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Aesthetic experience and education - an examination of Roger Scruton's 'Art and Imagination' and its implications for aesthetic education.

Nicholas Arnold McAdoo

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Abstract

Since Kant first articulated the 'antinomy of taste', a major problem posed for aesthetic educators has been how to reconcile the educational demand for the objectivity of appreciative acts with the need for personal response which appears to be built into the aesthetic language game.

In the first part of this thesis, after examining the undesirable polarization between current 'objectivist' and 'radical subjectivist' responses to the problem, I set out to explore an alternative answer which is to be found in the 'experiential' aesthetics of Roger Scruton. Here, an attempt is made to accomodate a public language account of aesthetic discourse with an empiricist philosophy of mind in which our ability to 'see the point' of aesthetic judgments is held to be related in fundamental ways to extra-linguistic experiences such as aspect-perceptions, mental images and emotions.

First, I look at Scruton's account of how aesthetic terms enter 'paronymously' into aesthetic discourse, relating this to Kant's view of the work of art as a 'presence' rather than an 'instance'. Next, I examine Scruton's argument for the autonomy of the aesthetic object qua object of the imagination, and I discuss the problems that he meets in considering representation, expression and symbolism in art in the context of this argument. Against the prevailing 'analytic' view of the imagination, I argue, with Scruton, that the act of constituting the work in our imagination is not an expendable extra to the realization of the meaning of the work - an argument which I attempt to reinforce by appeal to Kant's description of the 'aesthetic idea' and to Husserl's distinction between meaning as 'empty int-

ention' and its realization in aspect, image and emotion. This is followed by an exposition of what I argue is a systematic ambiguity between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic significances of aesthetic terms.

In the second part of the thesis, I examine how the educational demand for objectivity may be met by the above account, in terms of a theory of 'psychological' objectivity derived from Kant and reflected in Scruton. The pedagogical implications of this are examined next, especially as regards the 'expressive' power of teaching to communicate non-propositional acquaintance with the 'emergent' aesthetic object, and the need for the development of a 'feeling' for aesthetic judgment against a background of the aesthetic form of life. Finally, in line with my attempt throughout the thesis to treat the arts as a unity, I argue, against current trends, for a unified 'arts faculty' in which the teaching of literature is brought within the fold of the other arts.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction - Aesthetic education and the 'antinomy of taste'.

My main concern in this thesis will be to explore that aspect of aesthetic education that is described, often very loosely, as the appreciation of literature, music, painting etc. More precisely, I hope to clarify the contribution made to the development of appreciation by the encouragement and cultivation of pupils' personal responses. In attempting to give an adequate account of 'appreciation', especially as regards its educability, the main problem to be confronted is this: 'appreciation' is characteristically understood in both an objective and a subjective sense, as in Kant's celebrated formulation of the 'antinomy of taste'[1]. Thus, on the one hand, it would seem that the legitimacy of our appreciative judgments (see foot-note) must depend on our attention being directed wholly towards what we can discover in the work of art - or rather, following the widely accepted view of contemporary aestheticians[2], towards the 'aesthetic object' that is intimated by the work's material presence, but whose emergence into the light of day depends upon 'educated' acts of perception. On the other hand, it is also generally accepted that an ability to appreciate presupposes that we discover within ourselves, first-person responses to the work, for it is these that 'give point' to our judgments. As David Best points out, in giving expression to this generally accepted view of the subjective/objective polarity of 'appreciation':

> While an artistic judgment expresses a personal attitude to a

Footnote: Throughout this thesis, I shall be using the terms 'aesthetic judgment' and 'judgment of taste' to refer indiscriminately both to the type of descriptive judgment that is directed towards 'emergent' features of the work of art, as in the case of 'the music is sad', and to evaluative judgments such as 'the music is beautiful'. Whether or not the 'judgment of taste' and 'aesthetic judgment' are themselves interchangeable is a further matter which it will be the main purpose of this chapter to explore.

personal experience, there are <u>reasons</u> for it[3]

- reasons deriving from what is held to be objectively there, <u>in</u> the work of art, and hence open to correction. Yet insofar as one is also reporting a personal response, there is an obvious sense in which such reports are incorrigible: a pupil's judgment that 'the music is sad' may be corrected, but not his claim to be moved to tears by it - hence the antinomy.

Now if, as a result of 'aesthetic education', the pupils' personal responses normally lined up with what they correctly judged to be there, <u>in</u> the work (assuming for the sake of the argument that such objectivity could, at least in principle, be established with a large measure of agreement through the efforts of knowledgeable and experienced art lovers - a view that is widely held in contemporary aesthetics by writers such as Osborne, Sibley and Best), then the subjective/objective antinomy would present us with no more of a problem than it does in the case of our ordinary perception of the 'everyday' world. In the case of such 'everyday' perception our educated judgments normally coincide effortlessly with what we 'see for ourselves' and, where they don't, then this is for the most part clearly explicable in terms of irrelevant associations, absence of 'standard' viewing conditions, misunderstandings, colour-blindness and the like.

A main reason for the relative absence of the 'antinomy' in our 'everyday' perception however, is that our personal involvement in what we see, though present, is minimal. We 'read off' features of the familiar environment around us in a quasi-automatic way as a result of long-formed habits - hence the very 'ordinariness' of that environment. By contrast, as virtually all aestheticians seem to agree, in aesthetic appreciation a personal response is at a premium insofar as, without it, the anything-but-ordinary appearance of the

'aesthetic object' will fail to materialize, however much we may posit its presence at an intellectual level.

At the same time and as a result of this requirement however, it is only too evident that within the aesthetic realm, people's responses to works of art do not always work in harmony with their 'educated' judgments about the same works, whether as regards how they 'see' the work, the pleasure that they take in it or the value that they attach to it, and this, despite all the efforts of aesthetic educators! We may know at an 'educated' level, for example, that the Braque painting at which we are gazing 'ought' to strike us as a beautiful and harmonious composition in its own right, and yet the harder we gaze, the more insistently does it appear to us as nothing more than a very distorted guitar. In the same way, as David Best points out:

> One may recognize that a work expresses sadness while having quite a different response to it[4]
> - or even, one must add, no response at all, as when a work 'leaves us cold' despite our 'educated' identification of its qualities. In such cases, we judge the work to be 'sad' but don't feel it to be so.

This state of affairs has led Margolis to question the traditional Kantian identification of 'aesthetic judgment' with the 'judgment of taste' (the source of the 'antinomy') on the grounds that:

> When we think of taste merely in terms of our responses to things - we are not interested characteristically in judgments, but in reports or manifestations, of taste.[5]

He is thus led on to suggest the radical possibility that few other aestheticians, as far as I know, have dared face up to - namely that:

> There may be no more than a contingent relationship, therefore, between aesthetic judgments and the attitudes and responses that we associate with our actual tastes.[6]

This would, of course, resolve the 'antinomy' at a stroke, but at what a price! There is no denying of course that such a contingency is

present on those occasions when (a) a personal response to a work is so idiosyncratic as to be entirely unilluminating about that work, as when someone bursts into laughter every time he hears Brahms' Tragic Overture, or (b) when a reasonably objective appraisal of a work is made without any accompanying personal response, as in the case cited by Margolis of:

> A tired drama critic who can, without responding, notice what is "charming" or "lovely" or "stirring" or "horrible"[7]

- but these are hardly typical examples of 'appreciation'. However, if the relationship between our objective and subjective responses were seen to be a purely contingent one on every occasion that we engaged in the appreciation of art, even when they were in full accord, then it seems doubtful that the concept of 'appreciation' could ever survive such a fragmented view of itself. What sense, for example, on Margolis' view could the poor pupil make of the following rubric, typical of its kind, taken from an 'O' Level English Literature examination?

> Candidates will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge of the selected reading by close reference to the texts...and to show evidence of a personal response...Liveliness of response and sincerity of interest are the paramount considerations.[8]

Would he not have to write two quite separate answers, and who is to say which one would be more important?

Few aestheticians I think, would be prepared to accept Margolis' drastic remedy, so deeply is the notion of a non-contingent personal response embedded in even the most 'objectivist' account of aesthetic judgment. David Best, for example, one of whose aims in his recent book Feeling and Reason in the Arts is to treat the educational development of 'appreciation' on analogy with a Kuhnian view of science, is nonetheless categoric that:

> Personal involvement is implied in the arts, whereas in the sciences it is more normal to accept conclusions reached by others...an artistic judgment commits one much more personally, in that the making of it implies one's own first-hand experience

of the work.[9]

Rather than admit, then, the threatening possibility that the subjective and objective aspects of 'appreciation' work quite independently of each other, most aestheticians operate, quite understandably, on the assumption that the right kind of education will bring them into line, as in Best's commitment to the view that:

> It is an aim of education to encourage students' likes and dislikes to coincide as far as possible with their evaluative judgments.[10]

Nonetheless, the burden remains on such 'objectivists' to show just how the two aspects <u>are</u> connected in a non-contingent way - a burden that, as we shall see, they do not always seem to be too well aware of. If they <u>can't</u> show this, then it is difficult to see how they can continue to insist upon the presence of a personal response except as perhaps a desirable but ultimately an <u>optional</u> extra to the objective requirements of judgment.

The immediate problem that the above-mentioned educational enterprise raises, however, is this: which, of the subjective and objective aspects of 'appreciation', is to be brought into line with which? Over this question aestheticians and aesthetic educators alike are deeply divided, especially as regards (a) their differing views as to what <u>constitutes</u> the 'aesthetic object', and (b) their disagreement as to which is of more educational value, the pursuit of objectivity or fullness of personal response - a matter clearly affected by their views on what is to count as a 'personal response' and how it is related, if at all, to aesthetic judgment.

In general, disagreements both as to what constitutes an 'aesthetic object' and what constitutes a 'personal response', centre on how far, if at all, the viewer's/reader's/listener's powers of imagination, aspect-perception and emotional susceptibility have a <u>'constitutive'</u> (as opposed to a merely 'reproductive') role to play in

the production and 'quickening' of the fully-fledged 'aesthetic object'. Is the 'aesthetic object' to be thought of as a self-sufficient entity awaiting only our 'educated' contemplation, or is it rather in a state of varying degrees of incompleteness, necessitating 'fulfilling' acts on the part of its audience? How one answers this question will clearly have an enormous effect on how one conceives of 'aesthetic education'.

As one might expect, subjective and objective interpretations of 'appreciation' compete with each other in attempting to establish in which direction aesthetic education should go. Most influential of the former is what one might call the 'radical subjectivist' view (rare among contemporary aestheticians but often to be found in 'progressive' classrooms and deeply rooted in popular wisdom), where the 'aesthetic object' is taken to be constituted <u>wholly</u> by each pupil's individual responses - his feelings, trains of imagery, likes and dislikes, etc. "Read only the poems that appeal to you in a personally meaningful way," advises such a teacher as the pupils leaf their way through an anthology. "Concentrate on whatever images, feelings and thoughts come into your mind as you listen to the music" - and so on.

