who have provided accounts of literature's cognitive value, I see it as a repository of human experience, as an archive of humanly important stories which tell us something about the big wide world, other people, and ourselves.[3] Literature's cognitive value stems from the fact that it feeds directly into our intellectual demands: it tells us about things we care about as reflective human beings, as social agents, as participants in public life, as individuals who struggle to cope with whatever the world brings on them. In light of its doing so, literature demands a particular kind of engagement, one which asks us to exercise our reflective, emotional, imaginative and perceptive capacities.[4] Stolnitz however does not share such a conception of literature. As one of the most famous 20th century advocator of disinterestedness as the key aesthetic attitude, Stolnitz defends art's value on the basis of its formal features, rather than on the basis of its representational or expressive dimension. His account of art's cognitive triviality rests on a comparison between art and other practices considered cognitively valuable, namely science, history and religion.[5] Indirectly, he presupposes epistemic monism, a view according

[2] Insightful discussions over what is at stake in debate about literature's (and art's) cognitive value are found in Davies (2007), Gaut (2005, 2006), Gibson (2007), Graham (1996), Lamarque (2007).

[3] See in particular Nussbaum (1990) and Gibson (2007).

[4] In insisting on literature's capacity to reveal aspects of the world to us, I am not implying that it should not be attended in a way which reveals its literary value—literary stance is, on my view, compatible with an epistemological approach to it, in a manner defended by M. Rowe (2010) in his criticism of Lamarque and Olsen's (1994) view. Though here I can't specify my claim, I do not think of my approach as an instance of instrumentalization of literature, as some scholars (e.g. Derek Attridge (2015)) do.

[5] Though some of his statements regarding science's veritistic deliverances are controversial, I will not challenge him on that basis. Rather, I will go step by step through his claims and show that contemporary literary cognitivism, aided by most recent developments in epistemology, can successfully fight off his arguments.

to which truth is the only epistemic good. My approach is different. Notwithstanding literature's artistic value, our engagements with literature, I argue, invite epistemological assessment. We form beliefs on the bases of what we read, we make judgments, particularly moral, about what we read, we think differently about concepts we considered familiar prior to reading and we feel complex emotions for fictional characters. Therefore, we have to explore epistemic aspects of literary engagements, and, more importantly, explain why these aspects are more complex than presupposed by Stolnitz's monistic paradigm.[6]

An expanded view of literature's cognitive value is supported by the recent developments in epistemology, particularly by the 'epistemic pluralism'.[7] The main aspect of pluralism is its expansion from truth to various other states (such has acknowledgement and understanding) and processes (such as weighting evidence, formulating hypotheses, reflecting on possibilities etc.) that are recognized as cognitively valuable. Since the time of Aristotle, literature has been credited with giving rise to such states and processes—usually referred to as indirect benefits—and now finally epistemology can ground its capacity for doing so. By indirect benefits, I assume various ways in which we come to think about the world as the result of our experience with the literary work. Literature can deepen our understanding of phenomena it brings to view by showing us some of their aspects we might have been unaware off. It can make us adopt a different perspective on things by showing us nuances we did not recognize as relevant. It can provide opportunities to reflect on our experience, principles we endorse, attitudes we hold, values and virtues we cherish and the like. By offering vivid and usually rather detailed descriptions of experiences of fictional characters, it can bring to view experiences that we didn't have opportunities to undergo firsthand. Literature can influence our imagination and make us better at counterfactual thinking and moral reasoning.[8] While Stolnitz might have a point in showing how hard (though not impossible!) it is to talk of truth in the context of literature, he is wrong in denying literature its cognitive value. With the right epistemology in place, his arguments lose their sharpness.

From the standpoint of epistemology, the most promising explanation of the mechanism that enables such cognitive transfers is, on my

[6] It is important to stress my epistemological approach, in order not to lose sight of my focus here. For the most part, literary cognitivists aim at exploring the relationship between literature's cognitive value and its overall value. Against that background, one can challenge literature's cognitive value by denying (i) that literature is cognitively valuable, (ii) that its cognitive dimension matters for or determines its aesthetic value or (iii) both. My approach however is narrower, in that I respond only to (i). I aim to show that literature is cognitively valuable, not in a trivial sense in which it might occasionally contain true propositions, but in light of its deliberate dedication to exploring issues that humans care about.

[7] See David (2001) for epistemic monism and Riggs (2002, 2008) and Kvanving (2005) for pluralism.

[8] For the latest research on this issue see Young's contribution to this volume.

view, testimony. A literary work can be seen as a special kind of testimony in which an author assumes the role of an informant and the reader that of a listener.[9] As in any testimonial exchange, in order for a listener to learn something, the informer has to be sincere and reliable, and a listener should not trust blindly but on the basis of evidence that supports the testimony (even if such evidence consists of the prior reliability of a particular informer). While literature, as creative and imaginative writing, seems to stand opposite to a truthful and reliable account of events, I will show that in many cases, there are no reasons to exclude literary authors from domain of trustworthy informers. In addition, influenced by Jennifer Lackey's account of testimony (Lackey 2008), I claim that we learn from what others are telling us, not from what they believe. Therefore, the fact that literary fiction invites the attitude of make-believe rather than believe does not render it unreliable. However, to properly see it as a source of cognitive gains, the narrow view of testimony should be extended: testimony should not be confined to transmission of propositions that the informer believes to be true, and sought-after by the audience.[10] Rather, testimony is more embracive of other sorts of verbal (and written) exchanges among humans and it has no restrictions on the subject matter or the form in which it is given.[11] Such instances of testimony can result in indirect cognitive gains as described above, provided a listener is willing to engage with the content of informer's claims and evaluate them from the perspective of her set of beliefs, her experience and tacit knowledge of the world and empirically developed capacity to discriminate good and bad informants.

With these preliminary remarks we can turn to Stolnitz.

2. *Literary truths*

Stolnitz begins his criticism of the cognitive value of art by attacking the notion of artistic method and artistic truth. "We have a relatively clear and firm conception of how science arrives at its truths", he says, "but a 'method of artistic truth' is not matter for debate and hardly makes sense..." In addition, "scientific truths, once arrived at, are truths about the great world", but it is altogether unclear whether "the arts give us truths about the great world" (337).

As a way of response to these statements, two things should be noted. First, many literary authors report conducting a fare amount of research prior to writing their works. Although on Stolnitz's view, a literary work "has no reference beyond itself" (337), authors and the audience alike have often spoken of literature *being about* the world.

[9] I develop this analogy in Vidmar (2012b), in Vidmar (2013) and in Prijić and Vidmar (2012). I refer to it as a fictional testimony.

[10] For a discussion, see Lackey (2008).

[11] I rely on Jennifer Lackey's characterization of the broad view of testimony (see Lackey 2008). See also Millar (2010).

Gregg Crane is but one literary scholar who emphasizes the extent to which authors of realistic novels are committed to truthful representations. These writers, he explains, "share a general conception of fiction as a detailed and accurate representation of historically specific characters and settings—their manners, ways of dress, speech patterns, social habits, main concerns, and topics of conversation" (Crane 2007: 156). On Crane's view, literary realism is "empiricist in orientation", grounded upon "concrete examples", focused on an "exploration of the here and now", on the "world of concrete personal experiences", "inductive rather than deductive, experimental and open to uncertainty" (Crane 2007: 157–8). Given such a tradition of investigating the issues one writes about, where such investigations often take the form similar to empirical scientific investigation, it makes sense to think of literary authors as testifiers: through their work, they are telling us what they see in the world, and how they see it. The 'method of artistic truth' is not all that different from other methods we rely upon to gain knowledge, and from other means through which knowledge is conveyed to us. Naturally, the crucial difference is the fact that, unlike in regular cases of testimony, authors are not under the obligation to tell the truth. However, at least with respect to those who commit themselves to realism, we should not presume they are feeding us with falsities.[12] As I mentioned in the introductory part, readers, as receivers of authors' testimony share the burden of carefully assessing whether what they are told is likely to be true or not. They can do this in light of their familiarity with literary practice and with their overall experience of the world. Against such a background, they can differentiate between novels which offer reliable accounts of their subject/theme nexus and those that do not. Even a glimpse of a novel by Theodore Dreiser or Henry James, in comparison to a novel by Danielle Steel, reveals striking differences in how these authors approach their topic and represent their subject. For an audience who has the capacity to discriminate good testimony from bad, the later work will not be considered a valuable source (though it can be an enjoyable read).

Moreover, it is not quite so that 'literary truth' is not subject to critical evaluation and occasional refutation, primarily by literary critics. Works which aim to be 'true to the world' but fail, are criticized on the account of their epistemic unreliability. One way at least where such practice is obvious relates to the low art vs. high art distinction. Trashed for its lack of psychological reality in characters' presentation, for its highly simplified accounts of political, social and other forces operative in society and for overall ignorance of the complexities of 'human predicament', low art novels do not collect praise for their cognitive impact and are often castigated for the perspective they offer.

[12] Elsewhere I offered an account of how non-realistic literary works satisfy the condition of reliability, see Vidmar (2012a).

That leaves us with the problem of explaining the notion of 'literary truth'. Some have tried to do so by claiming that literary truth is a sort of a *sui generis* kind. Inviting severe criticism from Peter Lamarque, Iris Murdoch talks about "artist's just and compassionate vision of the world" which reveals "the real quality of human nature" (taken from Lamarque, 1996, 97). As Lamarque pointed out, this line of defence is not promising since it only obliges a defender of literary cognitivism to provide an account of this special kind of truth and then to clarify how it relates to our cognitive pursuits. As explained in my preliminary remarks, on the view I am defending, literature is a source of truth about the great world and its complexities and it can reveal 'qualities of human nature', but if by 'real' Murdoch has in mind some kind of metaphysical properties that are only discoverable through art, then I share Lamarque's worries. To the extent that literature is concerned with the real world, the truths it delivers are truths about that very world.

Stolnitz disagrees, claiming that we lack a criterion on how to recognize an artistic (literary) truth, whereas we do not lack such criterion in other domains. Even if it might be objected that religious beliefs "are indisputably true of the great world" (338), the fact remains that statements like 'Man is the creature of God' is a "recognizably religious truth" (338). The problem, he claims, with literary truth is that it is altogether unclear what such truth would look like or what it would amount to.

I do not think this is a serious problem for literary cognitivism. In one, rather trivial sense, literary truths are those truths that are obtained from literature. Given that there are no limits to the topics that literature deals with, there are no boundaries to the kinds of truth we can find in literature.[13] But this speaks in favour of the cognitive value of literature, rather than against it, since it reveals how rich a source of truth literature is. Literature is concerned with all kinds of truths pertaining to all kinds of domains, without restriction. Even the most random survey of works from different historical periods or literary genres reveals that there's no restriction on themes in literature. Literature concerns itself with all aspects and domains of being human. Consequently, all sorts of truths can be found in literature: historical, biological, sociological, philosophical, anthropological etc.[14] The notion of literary truth can only refer to literature as a source, not to a special kind of truth distinctive of literature.

[13] Notice the analogy with the things we learn from the newspaper, developed by Noel Carroll (2007). Although we learn all sorts of things from newspapers, we do not have a clear conception of newspaper truth, nor do we need one in order to take newspapers as reliable.

[14] Stolnitz himself acknowledges this: "It now falls out why there was, when we began, no trouble in finding clear cases of scientific, historical, religious, and garden variety truths, whereas no clear examples of artistic truth came to mind. None of its truths are peculiar to art. All are proper to some extra-artistic sphere of the great world." (341). Well, that is precisely what I want my epistemological analysis to reveal.