Now, at a pedagogical level, much of this is admirable. It makes the pupils feel involved and is, in fact, how many of the best primary teachers start children off on a love of the arts. Furthermore, as Sibley points out, <u>any</u> approach to aesthetic education must start off from:

> (the) natural potentialities and tendencies people have[11] - for aesthetic 'learning', like any other form of learning, must depend initially upon unlearned starting points without which the subsequent appearance of the learning would be inexplicable. Here, it is a fact of the utmost significance both for the 'personal' <u>and</u>

'judgmental' aspects of 'appreciation' that very young children, long before they acquire any concept of the 'aesthetic', display all manner of behaviour which, although apparently unlearned, seems to carry within it the seeds of both aesthetic creativity and appreciation. Little children who, for example, spill their blackcurrant purée, are fascinated by the patterns that they can make in it with their fingers; in the early stages of learning to talk, they play endlessly with the sounds of words and, before long, make up stories of their own rather than just repeating what they have heard; having learned to walk they often discover for themselves the pleasure of dance-like movements and so on. Equally, one finds an abundance of agreement in pleasurable reactions to bright colour, rhythms and musical sounds that could not all be explained away as the product of unconscious imitation or other learning of some sort. As Wittgenstein says of such reactions in general, including the ones above that have a proto-aesthetic character:

> The origin and the primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can the more complicated forms grow. Language - I want to say - is a refinement; 'in the beginning was the deed'.[12]

Commenting on this remark, Norman Malcolm reports Wittgenstein as saying:

> Not merely is much of the first language of a child grafted onto instinctive behaviour - but the whole of the developed, complex, employment of language by adult speakers embodies something resembling instinct.[13]

If this account of language learning in general is correct also in respect of aesthetic discourse, particularly as regards the residual presence of such 'instinctive' reactions in even the most 'educated' acts of appreciation in later life, then the pedagogical approach of the 'subjectivist' teacher is clearly on the right lines. In their first or 'instinctive' reactions is to be found the origin of all those judgments, aesthetic or otherwise, which no 'book of rules' can

teach pupils how to make. However, insofar as the 'radical subject-ivist's' account of 'appreciation' totally subsumes 'aesthetic judgment' under the 'incorrigible' interpretation of the 'judgment of taste' (i.e., 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'), then it cuts the ground from under its own feet as regards the possibility that 'appreciation' could ever be educated. indeed, the 'radical subject-ivist' not only admits as much but proclaims it, as exemplified by David Best's reductio ad absurdum example of the dance teacher who is quoted as saying:

> 'Dance is such a subjective matter that there is nothing that can or should be said about it.'[14]

Such teachers resolve the antinomy only at the price of abandoning the 'aesthetic object' altogether and, along with it, any possibility of 'aesthetic education' - for insofar as everyone, on their account, is automatically the leading authority on their own tastes, there could be no reason for anyone to bother with learning anything at all, and thus nothing for teachers to teach. The fact that many such teachers nonetheless 'carry on teaching', may merely illustrate how easy it is to live with an antinomy of which one is not aware. However, although ignorance may be bliss, it can scarcely justify one's setting oneself up as a teacher.

The 'objectivist' on the other hand - representing a position that is very much in the ascendant in contemporary aesthetics - can escape all such charges. For him, the 'aesthetic object' exists, at least potentially, quite independently of whether or not we can 'see' it as individuals - an entity 'there' to be contemplated, gradually revealing itself for what it is, despite our disagreements which can always be explained away, at least in principle, by our limited powers of detachment and receptivity. Harold Osborne, for example, is firm in his conviction that:

> Aesthetic interest leads to outward-turning forms of activity and

> inclines us typically to absorption in an object presented for perception, not an inward dwelling upon our own moods and emotions.[15]

Claiming to speak for a broad consensus of opinion, he asserts that the latter (i.e. the 'constitutive') view:

> runs directly counter to the more rigorous aesthetic understanding of today. Nowadays every competent instructor would recommend his students to concentrate attention firmly on the object.[16]

Here, then, it is the 'aesthetic object' that calls the tune and 'personal response' that must dance attendance.

The drive behind such 'objectivism' may be seen to come from two main sources: (a) the need to provide a descriptive basis upon which the legitimacy of the prescriptions of 'aesthetic education' (and art criticism generally) may rest; (b) the delegitimization by 'analytic' philosophy of old-fashioned views of 'experience' as consisting of mental states which somehow accompany judgments, for as Wittgenstein says:

> One is tempted to imagine that which gives the sentence life as something in an occult sphere, accompanying the sentence. But whatever accompanied it would for us just be another sign.[17]

The question which such 'objectivism' must face, however, is: where does this leave the notion of 'personal response'? - for Osborne, like Best, still pays court to the principle that:

> In aesthetic appreciation each man must see for himself.[18]

To answer this question, we must note that even for the most objective of aestheticians (with the possible exception of David Best), the autonomy of the 'aesthetic object' is not quite as clear-cut as might at first appear. Although an 'object', presumably like the 'objects' of any other form of knowledge it still, as Osborne points out:

> needs competent observers in order to achieve actualization and to emerge from the dim shades of potentiality[19]

- a 'potentiality' that, in the case of the major works of art,

Osborne is further willing to concede may contain:

> a large, perhaps a very large, number of possible and legitimate actualizations.[20]

What is meant by 'actualization' here, particularly as regards its limitation to a class of 'educated' observers? We must be very careful to distinguish between the 'subjectivist's' view that the spectator's imagination and emotions have a constitutive role to play in the 'actualization' of the work and, on the other hand, the view of an austere, 'outward-turning' contemplative act that is here being advanced by the 'objectivist' and which has its origins in the writings of Sibley, who may perhaps be described as the 'father' of contemporary 'objectivist' aesthetics. For Sibley, the 'aesthetic object' has an objective existence in the sense only that its presence is ultimately dependent upon a primary object that is:

> visible, audible, or otherwise discernible without any exercise of taste or sensibility.[21]

In spite of this dependence, however, an 'exercise of taste' is still necessary. Without such an exercise there is no way that the pupil will ever come to 'see' the 'aesthetic object' however hard he looks and however acute his ordinary perceptual powers. In a vein similar to Moore's dismissal of 'naturalistic' attempts to define 'the good' in ethics, Sibley argues that:

> there are no non-aesthetic features which serve in <u>any</u> circumstances as logically <u>sufficient conditions</u> for applying aesthetic terms. Aesthetic or taste concepts are not in <u>this</u> respect condition-governed at all.[22]

This is because if they were, then even though the pupil would still have to learn the distinctive rules of the aesthetic language game, the <u>act</u> of aesthetic perception (once such rules were mastered) would be indistinguishable from the quasi-automatic 'reading off' of features that characterizes 'everyday' acts of perception. For example, hearing a chord as a minor third would be indistinguishable from hearing it as 'sad'.

Sibley is not here denying the obvious fact that our aesthetic vocabulary is intimately related in many ways to our grasp of non-aesthetic terms - e.g., as when our claim that 'the music is sad' must presuppose our understanding of the non-aesthetic concept of 'sadness'. Indeed, pointing out a special configuration of non-aesthetic features in a work of art is one way that the teacher has of assisting the pupil to 'see' the 'emergent' aesthetic configuration. Nonetheless, no combination of non-aesthetic features could ever entail or explain the presence of aesthetic ones in such a way as to compel the pupil of normal eye-sight and intelligence to actually see them. That is Sibley's point. For if such a pupil were able to see the 'aesthetic object' merely by following a conceptual rule (e.g., 'if the music is in a minor key then it is sad'), then the 'exercise of taste' would no longer have a place in the aesthetic language-game, and if that were the case, then the 'aesthetic object' itself would be redundant. Once the pupil had mastered the 'rule', it would be quite possible for him to appraise the 'aesthetic' features of a work merely on the basis of an accurate second-hand description of its non-aesthetic features.

Instead of merely rule-following then, the pupil must 'exercise taste' in the sense that to understand the aesthetic language game, he must see for himself what the 'person of taste' sees. He must, in other words, achieve what Osborne called an 'actualization' of the 'aesthetic object' about which, strictly speaking, we can say nothing non-aesthetically at all. How then, is the pupil to pick this up? Self-evidently not from any 'book of rules' but rather from being in the company of knowledgeable and experienced art lovers (and how could you teach an arts subject if you didn't belong to this 'company'?) who have themselves had direct acquaintance with the 'aesthetic object' and are therefore in a position to pass on their appreciation of it.

Such teachers strive by various means to get their pupils to see what they themselves have seen. During the course of their teaching they may well appeal, in a general kind of way, to a background knowledge of conventions, cultural traditions etc. In the end, however, when all the various types of information, explanation and argument have been run through, if the pupil <u>still</u> can't see it, then the teacher can only tell (but not compel) the pupil to see what he sees. "Look again," he commands or appeals, for there is nothing else that he can do. For the 'objectivist' teacher such an injunction is prescriptive rather than stipulative because the facts of the matter are seen to justify it- they are <u>there</u> in the object, even when he is the only one to see them. How, then, will such a teacher know whether the pupil really has seen what he, the teacher, has seen as opposed to merely simulating the desired response? Self-evidently not through what the pupil says alone, however reasonable, but also through all of those aspects of his demeanour which suggest <u>genuineness</u>, such as tone of voice, facial expressions, subsequent behaviour etc.

At this point, something by way of clarification needs to be said about the 'unconditioned' nature of such responses. Insofar as 'appreciation' is understood as combining the 'judgment of taste' (based on our <u>personal</u> response to the object) with 'aesthetic judgment' (based on claims about the <u>object</u>), then it would seem that appreciative responses are in fact 'unconditioned' in two senses. (a) In the sense just discussed, it is a feature of 'taste' not to be engenderable by appeal to any rule but only through 'seeing for ourselves'. This feature it shares with all sensuous awareness and the 'bodily' (as opposed to the intentional) awareness of emotions in general, in the sense that no one else can do our seeing or feeling for us. (b) Insofar as a teacher's injunctions are seeking to communicate not only an experience but a judgment about the object,

then appreciative acts may be seen to share the 'unconditioned' nature of all judgments - namely that, as Wittgenstein has so often pointed out[23], no 'book of rules' can teach the pupil how to judge, but only a 'feeling' that he is going on in the 'same' way. Thus, insofar as one wants to keep the 'experiential' and 'judgmental' aspects of 'appreciation' in harness (as an 'objectivist' like Sibley clearly must), then an adequate response to the injunction that the pupil 'hear the sadness in the music' must involve not only an unconditioned 'exercise of taste' (feeling the sadness) which is as unique to the aesthetic language game as e.g. seeing a colour is to the language game of perception, but also a further unconditioned judgmental feeling as to the correctness of the claim that the music must be felt as sad. In other words, two different kinds of 'feeling' seem to be operating here.

It would seem, however, that in Sibley's account the two are run together, presumably because, insofar as 'aesthetic qualities' are held to have an ultimate resting-place in the object, then in theory there should be no conflict between one's experience of a work when one 'exercises taste' and how one judges the work to be. In other words, for Sibley, experiencing the objective sadness in the music and judging it to be sad are given in one and the same breath. However, this particular 'objectivist' way of resolving the 'antinomy' depends upon two very questionable assumptions, namely: (a) the posited 'objective' existence of the work of art to which the 'exercise of taste' is held to give us special access (though this objectivity is much 'weaker' in Sibley's account than that of other 'objectivists' like Osborne and Best) - from which follows (b) a view of 'aesthetic perception' as coming as close as possible (or what Kant would call 'asymptotically'[24]) to ordinary perception without actually being fully rule-governed - i.e., an essentially minimal view of whatever is 'personal' in taste.

We may see the latter assumption at work in Sibley's concern to emphasize that there is nothing 'esoteric' about 'aesthetic perception, even though it cannot literally be equated with ordinary perception:

> We do after all say that we <u>observe</u> or <u>notice</u> (aesthetic qualities)...They are not rarities; some ranges of them are in regular use in everyday discourse.[25]

In a way, of course, this is correct. Most people don't just perceive a 'neutral' world of objects but rather a world 'coloured' by all manner of affective aspects, including aesthetic ones. That the building where the pupil goes to school is perceived by him as 'ugly and oppressive' is just as much a part of his 'everyday' perception as that it is a 'building'. However, in the case of many if not most such 'perceptions', it is generally assumed that there is a degree of <u>personal</u> involvement. The new headmaster, for example, may well find the same building 'grand and inspiring'. For Sibley, however, insofar as such 'perceptions' would be constituted by the individual's own images and feelings (which is what we mean by their being a <u>personal</u> response), then they would clearly be quite out of keeping with what he calls 'observing' and 'noticing'. On his account, then, either the building is 'oppressive' or it isn't, and only the building can determine that.

But if everything that is 'personal' in aesthetic response is to be excluded, then what sense are we to attach to Sibley's requirement, in common with all the other 'objectivists', that the pupil must 'see for himself'? In the end, it can only mean, in a trivially true sense, that we must 'exercise taste' for ourselves because <u>no one else can do our seeing or feeling for us</u>. As has already been pointed out, this is equally necessarily true of <u>all</u> perceptual acts - and also of other acts of judgment, since no one else can make our own judgments for us either, however much they may take it upon themselves to try to

do just that. What is required for aesthetic responses, then, in Sibley's case, as a result of this hard and fast distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic features, is something like an 'aesthetic sense' (reminiscent of Moore's 'moral intuition') that is to be distinguished from our other senses only by the nature of its objects.

Apart from the dubious nature of such a posited 'sense' with its presumed special access to an objective world, the main limitation of Sibley's account may be seen to lie in the essentially <u>minimal</u> view taken of our personal contribution to appreciative acts. On this view, the pupil is required to exercise neither his imagination nor feelings, but only to look at the object in a certain way, i.e., the way that other 'aesthetically educated' people look at it. That the pupil might in <u>any</u> way make an active contribution towards completing what is richly intimated in the work, through constitutive acts of his own imagination, is therefore ruled out of court.

Still, at least Sibley is consistent in that he disavows any interest in the concept of 'taste' as a personal response in anything other than its minimal sense[26]. Not so, other 'objectivists' like Osborne and Best, however, who would appear to throw all such caution to the winds insofar as they (a) insist upon a high degree of personal involvement, while at the same time (b) offering a much 'stronger' account of the objectivity of 'appreciation' to the point where it almost seems to be achieved by the attentive exercise of our ordinary perceptual powers. Thus Osborne rejects Sibley's sharp distinction between the 'aesthetic' and the 'non-aesthetic', insisting throughout his influential work <u>The Art of Appreciation</u>, in such terms as the following, that:

> An 'aesthetic object' as I use the term is a sub-class of 'perceptual' or 'phenomenal' objects[27]

with the consequence that 'appreciation' is conceived of as essentially an act that:

> inclines us typically to absorption in an object presented for perception.[28]

Yet in the same breath, throughout the book, very considerable concessions would _appear_ to be made to a far more _constitutive_ view of 'appreciation', as when he says that:

> What Ingarden calls 'areas of indeterminacy' in the work can be filled out, plenished or made concrete in a variety of ways, all of which are valid.[29]

Elsewhere, he insists that for successful 'appreciation':

> Breadth and vigour of imagination are vitally necessary[30]

while with regard to the influence of the work's representational content on its formal qualities, he goes on to say that:

> New dimensions of imaginative identification and empathy give fullness and body to the actualization of the art work.[31]

Even now, however, both in the case of our imagining and feeling the work, we are left in no doubt by Osborne as to their essential 'directedness' towards the object, as in his following _caveat_ which clearly limits imagining to a purely '_reproductive_' role, in seeming contrast to his earlier remarks about 'breadth' and 'vigour':

> Imagination must be held in leash and restricted to that sympathetic identification which facilitates the apprehension of what is there to be apprehended.[32]

Such quotations as the above illustrate how difficult it is to criticize Osborne's stance on 'appreciation', because he is always shifting his ground. Thus at times he appears to be taking over the 'subjectivist' position (i.e., the 'constitutive' view) while at the same time emasculating it and in the end, as we shall see, denying it _any_ legitimacy within the framework of his 'objectivist' argument.

While Osborne himself chooses to side-step the philosophical implications of his 'objectivity' thesis, professing no particular view on this e.g. as between 'realism' and 'phenomenology'[33], David Best on the other hand goes almost so far as to offer a 'realist' account of the 'aesthetic object' (although he explicitly disclaims

that he is a 'realist'):

> An artistic judgment, in precisely the same way as a scientific judgment, can be justified or refuted only by reference to what is externally observable. From the point of view of objectivity in the sense of accountability to reality, the two kinds of assessment are the same...If I make an artistic judgment it is incumbent upon me, if challenged, to substantiate it by citing not my subjective feelings about it, but objective features of the work of art itself.[34]

Yet he too, like Osborne, insists in the same breath that:

> In many cases, it would be a mark of one's failure fully to appreciate a work if one were not emotionally involved...Fully to appreciate the arts one needs both detached critical appraisal and the educated emotional capacity to involve oneself in a personally meaningful way.[35]

I have dwelt on the writings of Osborne and Best at length in order to bring out a contradiction of which neither of them seems fully aware - for how can such personal involvement as at times they espouse be justified as even desirable for appreciative acts, let alone necessary in any way, when at the same time they hold that aesthetic features are wholly in the work, regardless of whether particular individuals see them or not? On their account, must not any personal response (in the sense of a constitutive mental state composed of images, aspect-perceptions and emotions experienced in response to the work of art) be as irrelevant to aesthetic appraisal as it would be to scientific verification? What seems to have happened is that writers like Osborne and Best have unhesitatingly accepted the traditional view that a personal response must be part of the aesthetic language game without ever asking themselves why this should be so. As a consequence, the requirement that pupils are to experience the work personally in anything more than Sibley's minimal sense of 'seeing for themselves' would appear to be nothing more than an arbitrary rule, lacking in any rationale - for, seen in their true 'objective' colours, Osborne and Best can no more offer a home for the concept of 'personal response' than the 'radical subjectivist' can offer a home for the concept of the 'aesthetic object'.

If Best's and Osborne's account of the subjective aspect of 'appreciation' now starts to look decidedly shaky, what then of the posited autonomous existence of the work of art itself? Like Sibley, both these writers certainly appear to view the objectivity of aesthetic judgments as dependent upon inter-subjective agreement. However, whereas Sibley, especially in his later writings, seems content to accept a modicum of agreement as perhaps all that we can hope for within the aesthetic realm, as when he says:

> A realm of objectivity might be made possible by some limited (not widespread) actual agreement including some settled and virtually indisputable cases[36]

- Osborne and Best by contrast, behind their seemingly undogmatic acceptance of the inevitable influence of cultural and personal factors on our aesthetic judgments, appear to assume that, in principle, aesthetic disagreement will tend to disappear ('asymptotically') in the course of time, as our capacity for pure, disinterested contemplation of the object improves. Thus Osborne, after conceding that the 'actualization' of the work:

> depends also upon historical, social and environmental conditions[37]

then goes on to assert, like any nineteenth century 'positivist' attempting to free science from the irrelevant dogmas of religion, that:

> We pride ourselves that we can now direct our attention to those formal qualities which are universal and necessary to art in all styles and periods, not being distracted by the variable and inessential.[38]

Best, similarly, attempts to accommodate the facts of aesthetic disagreement and cultural differences to his 'scientific' model, by arguing along Kuhnian lines that:

> In the sciences...there may be situations where disagreement may persist although both parties have the same facts...but that does not necessarily imply that further fruitful debate is in principle impossible...Both a conviction that it is possible in principle to resolve problems and conflicts, and the persistence in practice of problems and conflicts are essential for the

continued progress and even existence of any area of inquiry.[39]

However, for the scientific analogy to work, Best has to show that aesthetic disagreement, like disagreements within the scientific community, must presuppose that there is one correct answer, however far away we may be from it. But, as compared with science, it would seem self-evident that the aesthetic form of life is far too mixed up with cultural and personal factors ever to hope for more than Sibley's cautious modicum of agreement - which, of course, is why the antinomy is so persistent.

Of course it is not being denied that the intelligibility of appreciative discourse must depend on a measure of agreement as to what we are talking about, for without this we could not even make sense of our aesthetic appraisals to ourselves, let alone to others. As has already been pointed out, if such appraisals were not open to correction of some kind, then any notion of 'aesthetic education' would be impossible. Nonetheless, although there is therefore some substance to Best's remark that a pupil who thinks that 'the Mona Lisa is an extremely poor painting':

simply has no understanding of what constitutes a good painting[40]

- the fact remains that such aesthetic 'ignorance' can never be like the case of e.g. a pupil denying that the earth goes round the sun, for if it were, then, as we have already seen, the pupil who did understand what constituted a 'good painting' would find no point in seeing the Mona Lisa at all, except in the 'minimal' verificatory sense of checking up for himself that it was indeed an instance of what the rules defined as a 'good painting'. As such, there would, of course, be degrees of 'good painting' to be assessed, but such 'degrees' would still be understood only in relation to a specifiable prototype or ideal which, like the 'perfect specimen' aimed at in a rose show, need only exist in the judges' specifications. Seen thus,

the role of the art critic and appreciator would be like that of a 'quality controller' checking off that each instance came up to scratch but, having done this, taking no further interest in it as an object for aesthetic contemplation.