Committed to finding an artistic truth, Stolnitz turns to *Pride and Prejudice* and comes up with one potential candidate: 'Stubborn pride and ignorant prejudice keep apart two attractive people living in Hertfordshire in Regency England' (338). If literary cognitivist is right, then this is one of the truths we might extract from Austen's masterpiece. However, Stolnitz claims, this statement cannot be cognitively valuable, since it doesn't amount to anything but to the summary of the novel, and that is not what literary cognitivist is after. If anything, it is the *fictional* truth supported by the text, rather than a 'worldly' truth supported by the state of the affairs in the world. However, Stolnitz misinterprets the function that this proposition, which indeed refers to the fictional world, can have for the cognitive economy of a reader. The problem here is not that the truth extracted from the novel is fictional; rather, the problem is that it is all together wrongly identified as that what the reader should extract from the work. What matters is not that a reader reaches the conclusion about two people being kept apart by pride and prejudice, but that he comes to understand the role that pride and prejudice might have in keeping people apart. Pride and prejudice both signal a certain cognitive and moral deficiency. One whose judgments are clouded by prejudice remains blind to how things really are, and pride keeps one from reflecting upon one's own mistakes and sustains one in one's arrogance. This is what Austen's novel puts to view and becoming aware of the intellectual and ethical malfunctions that spring from pride and prejudice is the lesson we should be concerned with in the experience with this work.[15]

To understand why focusing solely on a principle we might deduct from the work is not a good strategy to account for literature's cognitive value, consider Stolnitz's second candidate: "Stubborn pride and ignorant prejudice keep attractive people apart". This formulation goes beyond the fictional setting of the subject level and becomes an abstract claim, which Stolnitz finds problematic:

> Yet in abandoning Hertfordshire in Regency England, we give up the manners and morals that influenced the sayings and doings of the hero and heroine. (...) Their motivations and behaviour respond to and are thus largely shaped by these other people, fictional all, and to each other, of course, fictional too. (339)

The worry raised here concerns the fact that literary truth we are trying to deduct is necessarily entwined with the fictional world: details of the fictional world give rise to the truth itself. Extracting that truth leads us to either offer a summary of the novel (as was the case with the first candidate), or to peel down all the fictional layers until noth-

[15] Goldman (2013) has offered an insightful epistemological reading of *Pride and Prejudice*, claiming that cognitive benefits of the novel stem from its showing what is involved in a mature moral judgement. E. M. Dadlez ed. (2009) goes even further in revealing the novels' cognitive values, by drawing parallels between Austen's treatment of pride and prejudice and that of David Hume. Both philosophers make obvious the cognitive depth of this particular work.

ing but the bare proposition is left (the second candidate). But in this case it is hard to see what gives support to such a bare proposition, and how such a bare proposition can be cognitively valuable. If the truth is derived from a literary work, it is unsupported by the real world. But if it so generalizable as to be independent of the work itself, then, even if it has cognitive value, that value cannot be traced back to the work itself.[16] Seemingly, we have no way of accounting for the intuition that we learn certain things from literature and are justified in doing so.

This dilemma might be efficient only if we presuppose that the content of literary works is entirely made up. However, if we presuppose that literary writers report what they see in the world, the fact that a fictional character's pride keeps her from being happy is not a fact solely found in literature; it is a statement referring to what people do in the real world. Let us not forget that Austen is to this day considered a master in realistically capturing details of domestic life and her fiction is repeatedly praised for the true representation of social and economic, among other, aspects of her time. Against Stolnitz's view, the fact that the setting and characters are fictional does not render her novels silent on how the world is. In fact, "she applies the microscope to human character and motivation" which makes her novels unique "as representations of universal patterns of behaviour, and as documentation of an aspect of the provincial society of her time" (Carter and McRae 1998: 236). Stolnitz puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that the characters and the settings are fictional. Consequently, he argues, the 'lesson' we deduct from reading about their interactions, whichever that is, cannot be justified on the basis of fictional account. However, this argument only works against the assumption that 'fictional' equals 'false', which is not correct. Most literary aestheticians nowadays argue that fictional is not opposed to factual. It is a pragmatic principle signalling the kind of description we are dealing with and the range of activities at our disposal with respect to what is described, but it doesn't imply we cannot profit cognitively from what we read in it.[17]

3. *Normative power and applicability of literary truths*

In the previous part I tried to mitigate Stolnitz's view that there are no literary truths, by pointing to empirically-based realistic writing and by noting the width of literature as a source of truth. Moreover, I argued that the method of collecting literary truths is not as efficient in generating cognitive benefits as contemplation on the themes presented, and I argued that the fictional setting of the novel is not an obstacle to its cognitive potential. Stolnitz might concede to my claim, but he has a further list of arguments against LC. One such is 'the problem of quantification':

[16] For a similar dilemma, see Lamarque (1996).

[17] See Matravers (2014).

> The initial statements refer to Miss Bennet and Mr Darcy, or Ajax and Creon. Do the statements of psychological truth refer to all or most or few of the flesh-and-blood beings they designate? How can we know? The drama or novel will not tell us. Praises of its 'universality' must do more than beg the question or blur it. (339)

The problem of quantification boils down to asking about the referent of the truths revealed in the work. Even if there are truths to be gained from literature, such as various psychological insights, Stolnitz claims that it is hard to understand to whom these truths refer to. Greek tragedies' concern with the question of how *hybris* influences human life, argues Stolnitz, does not help us answer whether "*hybris* must destroy/ may destroy a great man in history [some great men?][all great men?] who..." (339).

I want to approach this challenge from two angels. The first one has to do with modality of the truths revealed in the literary work: what is the normative power of the psychological insight that readers can pick up from literary works? If Stolnitz's analysis of Greek tragedies is correct and at least one lesson from these tragedies is the 'hybris affects human life', should we conclude that people must or may become the victim of the *hybris*? Literary cognitivists often point to novels such as *Ana Karenina* and *Madam Bovary,* claiming that they reveal what is like to be in an unhappy marriage. Such novels, cognitivists claim, help us understand the psychological motivation that induces one to commit adultery. However, following Stolnitz, we may wonder whether we should conclude that being in an unhappy marriage necessarily leads to infidelity. The novels tell a certain story, but they do not attach any modal value to what they are saying. How is a reader to know?

A second angle from which to approach Stolnitz's worry concerns a distinction some/all: if a tragic hero in a Greek story falls a victim of his tragic luck, does it mean that all people/some people/one person can experience the same reversal of fortune? If Emma Bovary has no other solution for her unhappiness but to pursue sexual relations with other men and purchase expensive commodities, does it mean that this is true of all unhappily married women? Here we are asking not only about the normative power of truths deducted from literature, but about their applicability. The experience shows that not all unhappily married women engage in adultery and not all people fall victim to bad luck. So if truths deducted from literature do not apply to everyone and are not universal, whom do they apply to? More significantly, how can they be truths, when truths are, by definition, universal and objective?