What also needs to be questioned about such 'objectivist' positions, however, is not just the dubious pursuit of an extreme form of objectivity, but the detached, observational attitude that goes with it. Certainly, such an attitude (sometimes called the 'aesthetic attitude') has an important role to play in 'appreciation' since art, although often very like life, is not the same as life and much of its value lies precisely in its unique ability to distance powerful themes, thereby enabling the pupil to contemplate as well as to empathically 'live' them. Such 'disinterestedness', as Ray Elliott has pointed out[41], involves a special kind of 'objectivity' that is predicated in the first instance of the pupil's whole attitude rather than of his judgment alone - a stance that requires considerable personal integrity on the part of the pupil in order to rise above his immediate preoccupations. However, there is no obvious reason why such <u>personal</u> objectivity of response has to take a calm and detached form on every occasion, for sometimes, when we have made ourselves most 'open' to the work, we find that our response may in fact be at its most excited and dynamic - but not less 'objective' for being so. It would seem that in reality, then, 'personal objectivity' covers a wide family of cases, ranging from the most calm to the most excited. Insofar therefore as such a personal element <u>is</u> held to be a necessary feature of aesthetic response in general, then it is impossible to see how the 'objectivist's' attempt to limit it to the one paradigm can be anything other than stipulative, despite Osborne's <u>ad hominem</u> assertion that:

> Too many writers...have testified to the serenity and detachment of aesthetic contemplation for this to be an accidental feature

> ...even when the object of contemplation has dynamic or dramatically emotional characteristics.[42]

But <u>why</u>, one wonders, does Osborne in the end even bother to seek such support when, as we have seen, his own stance on 'objectivity' effectively makes <u>all</u> personal response, even of this detached kind, redundant?

In commenting on the 'standard' objectivist view, as expressed by writers like Bouwsma[43], Osborne and Best, that in the aesthetic language-game, emotions are to be understood as qualities <u>in</u> the work, like colours, quite independently of whatever we may actually happen to be feeling, Hepburn points out that:

> One is not always content to say: 'This music has the emotional quality of exuberance, but I am not in any way moved by it'...It is a loss of <u>impact</u> that we are lamenting.[44]

In other words, in a sense of 'experience' which is far more important than Sibley's 'minimal' sense, it is being claimed that no amount of an 'educated' capacity to judge <u>that</u> 'the music is exuberant' can ever be a substitute or compensation for experiencing that exuberance <u>in</u>, rather than merely <u>for</u> ourselves - i.e., constitutively as a mental state.

To correctly identify the exuberance without at the same time feeling it, is inadequate insofar as the work of art may be conceived of, not just as an object held up for contemplation, but also as an entity functioning to evoke within the pupil a type of personal response in virtue of which the work becomes 'alive' to him. This is the function of the work of art that Kant describes in terms of its <u>geist</u> - that animating spirit within it which is said to be recognized by the work's evocation of the 'aesthetic idea' within us, the 'aesthetic idea' itself being a 'representation of the imagination' which, like a pebble thrown into a pool, generates a wealth of further images and thoughts in us, brought into being by the free play of our imagination and understanding:

> We say of certain products of which we expect that they should at least in part appear as beautiful art, that they are without spirit (geist), although we find nothing to blame in them on the score of taste. A poem may be very neat and elegant, but without spirit...Spirit, in an aesthetical sense, is the name given to the animating principle of the mind. But that by means of which this principle animates the soul...is what puts the mental powers (i.e. imagination and understanding) into...play.[45]

Seen thus, the 'aesthetic object', though undeniably an object which is 'there' to guide the pupil's responses, can never yield itself fully to an act of detached contemplation. Rather, it requires, in order to be 'brought to life', that the pupil 'lend' it (to borrow Sartre's term) not only his understanding but his imagination and emotional susceptibility. As Sartre says of literature (see footnote), though I would argue that it is as true of the emotional qualities of music and painting:

> On the one hand, the literary object has no other substance than the reader's subjectivity: Raskolnikov's waiting is my waiting which I lend him...That is what animates him...But on the other hand, the words are there like traps to arouse our feelings and reflect them towards us...The imagination of the spectator has not only a regulating function but a constitutive one.[46]

The view that the 'aesthetic object' only yields itself in its fullness to the person who can imaginatively 'enter into' it - or, which amounts to the same, who can recreate it within himself as a special type of 'imaginary object' - has long been recognized as characteristic of the aesthetic form of life, although the 'romantic' excesses to which this view has sometimes led have understandably made it appear exceedingly suspect to contemporary 'objectivists'. Thus Longinus long ago pointed out the importance of such an 'inner eye' in

Footnote: On the same page from which the latter part of the following quotation is taken, Sartre says of Kant that he:

> forgets that the imagination of the spectator has not only a regulating function, but a constitutive one.

But this simply ignores the crucial paragraph 49 of The Critique of Judgment from which I have just quoted, in which Kant clearly conceives of the 'aesthetic idea' as constituted in the spectator's imagination. Thus Sartre himself may be seen, in this section of What is Literature?, as advancing ideas very close to those of Kant's.

relation to literature:

> A most effective way of attaining weight, grandeur and a vivid sense of actuality is afforded by...image-making...when inspiration and emotion make you appear actually to see what you describe and bring it before the eyes of your hearers[47]

- a comment, incidentally, that applies as much to the teacher's attempts to communicate his experience of the work, as it does to the work itself. Ruby Meager, similarly, underlines the necessity of this 'animating' type of experience when she refers to:

> a <u>power</u> in the (aesthetic) object to invade our experience, rather than a <u>feature</u> of the object to be noted duly by a refined exercise of detection.[48]

If this view of the 'aesthetic object' is correct, then it would seem that acts of 'appreciation' do indeed need to meet subjective as well as objective conditions - the former requiring a personal 'quickening' of the 'aesthetic object', while the latter are there to set limits on what may count as a legitimate response. As Sartre says of these two conditions:

> It is the joint effort of author and reader which brings upon the scene that concrete and imaginary object which is the work of the mind. There is no art except for and by others[49]

- and the same may be said of those 'emergent' aspects of the visual arts and music insofar as they are brought into being by the operations of our 'perceptual imagination', as when we 'see' the sadness in the blues of a Picasso painting, or 'hear' the sadness in the minor chords that introduce a symphony.

From this point of view, we may regard the antinomy between aesthetic judgment and taste, or the objective and subjective dimensions of 'appreciation', as reflecting a continuing process of interaction and therefore open to modification on both sides. If the personal response were not as corrigible as the judgmental one then, as we have seen, it would be ineducable; and if the judgment lacked a basis in feeling (the 'feeling of rightness'), then it would be mere mechanical rule-following. Furthermore, such interaction must be re-

garded as necessarily open-ended, for only if the antinomy ceased to exist would such interaction also cease to exist.

One of the most recent works to fall within this broad 'subjectivist' tradition is Roger Scruton's Art and Imagination (1974) - the main focus of the first half of my thesis. For Scruton, it is as artificial to divide our aesthetic judgments from our appreciative responses as it is, in the field of ethics, to divide moral judgments from our moral feelings and attitudes[50]. However, although Scruton therefore differs vitally and essentially from the currently dominant 'objectivists' in his interpretation of and emphasis on 'experience', he also differs from the 'radical subjectivist' in being just as concerned as Best and Osborne to avoid all self-indulgent fantasizing and gratuitous aspect-perception.

For Scruton:

> That there is some connection between the meaning of our utterances and our mental states is undeniable; but in the case of aesthetic experience the connection proves hard to describe.[51]

It certainly does, for it is a central part of Scruton's programme to reconcile a traditional empiricist view of 'mind' with its 'faculty' psychology and introspective methodology, with a 'public language' argument whose original purpose was to demolish the very position that he is so anxious to defend within the aesthetic form of life. The key to Scruton's position lies in his account of the contribution made to aesthetic experience by our imagination - for in opposition to the 'analytic' view that its manifestations are at best expendable, and at worst an impossibly 'occult' accompaniment to our meanings, it is Scruton's contention that:

> All our ways of referring to images seem to suggest an element of experience over and above the constitutive thought.[52]

Most importantly of all, however, the mental images, aspect perceptions and affective states in which Scruton sees the 'aesthetic object' as coming to rest, are viewed by him as themselves an import-

ant form of understanding. According to Scruton, without such experiences the pupil, however much he may have mastered the appropriate conventions and cultural background, could not be said to have really grasped the point of e.g. calling the music 'exuberant', since:

> The man who does not understand aesthetic description is the man who has no familiarity with the experiences that it is being used to express[53]

- rather in the way that Wagner's fearless Siegfried was unable to grasp what 'fear' is really like. Though such 'experiential' understanding can add nothing to the meaning of our aesthetic utterances, in virtue of being a type of 'knowledge by acquaintance', what it is held to possess is:

> a dimension of 'fullness', and in this sense, recognition cannot be explained simply as a case of realizing that a certain proposition is true.[54]

How far Scruton succeeds in establishing both the communicability and the necessity of such personal response remains to be seen. All that I would point out at this stage, because it has important implications for the justification of aesthetic education is that insofar as Scruton's argument for such 'knowledge by acquaintance' arises from demands made by the uniqueness of each work of art, then ipso facto such 'knowledge' must also be held to be necessary in order to recognize anything which has a unique, irreplacable identity - which includes not only works of art but e.g. people and places. No amount of geographical and socio-economic knowledge about London, for example, could ever be sufficient to convey the emergent 'spirit of place' by which it is identifiable and distinguishable from other cities. We just have to experience it, to 'live' it. In the same way, if all that sufficed for understanding people were getting to know their 'objective' qualities, then the Dictionary of National Biography would be quite sufficient without any need for personal contact.

Insofar as the 'aesthetic object', like individual human beings and the 'spirit of place', cannot be brought into being by rules alone, but has to be experienced 'at first hand', then this suggests an important continuity between how the pupil gets to know works of art and how he gets to know individual identities in general, such as those of people and places. This continuity is underlined by the fact that many works of art set out precisely to capture such individual identities. In developing the pupils' appreciation of works of art, therefore, we may also, in part, be developing their ability to 'appreciate' what is distinctive in people and places, among other things, for as Scruton says:

> What I feel in the presence of works of art may find its ultimate expression in my behaviour towards my fellows.[55]

The most important point about such 'experiential' knowledge, however, is that its value resides primarily, not in the attainment of some kind of scientific 'objectivity', but in the <u>richness of the relations</u> that are set up between the pupil's subjectivity and the object to which he is attending. As Sartre says of our aesthetic perception of landscape:

> It is we who set up a relationship between this tree and that bit of sky. Thanks to us, that star which has been dead for millenia, that quarter moon, and that dark river are disclosed in the unity of a landscape.[56]

In this respect, if it is accepted that such a personal response <u>is</u> a logical condition of aesthetic 'appreciation', then developing a pupil's capacity to appreciate must also develop the pupil personally, in the sense of increasing the richness of his life. Of course as we have seen, aesthetic education also involves the pursuit of objectivity in aesthetic judgment which any concept of an 'educated' taste must bring with it, together with the mastery of other kinds of knowledge that are art-related (such as knowledge of relevant conventions, cultural background and the work's non-aesthetic content). Although

necessary for aesthetic education to take place, however, such objective elements are not sufficient in themselves to justify it, for if an objective view of objects were all that was required for education then science would do the job just as well.

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CHAPTER TWO: How do we ascribe meaning to aesthetic judgments? The argument from paronymy.

At the heart of Scruton's empiricism lies a firm commitment to the view that:

> We must ascribe meaning to certain sentences directly, without the mediation of others that 'give their truth conditions' in a purely formal manner.[1]

Insofar as aesthetic judgments, both evaluative and descriptive, are seen to conform to this requirement, such a view may also be traced back to the fundamental Kantian principle that:

> There can be no rule according to which anyone is to be forced to recognize anything as beautiful.[2]

In other words, no one can grasp the full intended sense of e.g. 'the music is sad' until they have <u>heard</u> the sadness, for no mediating formal rule, such as that 'minor chords denote sadness' will be sufficient to bring about the requisite unmediated mental state on which Scruton, and Kant before him, want to ground the significance of our talk about works of art and our aesthetic perception of the environment in general. Since most aesthetic theories, however 'objectivist', at least pay court to the principle that aesthetic judgment must depend on first-person perception of, and feeling for the object, what then, is so distinctive about this version?

In order to grasp the special emphasis that Scruton, like Kant, places upon personal response here, an examination is needed of the contrast implied above between our rule-governed assertions and aesthetic assertions, the latter of which seem to escape the 'net' of any sufficient set of criteria. For this, I shall lean heavily on Kant's important distinction between 'determinate' and 'reflective' acts of judgment, put forward in the Introduction to <u>The Critique of Judgment</u>. In a rule-governed assertion, or what Kant calls a 'determinate' judgment, we apply <u>ready-made</u> concepts to appropriate particulars:

> If the universal (the rule, principle or law) is given, then the judgment which subsumes the particular under it...is <u>deter-</u>

minate.[3]

For example, I see this line as an instance of a curve. My assent to the judgment 'This line is curved' does not depend on any reflective 'awareness' of this particular line as such, insofar as the judgment instantiates a mere extensional use of the term, but upon whether the line satisfies (intensionally) a particular set of formal truth conditions - e.g. if it moves around an axis, then it's curved. No experience of the object is required because I could make the same judgment blind from a verbal description of it. Indeed, the whole notion of formal truth-conditions presupposes a kind of indifference to the instances that fall under them.

For most of our waking lives, such perceptual judgments work as a more or less automatic decision-making process. We see the world as full of 'instances' of things with which we are already more or less familiar, which is why our everyday perception of the world holds such few surprises - why in fact, we become aesthetically insensitive to what phenomenologists call the 'lived world'. This is almost certainly due to the dominance of a certain type of 'scientific' attitude within Western culture. Such a view is characterized by Dewey:

> Identification nods and passes on. Or it defines a passing moment in isolation, it marks a dead spot in experience which is merely filled in. The extent to which the process of living in any day or hour is reduced to labelling situations, events and objects as 'so and so' in mere succession marks the cessation of life as a conscious experience.[4]

When we apply such 'determinate' judgments to works of art, this produces the classic 'philistine' attitude that I have outlined elsewhere[5]. The philistine's conflation of 'determinate' with aesthetic judgment also serves to explain his blank incomprehension as to why there should be anything so special about the aesthetic object. For example, a painting of a landscape is seen simply as an instance of a landscape, at best a convenient substitute for a good view out of the sitting-room window - but what is so special about that? I can see a

landscape any day if I go for a drive in the countryside. Indeed, the identification of 'aesthetic' with 'determinate' judgment is almost certainly a root cause of why so many pupils fail to see what is the point of looking at paintings or reading novels, particularly where they involve a high degree of 'realism'. Seen in this way, works of art appear merely to offer a very heterogeneous collection of dubious 'facts' in no set order. There is another 'higher level' philistine to whom I have referred elsewhere[5] who approaches art primarily as a source of insight into life and for whom art therefore has some value as a quasi-text book, rivalling, e.g. the text books of psychology and history. However, seen thus, art becomes potentially redundant if real text books come along that can do the job better. (This important argument of Scruton's I shall be considering in a later chapter).

Ironically there have also been some 'formalist' aesthetic positions that have ended up advocating 'determinate' conditions for aesthetic judgments by reference to some hypothesized 'general principles of art'. According to Guyer[6], much of the drive behind Kant's concern to establish the conditions for 'free beauty' arose as a reaction to those 18th century rationalists who believed that disputes in taste could be settled mechanically by rules - a pretence carried to the extreme by a writer called Meier who offered no less than fifty rules of good taste!

What then <u>is</u> so special about aesthetic judgments in the eyes of aestheticians like Kant and Scruton? As we saw, whereas I can judge whether a line is curved or straight, or a landscape urban or rural, by reference to a set of formal truth conditions (the modern equivalent of a 'determinate judgment'), if on the other hand, I come to see that line as 'graceful', or the landscape as 'awesome' or 'sad', then it is not because I have had recourse to a similar ready-to-hand rule, but because I have submitted the object in question to my own

reflective gaze, pushing to the back of my mind my 'determinate' preconceptions. If a third party is to share this judgment then he or she too must in some way share this gaze. I do not make this judgment because I have grasped the determinate meaning of the object and see it as a good instance of something (the philistine attitude), nor because I have inferred it from a 'determinate' principle built into the predicate (the extreme formalist attitude). In the latter case, without the experience, my judgment would merely mime an aesthetic response, as unfortunately only too many pupils learn to do, when taking examinations in arts subjects. Rather, it is argued, judgment must arise from direct acquaintance with the object itself which now assumes importance not as a mere instance of some general rule, but as a 'presence' which we confront by suspending our preconceptions as far as possible, in order to be open to it. Thus Dufrenne describes it, echoing Kant's original idea at every point:

> The aesthetic object is distinguished from ordinary objects which present themselves through impoverished sensations, dull and transient, and promptly hide themselves behind a concept...It is necessary that the object exert a kind of magic so that perception can relegate to the background that which ordinary perception places in the foreground.[7]

An example of this would be the case cited by Elliott of perceiving the West Front of Wells Cathedral as 'weightless' through "the falling away of our every-day perceptual-imaginal habit of seeing large masses of stone as pressing down"[8].

Kant himself, in the Introduction to the Critique specifically identifies the above type of aesthetic judgment as a species of the more general category of 'reflective judgments' through which he considers we should approach the 'purposive' side of nature - i.e. through the imaginative act of thinking of nature as if it had a purpose. Put very simply, such 'reflective' judgments involve a reversal of the process involved in the 'determinate' one:

A capacity for reflecting on a given representation according to

a certain principle, to produce a possible concept.[9]

Without attempting to follow Kant through all the complex ramifications of this postulated faculty, I want to focus on two of its main features that are most immediately relevant to the argument - namely, the notion of an 'indeterminate concept' and the role played by imagination. The content of a reflective judgment for Kant is an 'indeterminate concept' - a seemingly paradoxical category of concept that Scruton revives in his equally paradoxical-seeming formula of 'non-descriptive meaning'. It becomes less paradoxical however, if we see it in terms of a mental attitude such that when we approach an object or state of affairs reflectively, we assume in a general kind of way that there will be some concept embodied in what we are observing, but that the precise nature of such a concept cannot be predicted in advance of the experience by reference to any available rule. This is because, as Merleau-Ponty has put it, the very idea of reflection presupposes "an unreflective life which is its initial situation"[10].

In the case of aesthetic 'reflection' however, in order to escape the celebrated 'antinomy' (created by the 'thesis' that no aesthetic judgment can be based on a rule, and the 'antithesis' that all aesthetic judgments must be based on a rule in order to claim the agreement of others[11]), the possibility of discovering a 'determinate' concept is replaced by the dawning of a pleasurable awareness that the object of our contemplation has a feeling of order and 'purposefulness' about it that sympathetically echoes the very structures of the human mind:

> because the ground of this pleasure is found in the universal, though subjective, condition of reflective judgements, viz. the purposive harmony of an object (whether a product of nature or of art) with the mutual relations of the cognitive faculties (the imagination and the understanding)...[12]

We cannot infer the object's meaning from any rule, such as that the object is a good instance of 'x', but only through experiencing the

'harmonious free play of the imagination and understanding' to which it gives rise. For example, I gaze at a chestnut tree in full autumn colouring, while at the same time putting to the back of my mind all such thoughts as one would find in The Observer's Pocket Guide to Tree Recognition, for these could only lead to 'determinate' judgments, such as that it is a good instance of a chestnut tree/deciduous tree etc. This is not an easy task, but its reward, if I am fortunate, is the 'shaping up' in my imagination of a rich and wonderful configuration, intimating design but resisting categories - the source of my aesthetic pleasure.

In calling the tree 'beautiful' therefore, I am trying to communicate a state of mind which, for Kant, will in principle be accessible to anyone else who has gone through the same process of trying to divest their judgment of 'determinate' preconceptions and in so doing, made themselves 'open' to the experience. In such a state of mind, as Guyer points out, it is our imagination which takes on the role of unifying the representation that 'shapes up', in the absence of any 'determinate' concept to satisfy the understanding:

> The harmony of the faculties is then a state in which, somehow, a manifold of the intuition is run through and held together as a unity by the imagination without the use of a concept.[13]

I shall leave an examination of the validity of this part of Kant's argument until a later chapter on the whole issue of 'objectivity'. However, it is worth pointing out that insofar as Kant is right, it is far easier to evoke such an 'indeterminate concept' in the case of non-representational patterns and music than in the case of natural objects and representational works of art, which is what leads Kant to the 'formalist' aestheticism put forward in the First Book of the Critique - although later abandoned, as we shall see. Had Kant lived in the 20th century, he might well have found in modern, non-representational art one of the highest expressions of what he

calls the ideal of 'free beauty' - a 'beauty' answerable only to the human feeling for form in whatever guise.

The limitation with this account however, is that in the end it only seems to work for those 'pure' aesthetic predicates like 'harmonious' and 'graceful' that we apply to non-representational patterns (or, if to other objects like the chestnut tree, only on condition that they can be transformed into such patterns). However, when we come on to those kinds of aesthetic reflection where our feeling for 'free beauty' seems to be so intimately bound up with non-aesthetic truth conditions - as when we reflect upon representational art or draw upon words like 'sad' and 'powerful' to describe what we take to be an aesthetic experience - then the whole theory comes in danger of falling apart. It is this type of reflection that Scruton takes as his starting-point in his examination of the paradigm case, 'the music is sad'. (Kant's own attempt to come to terms with the problem, first with the rather awkward notion of 'dependent beauty', and finally with the notion of 'aesthetic ideas', where the imagination takes on a new role, I shall deal with in a later chapter, when I come on to consider Scruton's account of symbolism in art.)

Before going on to consider this problem however, I should like to wind up the discussion on 'reflective judgment' by looking at the two main reasons why it is so appropriate as an account of aesthetic experience. The first reason, which we have already partly explored, is that I do not value a work of art as I do everyday objects or certain kinds of virtuous behaviour, because it is a good <u>instance</u> of some pre-determined concept (Kant's 'judgment of perfection'), but for its irreplaceable 'presence', however much this may be circumscribed by conventions and traditions. As Mary Warnock says:

> In order for the imagination to work, it has to concentrate on <u>one</u> object.[14]

From this point of view no formal truth conditions <u>can</u> be set up

either for the appreciation of the beautiful or, of course, for producing it - not that the attempt hasn't been made many times, e.g. as in the Renaissance search for the 'Golden Mean' in art. Even if we do not accept Kant's own, admittedly rather tortuous account of an 'indeterminate concept', we will still need something very like it if we are to do justice to this 'free' aspect of art. Furthermore, even if we did succeed in making a concept such as 'graceful' determinate, it could only be in relation to a specific work of art and not to the formulation of some general aesthetic rule since, as Scruton points out, "we cannot convert a sufficient condition into a rule that isolates more than the individual case"[15].