One way to solve this problem is to claim that literary works offer hypotheses, rather than truths. On this view, the claim, potentially extracted from *Madam Bovary*, that an unhappily married woman will engage in adultery, is a hypothesis about what a woman in a situation similar to Emma's might do, not a statement specifying what she will necessarily do. The cognitive value is here tied to the way reader implements this hypothesis into her cognitive repertoire which she uses

to make sense of human behaviour. Knowing what sorts of behaviour are available expands one's repertoire of reactions to the world. Understanding why people act in certain ways enables one to make sense of otherwise incomprehensible human behaviour. Here again the cognitive gain is not cashed out propositionally, but rests in literature's showing possible reactions. Rather than focusing on the statement which might be deducted from the work (such as Stolnitz's example "His *hybris* must destroy/may destroy a great man in history [some great men?][all great men?] who...") with the aim of finding the referent for it, cognitive gain is in considering how a certain 'lesson' can inform our thought processes on our available options. Tzachi Zamir's reading of *King Lear* offers illuminative example:

> Voices such as Edgar's and Cordelia's demonstrate the possibility of forgiving a parent as well as the incapacity to tell the parent that he is loved. Voices such as Racine's Hyppolytus exhibit the way kindness to a parent can be ultimately destructive. All of these are valuable as constituents of thought regarding filial obligation. All should interplay and constitute rational moral thinking about relating to a parent. None should simply be followed. (Zamir 2006: 41–2).

There is a more straightforward answer to the challenge of normativity and applicability. Stolnitz wants to say that, because we don't know, and can't determine, whether *hybris* will strike by necessity, whether it will strike this or that person, we can't accept any claim about *hybris* as a truth. Again by analogy, given that we can't know if an unhappy woman will cheat, and which unhappy woman will cheat, we can't take Emma's adultery as in any way informative on human behaviour. However, such arguments rest on a mistaken view about the type of content found in literature: unlike scientific discourses which deal with natural world that is operated by necessity and causality—a world which can indeed be described by a set of objective, universally valid list of truths—our 'social' world (for the lack of a better word) is not thus subject to regularities. Consequently, it cannot be so neatly described by a list of universally valid statements. Unlike natural sciences, which deal with casual laws, literature deals with the domain of human action and interaction, with their sense-making, interpretation and values. Some women cheat, but not all, some men are goners but some are born under the lucky star. Therefore, some literary works describe Emma and some Isabel Archer, some tell the story of Oedipus and some of Carrie Meeber.

4. *Triviality of literary truths*

The problem of quantification does not exhaust all the problems Stolnitz attributes to literary cognitivism. The next worry he raises is usually referred to as the problem of the 'cognitive familiarity' and it has to do with the fact that literature reveals truths which are already familiar to the readers, or truths which readers could have come to know

through some other means, like their own experience. In commenting Adrian Poole's claim that "Oedipus' fate opens our eyes to the gaps between being and doing and understanding", Stolnitz argues:

> Oedipus certainly acted without understanding and came to realize. So have we all, much of the time. It is less certain that those who have read the play (...) had not previously learned this truth, at the cost of their own less dramatic pain. (340)

A shift is made here from claiming that there are no truths available in literature to claiming that what we learn from literature is something we have learnt via other means, namely our own experience. Consequently, literature imparts only cognitively trivial truths. If that is so, then there is nothing particularly valuable in its handling of humanly important issues. However, before we concur with Stolnitz on this, we need to be more precise on what is at stake here. The argument from cognitive familiarity (CF) can imply four different things, which are not always kept apart in discussions. I suggest the following distinctions be made.[18] CF can be understood as a claim that (CFi) readers already know truths presented in literature, or as a claim that (CFii) readers can come to learn truths presented in literature through some other means. In a radical version, the argument can also be read as a claim that (CFiii) truths which we can gain from literature are well known, to the point that they are trivial. Claims (CFi–CFiii) should not be confused with the claim (CFiv) according to which readers need to bring some knowledge (moral, psychological, emotional) into the reading process in order to get cognitive (moral, psychological, emotional) gain after reading.

Many literary cognitivists accept (CFiv). Rather than claiming that the 'lesson' to be learnt from the *Crime and Punishment* is the moral truth 'Murder is wrong', readers already need to know that murder is wrong in order to follow the complexities of moral, philosophical and psychological situation described by Dostoyevsky. Bringing the knowledge of this principle to the novel enables a reader to engage with Raskolnikov's reflections on the morality of crime and psychological impact of the knowledge that one has committed it, and consequently, to reach a state of deepened understanding of the phenomena described by Dostoyevsky. It is because works have this kind of effect on the readers that it makes sense to claim that there are indirect cognitive benefits available from reading. Summarizing (and criticizing) the arguments of those who accept this idea, Peter Lamarque refers to it as the cognitive strengthening: "Again the emphasis is away from the acquisition of newly found wordly truths towards 'clarificationism' (Noel Carroll), or an 'enriched understanding' (Gordon Graham) or an 'acknowledgment' (John Gibson) of beliefs readers are likely to hold already" (Lamarque 2010: 381). On Carroll's view, and similarly with respect to Graham, literary works can clarify what is involved in the moral principles, thus

[18] I provided a more detailed account in my 2014.

enabling readers to gain a fuller understanding of these principles, and consequently, to become more sensible towards the ethical demands. Gibson relies on Stanley Cavell's notion of acknowledgment and argues that distinctive payoffs of literary works lie in their ability to reveal to us requirements that our knowledge makes on us. Knowing something is not enough, Gibson claims, if one doesn't understand what this knowledge demands of one. I agree with all these versions of cognitive strengthening but I will not go into more details here. Suffice to say that the argument from triviality is surpassed: there is a cognitive gain that depends on things readers already know.[19] Such a gain is not trivial, since readers do come to deepen their knowledge and understanding of notions and principles they are already familiar with.[20]

What about Stolnitz's CF argument developed along claims i–iii above? An easy way out of the problem for those who want to save the overall aesthetic value of works that (supposedly) present trivial truths is to claim that the value of a work resides not in new cognitive contributions, i.e. truths, but in the way these truths are developed (see Lamarque 2010: 239). From the point of view of literary aesthetics, this is a welcome solution which saves the value of literature that might have been lost. But from the epistemological point of view, this is not enough. Literary cognitivist wants to show that literature is a cognitively valuable source of knowledge, not cognitively trivial but aesthetically pleasing archive of things we already know. Therefore, we have to refute Stolnitz. We'll start with (CFi): readers already know truths presented in literature.