Secondly, insofar as our aesthetic judgments and descriptions always involve the communication of an <u>emotion</u>, then something more than a concept is being communicated - for as we have seen, although we may recognize at a conventional level that a piece of music is sad, we may yet find ourselves unable to feel the sadness which gives point to the judgment. As Kant says:

> To apprehend a regular and appropriate building with one's cognitive faculties...is quite a different thing from being conscious of this representation with an accompanying sensation of delight.[16]

While emotions are, of course, open to a determinate account in terms of their intentionality (a problem for Scruton's account that I shall be examining in a later chapter), there is an inevitable gap between recognizing that a certain feeling would be an appropriate response and actually feeling it. As I shall argue later, we cannot be made to, or ever make ourselves have an aesthetic experience when we don't feel one to be forthcoming, because emotions, <u>qua</u> mental states have an essential involuntary dimension. One cannot judge aesthetically that 'the music is sad' unless one feels it in some way, whereas one can assert correctly that 'John is sad' without feeling John's sadness in any way at all.

What follows from the above account of 'reflection' as applied to aesthetic judgment, is that insofar as any agreement in judgment is to be possible then it must be based not just on verbal agreement, but on the fact that others actually experience the same pleasures and pains as we do - that there exists a 'community of experience' in fact. This is the idea expressed by Kant and echoed by Scruton that such judgment "expects confirmation not from concepts but from the accession of others"[17] - i.e. assent based on having had the same experience. But without the guidance of concepts to 'stabilize' (Scruton's word) this agreement, then as Kant points out in the 'antinomy of taste', how can we really talk of 'judgment' at all? Such 'judgment' would seem to end up either in the absolute privacy of the 'beetle in the box' or else in the fortuitous although communicable 'privacy' of the associations of our 'empirical ego' (e.g liking Wordsworth's Prelude because it happens to revive happy memories of childhood holidays) or the culture that 'moulded' us (e.g liking Wordsworth because one has been brought up to feel that it's the 'right' thing to do). To retreat into such relativism would be to deny the element of freedom that Kant rightly took to be the very basis of all rational agreement and to provide contemporary 'structuralists' with carte blanche for deconstructing our aesthetic 'postures'. I shall argue later that the aesthetic distinction between 'autonomous' and 'relativist' accounts of aesthetic judgment is far too cut and dried and that one can, in fact, incorporate a degree of personal and cultural association into aesthetic judgments without abandoning the connection between freedom and objectivity in the aesthetic realm - indeed such associations play an important role in Scruton's own later arguments.

The task to which Scruton addresses himself therefore, like Kant before him, is how to reconcile the subjectivity of aesthetic judgments, as portrayed in the account of 'reflection' above, with the

normal requirement of agreement in judgments, that we should be able to specify objective truth-conditions for them. Scruton's own solution is to argue for a 'paronymous' use of words like 'sad' that enables us (a) to extend the field of reference to any state of affairs or object that strikes us as appropriate for its application, while (b) retaining its intensional sense unmodified, thereby keeping our 'paronymous' use within the fold of public language. This is combined with his empiricist concern to account for aesthetic experience, like Kant, in terms of an unmediated state of mind - i.e. a response that's based on direct acquaintance with the object, rather than simply on a rule-governed grasp of its descriptive meaning. The question is - can he do this without distorting our ordinary notions of language beyond recognition? This is, in fact, the very charge that Scruton himself lays at the door of the Kantian and Sibley-type accounts with which he commences his analysis[18].

Kant's own way out of this problem had been to postulate, in Paragraph 8 of the Critique, a second act of reflective judgment, whereby one reflected on the origins of one's response in order to ascertain the genuineness of its detachment without which there could be no free play of the imagination and understanding. Only in this way could one at least attempt to claim that one was valuing the object as an 'end in itself'. If this critique can be satisfied, which is what the four 'moments' of the First Book set out to explore, then one can reasonably expect everyone else who has carried out the same reflective exercise to have the same response in virtue of the a priori features of cognition and sensibility shared by all human beings. This is what Kant calls the 'subjective universal validity' of aesthetic judgment. Such a view has great importance for aesthetic education because it shows a way in which pupils can be taught to transcend not only their own immediate preferences, but also the pre-

ferences of their culture in order to be receptive to works of art that might otherwise seem very alien. It also allows for a degree of questioning the validity of one's own aesthetic experience which, as we shall see later, may not be available to Scruton's own account.

However, the problem with Kant's account from the point of view of communicability, is that it is never too clear just what it is to value an object as an 'end in itself'. If the object is conceived of as a unique particular, then strictly speaking one couldn't really say anything at all about it, beyond simply pointing at it and perhaps emitting some kind of grunt of pleasure or pain, like the legendary Antisthenes. Similar objections are voiced by Scruton in a later stage of the book towards those theories which try to set up art itself as a special kind of language - namely, a language of the particular that can't be translated, as exemplified in the theories of Croce, Langer and Goodman. (In fact Scruton's own view of artistic 'symbolism', expressed in terms of the work of art itself being 'the elaboration of my thought' may be vulnerable to the same charge, as we shall see later.)

It is important to note that the above criticism is part of a larger objection that Scruton has to both Kant (at least the Kant of the Analytic of the Beautiful) and Sibley, that in arguing for a very special use of words in aesthetic judgment, they "create too sharp a divide between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic world"[19]. In Sibley's case, it is because he argues that the terms with which we refer to aesthetic qualities have a 'second order' role that is unconditioned by their primary use. This larger objection of Scruton's is important to remember in the light of later sections of the book where he himself may be seen to fall into a position of remoteness in his concern to preserve the autonomy of art from non-aesthetic inroads.

Scruton's aim then, in this early section of the book, is "to see

how far the public and observable aspect of aesthetic experience can be described"[20] (a rather circular way of putting it, which in a way underlines the whole problem). On the one hand then, if the meaning of aesthetic terms has no relation to their non-aesthetic use then what is the point of naming them as we do? If, on the other hand, we say that they have the same sense, then how can we distinguish them as a special class? At this point, it might be objected that in making his bid to establish the connection between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic world, Scruton has picked a paradigm too favourable to his case in the example of 'the music is sad', because 'sad' has a primary non-aesthetic use. In another way however, the use of such ambiguous terms as 'sad' as 'indeterminate concepts' with their normal truth conditions suspended in effect puts them in the same class as those 'pure' aesthetic predicates like 'graceful' which, by their very nature are indeterminate - i.e. we can't decide in advance whether any particular work or art is graceful, though we may still need some approximate notion of what is 'typically' or 'characteristically' the case to distinguish between e.g. what's 'graceful' and what's 'strident' - a point that Sibley develops at some length[21].

Bearing in mind, then, that we are considering that class of aesthetic usages whereby we describe our response to an object in terms normally reserved for describing our feelings about the world in general, the problem remains - namely, how can words used in aesthetic descriptions have an aesthetic use and still retain their normal meaning? How can we say 'the music is sad' if we believe that this sadness is so very different from our feelings of sadness provoked by events in the everyday world, e.g. because as well as sadness it includes an element of aesthetic pleasure, or because we can reflect on the sadness rather than just being 'in its grip', or above all because we can't justify our usage by reference to the usual descriptive

truth-criteria? How, for example, can we reconcile it with Hegel's remark that 'art is essentially cheerful'?!

At this stage, it should be pointed out that Scruton is still primarily concerned with giving an account of meaning in terms of the intelligibility of our response, rather than in terms of the object of that response - which is in line with his self-appointed task, in this early section of the book, of seeing how far we can go in describing such a state of mind. The key to Scruton's answer seems to lie in the fact that we spontaneously call the music 'sad' because that is how it strikes us - even though Scruton does not actually use this term himself. Seen thus,

> Aesthetic description does not assert that a certain state of mind is justified but rather gives direct expression to the state of mind itself. Hence the function of aesthetic description is not, primarily, descriptive.[22]

This does not mean, he qualifies in a later chapter, that aesthetic adjectives don't also "carry a suggestion of genuine description" - for the reason that, as we have already seen, there must be some way of discriminating between them. They are not just substitutes for the ejaculations of pleasure and pain, which was more or less the early, crude empiricist view - although this is how we might have learned them in the first place. Nonetheless, their primary function for Scruton is one of direct expression, even though, grammatically they look like descriptions.

But if aesthetic 'descriptions' are fundamentally expressive, in the manner of a gesture, how can we say apparently informative things like 'the music is sad'? As we shall see later, when we come on to the pedagogical problems of the arts teacher in Chapter 9, much of Scruton's argument turns on how 'expression' is here being used, as between the way in which we say that a sentence 'expresses' a proposition, and the way that someone may communicate in an 'expressive' manner - as when we say that we are 'cheerful' in a 'cheerful' tone of

voice. So how is Scruton using the term 'expression' here?

> I shall use the term 'expression' as a name for this intimate relation between a sentence and a mental state, and I shall assume that there is a sense in which expression determines meaning, through determining our understanding of a sentence; the supposition is then, that certain aesthetic descriptions are non-descriptive in that they express not beliefs but rather 'aesthetic experiences'.[23]

In other words, we can express or understand someone else's expression that 'the music is sad', only if we have had the appropriate experience, which has the same relation to our quasi-description as beliefs have to genuine descriptions. The resultant 'meaning' is non-descriptive, as with Kant's 'indeterminate' concept, because it arises not from the application of truth-conditions, but from "certain non-cognitive states of mind"[23].

At this stage of the argument, it looks very much as if Scruton's attempt to clarify the notion of 'non-descriptive meaning' embodies an attempt to have it both ways - i.e. he wants to have all the advantages of the Kantian type of 'indeterminate concept', liberated from truth-conditions, and yet also to have the advantages of treating it as if it were obedient to truth conditions, albeit not entertained "in the strong sense"[24]. Everything then, seems to depend on how he can account for this 'intimate relation' between the 'cognitive' and 'non-cognitive'.

Scruton's solution is ingenious to say the least, and involves the appeal to 'paronymy' that we have already mentioned. Insofar as paronymy entails a widening of the extensional field of reference without altering the intensional meaning of the term, it is upon the extensional use of aesthetic terms that the whole weight of the argument seems to fall. To understand 'the music is sad', Scruton argues, we don't need to learn a new meaning for 'sad', nor is it necessary to appeal to any kind of descriptive analogy (e.g. that the rise and fall of the music echoes the rise and fall of someone sobbing) or mere

personal association, such as the revival of childhood memory. Rather, what is required is that we come to see the point of the word's paronymous use in this new context. Since Wittgenstein's story, referred to by Scruton, of 'fat Wednesday' and 'lean Tuesday'[25] seems to be too much of a private joke to be illuminating, while Scruton's own story, 'call a thing "nuff" only if it attracts you'[26] seems to involve the unnecessary introduction of a new term, I shall endeavour to illustrate the argument with a more homely example. Suppose that on tasting a glass of wine I say, quite spontaneously, 'what a cheerful wine!' Now assuming that I am not some 'wine buff' with a ready-to-hand collection of such terms but that the words do in fact spring spontaneously to my lips, then it must be because the word 'cheerful' strikes me as eminently appropriate to the experience. For Scruton, such a use seems to be apodictic in virtue of its 'intimacy' with my state of mind, and yet equally, we could not make sense of it unless my sense of its appropriateness is in some way related to its everyday use. Without this latter proviso, it would function as a mere ejaculation. If my sceptic drinking partner says 'how pretentious to talk of a mere taste as though it were human', then I might reach for analogies and explanations of one kind or another, but ultimately, to see the point of my judgment, he must have the same experience as me. Furthermore, although Scruton does not introduce the imagination until later on in the argument, there must also be a leap of imagination to grasp the paronymous use of 'cheerful', since no mere cognitive appraisal can generate the connection.

Transpose this story to an educational setting, and it would follow from Scruton's argument that no arts teacher could begin meaningfully to introduce aesthetic judgments to his pupils unless he could communicate an experience that he himself had had. Reciprocally, this would set up an equal challenge to pupils as a basis for

communicating their own judgments. Although Scruton, at this stage, does not consider an appeal to the role of established aesthetic conventions in order to support the 'public' side of aesthetic communication, it would not be much help if he did, since on the basis of his own argument, conventions themselves would first have to be grasped paronymously (e.g. at some stage in history, minor chords would have to have been heard spontaneously as 'sad') - a very important point, to which I shall return in a moment.

Now as Scruton points out, while the notion of 'paronymous' use can be quite adequately incorporated into a 'speech-act' analysis of how we use aesthetic terms, the limitation of such an analysis is that insofar as it is presenting us with a special non-standard use of words, it is in danger of falling into the very remoteness and obscurity of positions like that of Sibley, that he is trying to avoid. Somehow, therefore, it has to be reconciled with the semantic theory of meaning, as embodied in Tarski's formula, in order to keep an anchor in the public world from which its intensional sense derives. There are problems here however (a) because it is difficult to see how a 'non-descriptive' sense could meet the formal demands of the 'semantic' theory, and (b) the normal epistemological requirement that we specify some state of affairs that determines the truth of our assertion is not available on Scruton's account. He therefore offers in its stead the rather awkward notion of another kind of 'acceptance condition' which attempts to yoke together a 'weak' form of truth-condition with the experience of 'coming to see the point':

> The 'intimate connection' that exists between a judgment and a mental state...can be redescribed as the relation of a sentence to its acceptance condition...Hence aesthetic descriptions need not have truth conditions in the strong sense, and to justify them may be to justify an experience and not a belief.[27]

Whatever can it mean, not to 'have truth conditions in the strong sense'? Scruton's answer is once again ingenious. Once we have in-

troduced a paronymous use into the language, then, as with other kinds of value judgments, "it is inevitable that they should borrow the logical transformations of description"[28]. (This process might be compared to the sociologist's concept of 'reification'.) Thus judgments without truth-conditions in the epistemological sense may be "incorporated into a language piecemeal", and once there:

> will have a permanent and inevitable tendency to acquire realistic truth-conditions, as indeed ethical judgments seem to have.[29]

This might be seen to echo Kant's account of the 'asymptotic' way in which 'regulative principles', like those embodied in 'reflective judgment', function, as when they set the general goal of the purposiveness of objects without specifying actual concepts which they will or may fall under. This feature of the function of regulative principles is described in The Critique of Pure Reason:

> The remarkable feature of these principles...is that they seem to be transcendental, and that although they contain mere ideas for the guidance of the empirical employment of reason - ideas which reason follows only as it were asymptotically, i.e. ever more closely without reaching them - they yet possess, as synthetic a priori propositions, objective but indeterminate validity, and serve as rules for possible experience.[30]

In the same way, we might say that the paronymous use of an aesthetic term enters into public language asymptotically, in the sense that it may move nearer and nearer towards epistemological objectivity without ever actually getting there. To make this point clearer, let us return to my earlier argument about the relation between aesthetic judgments and cultural traditions, at the top of page 50. Here, although Scruton himself does not actually raise the issue, his account of paronymy may be seen as a way of explaining how many of the conventions of art first enter into public discourse. For example, the way that many colours, rhythms and harmonies are bound up with recognizable emotions may be because they started out as highly subjective, paronymous judgments which then became gradually incorporated

(i.e. asymptotically) into the public language and life of a culture. However, insofar as they show an "inevitable tendency to take on truth conditions", they also contain the seeds of their own destruction - as when the highly original use of 'blue notes' (flattened thirds) in jazz, to express bitter-sweet emotions, eventually became a banal 'formula' of popular music. This is because, just as for Kant, 'pure reason' is always tempting us to go beyond the bounds of the empirical world to assert a realm of metaphysical 'objectivity', so does this tendency of the paronymous use of terms to take on realistic truth-conditions hold out the temptation of a completely 'rule-governed' view of aesthetic creativity and appreciation.

But once this spurious condition of 'aesthetic objectivity' is reached then it ceases to be 'aesthetic' for the reason that once we start to approach the aesthetic object with a set of totally pre-established principles then what would pass for 'aesthetic' creativity and appreciation would be something like a 'painting by numbers' view of art, and we would then become 'blind' to the posited acquaintance with the 'presence' of the work - just as the 'philistine' only sees art as reflecting back his own non-aesthetic preconceptions about the world. Thus, one can now see that underlying all Kant's and Scruton's tortuous attempts to show how seemingly private experiences may enter public, rational discourse, lies an immensely important principle, shared with modern phenomenology, that aesthetic judgment must be based on a 'bracketing off' of the taken-for-granted world (both 'philistine' and 'objective formalist') in order that we may look at it afresh. As the writer Samuel Beckett, for example, points out:

> Our current habit of living is incapable of dealing with the mystery of a strange sky or a strange room...The old ego dies hard...When it is opposed by a phenomenon that it cannot reduce to the condition of a comfortable and familiar concept, where, in a word, it betrays its trust as a screen to spare its victim the spectacle of reality, it disappears and the victim, now an ex-victim, for a moment free, is exposed to that reality.[31]

Now in one way, it seems clear that Beckett's notion of rendering the familiar unfamiliar (a view of literature for which there are many precedents, e.g. as in Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads) can only be understood if one has had or is capable of having the same 'reflective' experience, which entails a direct perception of the object while suspending our preconceptions about it. But equally, as Scruton would be the first to point out, wearing his 'Wittgensteinian hat', unless we can somehow link this 'strangeness' to our familiar concepts of 'room' and 'sky', then we can make no sense of it at all. So does Scruton's account of our 'paronymous' use of terms in aesthetic judgments really manage to bridge the gap of the incipient dualism that runs through the whole argument - i.e. the dualism characterized by Wittgenstein when he speaks of our temptation "to imagine that which gives the sentence life as something in an occult sphere, accompanying the sentence"[32].

The main problem with the argument from 'paronymy', as I mentioned earlier, seems to be that the main burden is born by the novel extensional application of terms like 'sad'. From a paronymous point of view, literally anything could be incorporated extensionally into an aesthetic judgment as long as it strikes me as appropriate, regardless of the usual use of the term. It is held that the possibility of making such an extension intelligible as a third-person account rests as much on an appeal to our everyday use of the term as on an appeal to our sense of appropriateness. But insofar as the appeal to the 'appropriateness' of a paronymous extension rests ultimately not on any intensional logic (which would be to pre-judge the object) but on 'the experience of seeing the point', then as it stands, it is difficult to see how Scruton can avoid making it simply a bare assertion in the end. On the other hand, there is a sense in which a 'paronymous' use must, in the first instance, begin with a

bare assertion. Providing that this is not wilfull or groundless, and if others then come to see its appropriateness in the same way that I do, then clearly it will become something more than this. I shall be exploring this ad hominem aspect of aesthetic claims later on, in Chapter Eight, but at this stage of Scruton's argument it does seem difficult to see how one could ever be mistaken about one's feelings of 'appropriateness', and of course if this is the case, how could I even make sense of it to myself? In a later chapter of his book, Scruton actually asserts that:

> Knowledge of an experience by acquaintance (i.e. the kind of 'knowledge' that's being appealed to in the above argument) means having had the experience and being able to call it to mind.[33]

but this of course is to fall precisely into the trap that Wittgenstein warns of in the story about the man who bought a second copy of the same newspaper in order to check up whether what the first copy said was true. It would seem then, that unless we can relate the 'paronymous' use of words like 'sad' to the epistemological truth conditions entailed in its usual intension, i.e. by relating 'the music is sad' to real sadness, then Scruton's account of 'paronymy' will remain hopelessly dualistic, and therefore solipsistic. This is not to say that Scruton hasn't discovered something very important about the way that paronymous usage can explain the generation of aesthetic terms, but that as it stands, he has ended up with advocating a special kind of language which is as remote as that which he accuses Kant and Sibley of advancing. From the epistemological point of view, this paronymous use of 'sad' unasserted has the effect of putting all such emotions into a very strange sort of limbo world, thereby allowing his theory to fall victim to the very danger, in the early stages of the argument, he is so anxious to avoid, namely the over-separation of art from life. Furthermore, insofar as paronymy must involve an act of the imagination, it must be in a very limiting sense, because

it denies to imagination the very obvious anchor that it has in the world of real emotions, even when they're transposed to aesthetic judgment. in fact there is no reason at all why I should not feel real sadness when listening to a piece of music, and still employ the term 'sad' in an aesthetic sense, as long as the object of my emotion is the music experienced - but this would be to introduce intentionality into the account and therefore to undermine the whole notion of 'non-descriptive' meaning. It also, of course, introduces its own attendant dangers of over-determining the meaning insofar as an intentional analysis can't avoid talking about how we typically respond to aesthetic objects. How Scruton introduces 'intentionality' and relates it to the imagination I shall be considering in the next chapter.

One final point that has to be made is that so far, we have been considering 'aesthetic judgment' in terms of a fairly narrow aesthetic response to works of art, even though, as we have seen, this inescapably involves us in a consideration of non-aesthetic emotions. Once we get on to the non-aesthetic content of works of art (e.g. the presentation of ideas about society, psychological analysis etc.) the problem with 'unasserted responses' becomes even more acute, as we shall see.

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21) SIBLEY, FRANK 'Aesthetic Concepts', in MARGOLIS, J. (Ed.) Philosophy Looks at the Arts (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962).

22) SCRUTON, ROGER op. cit., p. 48.

23) SCRUTON, ROGER op. cit., p. 49.