Certainly it is true that in some cases—perhaps many—what we read in a literary work is known to us. That people commit murders because they are in need of money, that women and men engage in adultery because they are unhappy and dissatisfied with their partners or are simply bored and in need of excitement, that abortion was not always legal in America—these truths we know without reading *Crime and Punishment*, *Madam Bovary* and *An American Tragedy,* respectively. But to presuppose, as Stolnitz does, that such bare truth is all that we get from these works is a seriously impoverished way

[19] One way in which to bolster the cognitive strengthening line of defence is provided by those who defend the analogy between literature and thought experiment. As David Davies explains „the mental models through which readers comprehend fictional narratives also provide, through their mobilization of tacit or unarticulated knowledge of the world, a means of testing those claims to knowledge of the actual world that theorists have located in fictional narratives, and thereby validate the idea that fiction can be a genuine source of knowledge of the world" (Davies 2007: 44).

[20] A much stronger claim for the value of cognitive strengthening can be made if one relies on the recent developments in epistemology concerning the plurality view of epistemic aims and values. Wayne Riggs (2008) and Jonathan Kvanvig (2005) are some of the authors who developed accounts of understanding, and Linda Zagzebski (2001) and Catherine Elgin (1996) have both wrote on the connection between literature and understanding. I offer one such account in Vidmar (2013).

to think about their overall cognitive value. *Crime and Punishment* offers more than simple statements regarding the wrongness of murder. Many critics read it as a philosophical analysis of the principle of consequentialism and utilitarianism, as a psychological analysis of the impact of guilt and passivity upon an individual, as a sociological study of the poverty and alcoholism that were so widely spread in the city in that period.[21] At one level, there are various philosophical, psychological and sociological truths available in this novel and it makes no sense to suppose that readers know all of them before they begin to read. On the other hand, development of the story along these lines can contribute substantially to how reader thinks about justifiability of murder. A reader might come to realize that she would act in the same way in those circumstances, or she might conclude that the principle 'Do not kill' applies universally and is not liable to consequentialist's treatment. While it cannot be predicted what someone will get out of the work, there are important cognitive gains available, ranging from self knowledge to a deepened understanding of the moral principle.

To claim that literature presents only those things that readers already know seriously undermines some of the intentions authors might have had in presenting the story in a particular way. It is a well documented fact that Dreiser was passionately interested in human sexuality and was eager to understand social forces related to distribution of wealth (see Eby 2005). All of his novels are, thematically, about these issues. Committed to realism, he was particularly attentive to objectively and non-selectively depicting and portraying aspects of social reality. For the sake of argument, let us agree with the claim that his contemporaries were familiar with all the things he was writing about:[22] development and operation of big factories, entertainment industry, art scene and finances etc. Does it mean that therefore his works lack cognitive value? Certainly not, primarily because his intention was not to tell them what they already know but to challenge them to reconsider social and psychological forces that went into creating the reality he was describing. For all of his realism, Dreiser persistently used his literary works as an epistemological tool for probing the conditions of humans. Take the abortion episode from *An American Tragedy:* Dreiser is reporting what the readers (his contemporaries) knew—abortion is illegal—but he is relying on this knowledge in order, first, to theoretically discuss human sexuality, and second, to critically examine social circumstances involved in condemnation of abortion. Carefully addressing the issue of sexuality, he is examining the power of sexual urges in humans. By exposing society's attitudes toward pregnancies outside of marriage, he is criticizing the fact that the moral judgment regarding the 'sinful' as opposed to 'forgiveness-worthy' is de-

[21] For the interpretation along these lines see Dilman (1968), Ivanits (2008).

[22] But note that for readers who are not his contemporaries, his books offer a historical window into the development of great American cities.

termined by one's social status, rather than by some intrinsic features of the sexual deed itself. Given their poor background, Cylde and Roberta are two sinners who committed a "dreadful crime". On the other hand, "unfortunate" girls from rich families deserve to be rescued and resolved of their 'mistakes', not 'crimes'. Thus, "the real sex crime that Dreiser exposes in *An American Tragedy* is the national criminalization of sexuality" (Eby 2005: 582). By depicting the familiar situation, Dreiser criticizes the society and its hypocrisy, evident in the way it tries to control and sanction biological impulses: Roberta's shame and guilt caused by her (physical) desire for Clyde is the voice of society and upbringing; the inability to suppress these desires is the biological force which ultimately takes over.

The slave narratives and colonial literature are other interesting examples of literary works which depict phenomena that are common knowledge, but offer a wider, more personal perspectives into these matters. *A Passage to India*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Beloved* and many other works depict issues of race, racism and racial superiority and present it from the experiential perspective of those who were directly involved in these processes. Unlike historical accounts which give factual descriptions of how these processes were conducted, literary works reveal subjective experience and challenge the underlying assumptions that scientific accounts do not raise.

Moving on to (CFii): readers can come to learn truths presented in literature through some other means, such as personal experience, testimony or science and therefore, literature is not in any special way cognitively valuable. However, many, if not most, of the things we know are easily available through some other means. If I know there's no milk in the fridge, I could have come to that truth through perception (I opened the fridge and saw there's no milk), through testimony (my sister told me), through memory (I remember using the last bottle of milk), through deduction (I remember buying milk five days ago and that's how long it takes me to use one bottle) etc. That however doesn't mean the truth about not having milk is any less valuable. For my perspective here—epistemological—the fact that literature is not the sole source of truths does not mean that its cognitive value is diminished.

Replies to (CFi) and (CFii) should by now make it clear that (CFiii), the most radical reading of the argument from cognitive familiarity according to which truths which we can gain from literature are well known, to the point that they are trivial, is also to be dismissed along the same lines as (CFi). Literature is cognitively valuable and the cognitive benefits it delivers are many, important, and quite possibly in some cases at least, not easily obtainable through other means. For the (CFiii) to have any power, Stolnitz would have to show that everything that can be known through literary works is already known by all the potential readers. He would also have to show that no value is derived from depicting that which is known. I doubt such an argument would be convincing.

5. *Literature as a social practice*

Stolnitz's final list of arguments aims at undermining epistemic reliability of literature as a practice. When it comes to literature, he argues, there are no established ways of spotting mistakes, solving contradictions and confirming truths. The underlying structure of literature does not correspond to that of our established cognitive practices. In science and religion, his go-to examples of such practices, truths are supported, mistakes eliminated and contradictions resolved, by the underlying body of evidence.[23] No such mechanisms exist in art: "Art, uniquely, never confirms its truths" (340) Stolnitz claims, adding "The fiction does not and cannot provide the evidence" (340). In addition, even if art reveals truth—such as that "Estate litigation in the Court of Chancery in mid-nineteenth England moved very slowly" (340) from Dickens' novel—"the truth was knowable before the fictions appeared" (341).

At stake here is the fact that literature seems exempt from epistemic norms definitive of informative discourses.[24] Literary works deliver contradictory views—look no further than *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Gone with the Wind*—and contain factual mistakes that go uncorrected, such as mesmerism in Bronte sisters and physiognomy in Dickens. However, such factual mistakes do not deter readers from these works, nor diminish their value. Today we know that physiognomy is wrong, but we nevertheless enjoy Dickens' novels. But for literature to be cognitively valuable, argues Stolnitz, either should such mistakes should be corrected, or value of such works anihilated. Given that this is not the practice, as we neither allow intrusions into literary works nor deny them their value, we should give up advocating cognitive value of literature altogether.

All things considered, Stolnitz makes a good point in preaching caution: art and literature do not satisfy epistemic conditions of reliability we presuppose in and demand of science and other discourses imbued with cognitive potential. To overcome this problem, we first need to show that mistakes and contradictions found in literature do not undermine its claims to cognitive value. Elsewhere I have provided one such account and here I can only briefly repeat my conclusions (Vidmar 2012a). My main point was that not all mistakes found in literature result from ignorance or deliberate intention on the part of the author to deceive or convey falsehood—factors, in other words, that count against one's reliability. Some mistakes, such as those resulting from an author's reliance on physiognomy, were, at the time the work was written, not mistaken, but scientifically accepted theories about human nature. If anything, such cases prove the extent to which literary authors rely on scientific theories in their works, presupposing that these are true given that they are accepted by the scientific community. In such cases,

[23] It is questionable to which extent it is acceptable to talk of truth and lack of contradictions in religion. But to make the argument plausible, suffice to say that there are authorities, such as the Pope, who can be solve contradictions.

[24] See Stein Haugom Olsen (1978) for a discussion of informative discourses.

mistakes are the result of a background beliefs that the authors rely upon, beliefs that were, at the time of writing, accepted scientific truths about how things are. Such mistakes are epistemically important in the sense that they testify to how things were once conceived. Literature thus testifies to the progression and accumulation of the overall human knowledge. It is progressive and it accumulates knowledge from various disciplines. It reflects views and perspectives of the society. Therefore, as the scientific, religious, psychological, sociological, philosophical etc. views progress and modify, so does the way these are incorporated into literature. That is why there are mistakes, as well as contradictory views, in literature. They do not diminish the value of a work (neither cognitive nor literary) because there are other elements that bear upon work's cognitive impact and artistic value, elements which are not operative in scientific discourse. While scientific works become obsolete if the theories are wrong, literary works hold our attention because of the way the theme is developed, because of their formal features, emotional impact, aesthetic appeal and other artistic reasons. Very often, mistakes do not render works cognitively impotent. The fact that Ibsen develops the story of *Ghosts* on a scientifically mistaken account of syphilis (Olsen's example) does not render his psychological portrayal of dysfunctional family and broken family ties any less illuminating. Indirect cognitive benefits are still available, even if facts are wrong.

My account so far explains why sometimes mistakes are in literature, but Stolnitz's claim regarding the lack of epistemic principles is still on the table. However, his criticism is too strong. Even if the practice of literature does not rest on established methods of spotting mistakes and correcting them, it is not so that 'anything goes.' Recall that I have in mind an active, reflective reader whose knowledge of the world and literature is sufficient to provide a sort of a safety net. His experience enables him to differentiate between authors who present reliable accounts in their works and those who do not. One important element that readers rely on is familiarity with the demands of different genres. Depending on the genre in which they write, literary authors are to various degrees concerned with objective portrayal of reality, and when it comes to those genres in which aesthetic norms demand that they turn away from reality, readers do not expect these works to represent reality. It would be implausible to talk about mistakes in science fiction novels, even if it is perfectly acceptable to evaluate one's vision, say futuristic, with the state of affairs a novel describes.[25] Here again the analogy with testimony is informative: an evaluation of the reliability of a literary author is similar to the evaluation of our everyday informants, with the additional element of knowledge of the conventions of literary genres and an awareness (even superficial) of the literary techniques that might be used to support artistic aims.

[25] For an example of how to evaluate a science fiction writer with respect to the correctness of his portrayal, see Vidmar and Swirski (2014).

A further worry that Stolnitz raises is the fact that truths were knowable before they appeared in a certain work. This implies that they do not gain their authority in the same way as scientific truths do: many, perhaps all, scientific truths were not known until they appeared in scientific work. This is not so with literature. However, even if literature does not generate truths in the same way as science does (i.e. being part of a fictional discourse does not give them authority, whereas being a part of scientific discourse does), that doesn't mean that the value and validity of such truths is lost. Literature is still a valuable source of truths even if it doesn't discover them, but only delivers them. While it is true that Dickens' readers knew that legal system of their time was slow, just like Dreiser's readers were familiar with development of factories, for us, today, these works give us new, unknown information about social, political, economic and other circumstances dominant at the time these works were written. As evident from my reply to instances of CF argument, literature doesn't have to be dedicated to discovering truths in a way that science is to be cognitively valuable.

Finally, Stolnitz reverberates some of the concerns raised by Plato regarding the epistemic authority of authors. As he claims, truths derived from art "do not require specialists" (342). I take this to be the most pressing issue. How to account for the incredibly sharp insight into human psychology that imbues Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Austen, Dostoyevsky and various others literary classics? Most of the literary giants wrote their works at incredibly young age, and not all of them had a first class education. What made them so great at capturing the world in all of its complexities? I doubt we can find any theoretical answer to this, and it might be so that we need a case by case study. To many, observation was crucial. Dostoyevsky claimed it was the years he spent in Siberian prison that made him sensitive to the nuances of human psychology. Edith Wharton, Theodore Dreiser, Leo Tolstoy and many other realists were relying on empirical methods of observation and description. Writers were often a part of wider group of intellectuals, all of which were devoted to pursuing different kinds of knowledge; arguably, they relied on others for insights into different areas of research and used that knowledge in their works. In modern days, writers do research and consult experts, as often revealed in their interviews. Whether that suffices to answer Stolnitz I do not know, but I am not sure if epistemology can offer anything better.

One final observation: in his haste to expel literature from the domain of informative practices, due to its apparent inability to hold hands with the sciences, Stolnitz does not consider the possibility that literature would fare much better if compared to a different set of cognitively valuable practices: the humanities. Many of his arguments against taking literature cognitively seriously apply to philosophy. Philosophy too contains contradictions, as when Kant clashes his theory of causality against Hume's, and mistakes, as when Descartes explains

human emotional experience via the notion of animal spirits. Occasionally, it is questionable which truths are philosophical and how to determine them, as philosophy lacks a universally accepted method and shares its concerns with sciences and the humanities. Nevertheless, we repeatedly recognize it as cognitively valuable. Furthermore, literature and philosophy are in the same manner concerned with humanly important issues, and with challenging what is known and familiar. Stressing the similarities literature shares with philosophy is important for the overall assessment of its cognitive value.

6. *Conclusion*

My aim in this paper was to provide an epistemological account of the cognitive value of literature that can mitigate, if not fight off, Stolnitz's arguments. While it is my impression that Stolnitz challenges literature on an overly simplified assumption about the veritistic nature of sciences, my aim here was to show that his challenges can be met. Literature does not satisfy scientific criteria of discovering truth, but these are not the only criteria relevant for knowledge and learning and neither is scientific way the only way in which we can gain knowledge. Divorcing literature from the norms of science does not imply divorcing it from norms of epistemic reliability or making it incapable of delivering knowledge and being cognitively valuable. Confirmation of the truths extracted from literature comes from life and experience. The great works of art that give incentive to our cognitive pursuits may be unrelated but to the extent that they are concerned with human situation in the world and humanly important issues, they form a corpus of different ways of being human and acting (in)humanly, in the widest sense possible. Formal contradictions are tolerated not because literature is above the norms of epistemic reliability bur because it reflects advances in ideas and conceptions and their diversity. There are no easy, straightforward answers to questions that literature raises, because there are no easy and simple answers to questions that concern humanity itself. Finally, there is more to our cognitive economy than having true propositions and literary works offer potential for genuine advance in one's conceptual framework. Understanding other people's experiences, having an awareness of what it feels like to be in a certain situation, having one's views challenged and getting the opportunity for a reflection, re-examination and re-evaluation of one's body of beliefs matters significantly for how we are as epistemic agents. None of these benefits is available on Stolnitz's over-simplistic account of what comprises cognitive value.[26]

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Book Review

Philip Goff, *Consciousness and Fundamental Reality,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 304.

The book is a well-structured expedition into Russellian monism, with two main parts consisting of ten chapters (five for each part). The chapters themselves are further divided, which gives the reader a welcomed overview of thought progression and structure. In the first half, Goff develops a distinct version of physicalism and gives his critique of it. In the second half, he articulates different versions of Russellian monism and defends a particular version based on a panpsychist interpretation of Russellian monism. At the very start, he introduces the reader to his vision of philosophy and the overarching theme of the book. The reader is introduced to Goff's starting thesis about the datum of consciousness, and Goff spends some time arguing for it and sketching the historical context that shows how and why this datum was ignored. However, because the plausibility and legitimacy of Russellian monist views hinge on this datum, it is necessary to understand the contemporary context in which the claim "consciousness is a datum" calls for a defence.

In contemporary philosophy of mind, the discussion regarding the mind-body problem has been radicalized to the point where mainstream traditional physicalism is losing its proponents. We see fewer philosophers who are ready to maintain a compatibilist position that mental, phenomenal states are real and can be placed within the physicalist ontology. Instead, we see a rise in radical ideas and positions, which, one could argue, is only more beneficial for the dialectics of the problem-solving. On one hand, we have the so-called deflationists, who realized that one cannot be a realist about mental states and at the same time hold that physicalism is true—therefore, their physicalist position has been radicalised to the point where they deny the reality of mental states. Illusionists, for example, maintain that phenomenal states are illusionary, that they are not in any way instantiated properties of any system, but that the appearance of phenomenality is somehow generated by our faulty introspective self-representational models. Their research focus is centred on cognitive mechanisms that give rise to these illusions of phenomenality. On the other hand, we have realists about mental states, one could call them inflationists, who maintain that the placement problem of mental states is indicative of their special nature, namely their non-physical nature. Since we cannot fathom how mental states (if real) can be placed within the physical framework, this means that the mental states must somehow be something extraphysical. In this sense, the peculiar epis-

temic situation about consciousness is an opportunity to speculate about the suitable metaphysical framework that could accommodate the reality of phenomenal consciousness. Both camps have something in common, which is that they subscribe to the conservative methodology that understands theoretical revisions as justified only when the existing theoretical resources have been exhausted. The mantra "first exhaust then propose" sums up this approach. For example, current physicalist metaphysics should first be exhausted, only then are we justified in making certain metaphysical revisions. However, the camps disagree at this point. Deflationists think that the existing naturalistic framework has not been exhausted, since we can try to dissolve the problem of consciousness by replacing it with the illusion problem. Their answer to the hard problem is thus that the hard problem is not really a problem since its main component is an illusion. They choose the existing theory and proclaim the anomaly as an illusion. Inflationists, on the other hand, are not committed to the existing naturalistic theories, and thus they see the anomaly as something real that could not in any way be an illusion. We are, after all, talking about consciousness, something that only a philosopher would dare to deny. For inflationists, consciousness is a given fact and there is no way around this; thus, since we cannot place consciousness in any physicalist ontology, we must make room in the ontology, we must modify it. Phillip Goff makes the case for this kind of modification in his recent book *Consciousness and Fundamental Reality* (2017).

In the first part of the book, Goff sets up pure physicalism (physical truths are entailed in logico-nomical terms) and addresses the main arguments against it, like the conceivability and knowledge argument. These arguments are usually employed by dualists and Goff recognizes that these arguments must be modified in order to threaten physicalism. However, he puts forward an argument based on revelatory powers of phenomenal properties. This means that phenomenal conscious states reveal their nature to us by virtue of us experiencing them. I know what pain is just by virtue of me being in pain. I do not know what part of my brain is activated when I am having such experiences, but I do, nonetheless, know what these experiences are. This revelatory angle is tightly connected to the previously mentioned "consciousness as a datum" thesis that Goff introduces at the beginning of the first chapter. Phenomenal states reveal to us something real, an aspect of a phenomenal subjective consciousness; moreover, this revelation produces something that is metaphysically unabridged and unrevised. As Goff writes: "My methodological starting point is that phenomenal consciousness is a hard datum that any adequate theory of reality must accommodate. Moreover, consciousness must be accommodated unrevised in the following sense" (3). His entire second part of the book and really any such metaphysical enquiry rests on similar propositions, and underlying it is a peculiar implication that "one of our ordinary pre-theoretical concepts gets the world exactly right" (3). Phenomenal experiences thus reveal something true about the world itself, at least in this sense that there is no reality/appearance distinction between our inner lives and the world itself. This is a striking claim that he is prepared to defend, even if it seems too good to be true, especially if we consider the fact that in the other camp the deflationists have the opposite implication to defend, namely, the proposition that the reality/appearance distinction is

present at the level of introspection. This is the best illustration of the current dialectic about the problem of consciousness—the disagreement occurs at the very beginning. Thus, for someone who has a deflationist inclination, Goff's starting point is moot. The same goes for inflationists; they consider any revision of the concept of consciousness to be unjustified. It seems important that the reader holds this dialectical context in mind when reading this book, the discursive stalemate is indicative of the vast chasm between the two contemporary approaches to the problem of consciousness.

Embedding the revelation argument into the overarching datum of consciousness thesis gives physicalists little room to manoeuvre and prepares the stage for the second part of the book, in which Goff explores theories based on Russellian monism. In brief, Russellian monism is the view that there is a distinction between two classes of properties, dispositional/structural ones and intrinsic ones. Sciences reveal structural properties about matter, yet they remain silent about its intrinsic nature. Considering we have at least one good idea about the intrinsic nature of matter (inner experiences of our brains) and if we think that there should be a continuity between large and small parts of the world, we can then posit that the intrinsic nature of matter is something akin to consciousness. This is the simple path to panpsychist considerations, and Goff is most sympathetic towards them.

Even if we grant that Goff has good enough reasons to reject physicalism, there are other problems ahead for the positions that he proposes in part two. One of the first reactions that panpsychists face is that of disbelief, because it just seems so unbelievable that the fundamental particles of matter are conscious in any way. The reluctance to accept this kind of reality might be mitigated by the theoretical benefits of these theories, or so Goff and other acolytes of Russellian monism claim when they defend their position against the objection of counter-intuitiveness—the same objection that they are also quite eager to throw at the physicalists who proclaim that there are no phenomenal properties.

Another, more serious and famous problem is the combination problem, or the subject-summing problem, as Goff calls it. He devotes up to three chapters to this problem, its variables, and possible solutions. This seems reasonable, as it is, after all, the central problem facing panpsychist theories. The problem is quite simple, and it entails our confusion when we are "trying to make sense of lots of 'little' (proto) minds forming a big mind" (165).

In developing all the viable responses to the problem, he makes a distinction between cosmo(macro)psychist and micropsychist versions of Russellian monism. The latter is a 'smallist' version that entails sub-atomic or other small regions of reality to be the (micro) subjects that have phenomenal properties. The former is the version about the whole cosmos having phenomenal properties. Continuing from this distinction, he makes an observation that the combination problem is a problem only for the micropsychist versions. At this point, Goff has in mind a special version of the combination problem, namely the subject irreducibility problem, which states that a conscious subject cannot be further analysed into facts that do not involve that subject.

To see how a cosmopsychist can avoid the subject irreducibility problem, we must make a distinction between analysis and subsumption. Goff

makes this distinction and argues that 'grounding by analysis' is different from 'grounding by subsumption'. He introduces the notion of grounding by subsumption in Chapter 9, where he also articulates his view of cosmopsychism. The main difference is that in grounding by analysis, *y* entails the necessary requirements for *x* to be real; and in grounding by subsumption, *y* is thought of as whole of which *x* is merely an aspect. This distinction entails that a state of affair can occur in which *y* and *x* are real even if *x* is not grounded in *y* by analysis, as *x* can still be grounded in *y* by subsumption. He makes an effort in Chapter 9 to explain subsumption with four examples, but the important thing is that his argument for cosmopsychism rests on the importance of this distinction and on the theoretical fruitfulness of introducing the notion of grounding by subsumption. Goff goes on and articulates his version of Russellian monism, the constitutive cosmopsychism according to which the cosmos as a whole can be understood as a conscious entity and that we are conscious subjects by virtue of being subsumed in this greater whole. He goes on and links cosmopsychism to priority monism, according to which the cosmos is the only fundamental entity, explaining how such a view does not exclude material reality and is as such coherent with empirical sciences.

The book ends with the chapter on the possibility of analytic metaphysics or a manifesto, which is echoed in the title of the chapter. It is a suitable end to the metaphysically ambitious book. In this chapter, Goff discusses the state of cutting-edge metaphysics, he addresses some anti-metaphysical sentiments, and shows how phenomenality can be used to support metaphysical positions outside the mind-body problem. The broader picture he paints is that of analytic phenomenology: "Start with common sense, empirical data, and carefully considered intuitions concerning the nature of phenomenal consciousness, and move on by appeal to theoretical virtue" (271).

This project is built upon the "consciousness as a datum" thesis, and since science or Galilean metaphysics abolished consciousness in exchange for empirical progress, Goff concludes that there is no worry for metaphysics not progressing because the true post-Galilean metaphysics has not yet begun (273).

It might be that his book is one of the first ushering into the new era of phenomenally grounded metaphysics, but there are concerns that should be addressed. One concern comes from the idea that phenomenality should be thought of as metaphysically neutral, since there are examples that show how one phenomenal experience can support two different metaphysical scenarios. The other concern is at the very starting point of such a project and cuts at the heart of the contemporary dialectical setting of the mind-body discussion we mentioned earlier. What do we do with consciousness? Do we inflate it and start phenomenally inspired metaphysics with it, or do we deflate it and proclaim its nature to be illusory? Since these positions diverge at the starting point, maybe the best thing to do is to let them run their course and see which one bears more theoretical fruit.

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