24) SCRUTON, ROGER op. cit., p. 55.

25) WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG Philosophical Investigations, translated by ANSCOMBE, G. E. M. (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1963), II xi p. 216e.

26) SCRUTON, ROGER op. cit., p. 65.

27) SCRUTON, ROGER op. cit., p. 55.

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29) SCRUTON, ROGER op. cit., p. 66.

30) KANT, IMMANUEL The Critique of Pure Reason, translated by KEMP SMITH, NORMAN (London, MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1964) p.545.

31) BECKETT, SAMUEL Proust (London, John Calder, 1965), pp. 20-21.

32) WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG The Blue and Brown Books (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1960), p. 5.

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CHAPTER THREE: Can aesthetic experience be 'rational'? Scruton's account of the imagination

Central to the 'magic' of aesthetic experience is the phenomenon that we often respond to works of art as if we believed that the 'world' they embodied were, in some sense, real or present to us. This is normally attributed to the power of imagination to go freely beyond the given (the province of Kant's 'reproductive imagination'), both as regards its thoughts (e.g. vividly conjuring up the fictional world of a novel 'in our mind's eye') and what it perceives (e.g. seeing the sadness in the blues of a Picasso portrait or a Tchaikovsky symphony, or even 'perceiving' intimations of immortality in a starry sky, as Kant did). How far such imaginative responses are, in fact, primarily volitional as Scruton would have us believe and how far they arise from involuntary processes within us (Kant's 'empirical imagination'), is a debateable point to which I shall return. Some aestheticians, notably Elliott[1], have viewed such involuntary responses normatively, as exemplifying our most vivid, powerful and for some, all too rare contacts with works of art, when they 'come alive' in a revelatory sense. Up to a point, Scruton seems to share this view, and further wants to make the very intelligibility of our descriptions of aesthetic response depend upon the ability of others to have the same kind of imaginative experiences as ourselves.

The problem is, however, that in talking of such experiences as if their objects were 'in some sense' real, we hedge them around with an 'as if' language that would seem to lead us right back to the central problem of the previous chapter - namely, that once again we seem to be positing a 'special' usage, a sadness that is both real and unreal, parallel to the "special" meanings that some aestheticians have attributed to aesthetic judgments. Austin is one of the many who exemplifies this 'special meaning' approach, as when he talks of the similar phenomenon of 'empathy':

> We do talk of e.g. feeling another person's displeasure, and say, e.g. 'his anger could be felt', and there seems to be something genuine about this. But the feeling we feel, though genuine 'feeling' is not in these cases, displeasure or anger, but a special counterpart feeling.[2]

In recent years this problem has attained something of the status of a 'philosophers' paradox' (which is as much as to say that the layman is not too bothered by it!), as in the protracted and inconclusive series of articles that followed on from Radford's article, How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina?[3]. Much of the inconclusiveness surrounding this topic arises, I shall argue later, because all these writers along with Scruton, ignore the very important distinction that needs to be made between the intentional and the involuntary aspects of such responses. Thus on the one hand, there is the rational pressure that seeks to limit our responses to what is appropriate in virtue of a consideration of the intentionality of our emotions. From this perspective of course, it does seem odd to have feelings directed towards objects that we know to be imaginary - not, in the case of works of art, because an obvious mistake has been made like hearing a radio drama as a news bulletin, but because the work of art, although like life, is not real life. On the other hand however, there is the fundamentally involuntary side of emotional response, or what R. S. Peters calls its 'passivity'[4], which arises when we become 'in the grip' of an emotion, and which would appear to be indifferent to the normal, rational criteria of 'appropriateness'.

A similar problem may also be seen to arise in those cases of perception which involve 'seeing an aspect' beyond what is given by our 'everyday' awareness - e.g. the case cited by Elliott[5] of 'seeing' the cathedral columns as a forest of trees, or hearing the sadness in the music when I know that the music, as such, can't have feelings. Ultimately, is there any more to such 'aspect perception' than e.g. mistaking a tree for a charging elephant in the twilight? As Elliott

says, "imaginal experience may be of the highest aesthetic importance", but then he adds, adopting the voice of the sceptic, "perhaps it is all superstition and describing it, an elaborate exercise in self-deception"[6]. Plato similarly alternates between these two opposing views of the imagination as a kind of revelation and as false belief and the fact that he was still putting forward the former view in the Phaedrus, written after The Republic would suggest that he never really resolved this dilemma. One might of course advance the kind of view that Nietzsche embodied in his account of the Apollonian side of human nature - namely, that we are often willing partners in such self-deception:

> The ground of Being, ever suffering and contradictory, time and again has need of rapt vision and delightful illusion to redeem itself.[7]

but such a position is immediately vulnerable to Scruton's objection that this entails using the work of art for a further, and in this case, ultimately self-indulgent end.

To introduce belief in the material reality of the aesthetic object would obviously be to confuse hopelessly the real and the imagined world. So how can we keep our experience of works of art within the fold of rationality when, at the same time, all our normal beliefs in the reality of what we experience seem to be held in a state of suspension? (N.B. This sense of 'suspended belief' needs to be kept separate from the sense in which it was used in the first section of Art and Imagination, where it was seen as a necessary condition for 'reflective judgment'.) At this point it ought to be made clear that what is not in dispute is that most people are in fact capable of powerfully responding to a whole range of objects, including works of art, that they know "in the back of their minds" to be imaginary. Even Sartre, for example, used to believe, at one time, that he was being followed around by a giant lobster! Leaving aside

for a moment the special status of our response to works of art, this is simply a contingent feature of human consciousness which may be seen both as a curse and a blessing. Outside the realm of art however, such responses tend inevitably to be seen as highly irrational and hence to be explained away causally by associationist psychology. it is this type of imagination that Ruby Meager has in mind when she says:

> Imagination will work on any ideas that float into our minds, however remote from actuality they may be; and left to itself will develop them almost invariably along lines congenial to wish-fulfilment or fear-fulfilment.[8]

For Kant, this is the terrain of the involuntary 'empirical imagination' - to be contrasted with the freedom necessary for arriving at rational beliefs (the freedom that makes possible, among other things, the Kantian ideal of 'free beauty' that transcends all 'conditioned' preferences). I shall argue later that it is too easy to dismiss all associative responses to works of art as aesthetically irrelevant, although how this will be reconciled with the idea of imagination as essentially voluntary as put forward by Scruton (and also, although in a rather different form, by Sartre) remains to be seen. For the moment, what we are primarily concerned with is how we can be justified in regarding our imaginative responses to works of art as a rational kind of activity when, in relation to other kinds of imaginary objects, such responses are thought of as irrational, superstitious, hallucinatory etc. As Shakespeare put it:

> What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?[9]

Since, then, no claim for the literal truth of imaginary objects can be made without absurdity, it is sometimes claimed that art yields a special kind of truth. only to be found in art, as though the artist were some kind of alchemist. But this is once again to introduce a "special sense" argument - in this case, a "special sense" of truth

condition. Scruton attacks this version of the 'magic' of art when he argues that:

> the appreciation of magic art is a confused affair in which belief and enjoyment are inextricably mixed.[10]

However, before we can go on to examine just what relationship does exist between imaginary objects and truth (which is really the topic of the third section of Scruton's book) we must first 'clear the ground' by examining in more detail just what is meant by 'imaginary experience' in Scruton's argument, and how this relates to the possibility of a rational account of aesthetic response.

In fact the very idea of 'imaginative experience', both in its mental 'conjuring up' and perceptual 'seeing as' roles, has come under much attack. If, in the first sense, we mean by it something on the analogy of an interior film show, then it is difficult to see how it can survive the devestating attacks made on it by Ryle, Wittgenstein and Sartre. Equally, in the latter sense, if it is seen as entailing the viewer as in some way re-constituting the aesthetic object for himself, then it is difficult to see how this can be reconciled with the important role that direct perception plays in 'reflective judgment'. Dufrenne, for example, sees imagination in a re-constituting sense as a direct threat to the 'plenitude of the sensuous' revealed to us by the 'imperious' aesthetic object:

> Imagination appears to us to be repressed rather than stimulated by the aesthetic object.[11]

Of Debussy's La Cathedrale Engloutie, he says:

> Is it suitable that we evoke this submerged cathedral, that we raise images of some fabulous city, of submarine ruins in transparent and perfidious water, and of bells whose spirit survives the disaster by some miracle? Such representation only obstructs the listening.[12]

Here, we might want to argue that the very richness of Dufrenne's description betrays a tacit acknowledgement of the evocative power of such music to produce, within our imagination, a coherent aesthetic

experience which could never be equalled, at any rate in this case, by the austere attention to pure sound that he seems to be advocating. Nonetheless, what both arguments have in common (i.e. Ryle et al.'s and Dufrenne's) is a protest against the over-population of our perception with two objects when what is intended is only one object, namely, that which the work of art is trying to bring to our attention (metaphorically speaking) - just as when we try to imagine an absent object such as Ryle's Helvellyn or Sartre's Peter, it is the original that remains the proper object of our intended meaning.

In thinking about imagination then, the great temptation to be avoided is the positing of a sunken cathedral as a kind of mental entity that can only be reached by introspection. As Wittgenstein says:

> One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when one imagines anything, but how the word "imagination" is used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about words. For the question as to the nature of the imagination is as much about the word "imagination" as my question is. And I am only saying that this question is not to be decided - neither for the person who does the imagining, nor for anyone else - by pointing; nor yet by a description of any process.[13]

The 'logically private' image, as distinct from the describable private <u>associations</u> of the individual, is literally unthinkable because any description that I may offer of my imaginative experience (or what I find myself perceiving) must presuppose the public meaning in virtue of which it is identified. Therefore to describe an 'image' as such, as opposed to an image <u>of</u> something, would be to describe nothing at all. From this point of view, the central problem with the first section of Scruton's book was that, in characterizing aesthetic judgments in terms of my spontaneous response to an object (e.g. I just find myself experiencing sadness when I listen to the music), the 'directedness' of such responses is ignored. Emotions like sadness, for example, can never be conceived of adequately in terms of the old empiricist model of autonomous mental states, floating around in some

'inner space' because, in Scruton's words:

> Responses are intentional...they involve an awareness and understanding of their objects. As a result they must be founded on a certain conception of their object.[14]

The unavoidable introduction of intentionality in this middle section of the book would seem however to create several problems for Scruton's complex synthesis of 'empiricism' and 'conceptual analysis' - not least of which, of course, is the vexed status of 'non-cognitive' acquaintance. What most immediately concerns us here, however, is to find out whether or not the introduction of the intentional aspect of responses works against the rational possibility of feeling real emotions about unreal objects, insofar as the normal beliefs and judgments by which we identify the various emotions, and upon which they depend for their intelligibility, seem to be left in a kind of limbo. For example, I am normally saddened by states of affairs that I judge to be suitable objects of pity, but how could a piece of music or a fictional character fit this description?

In terms of the 'grammar' of imagination then, how can Scruton reconcile the demands of the argument from intentionality with his notion of a 'weak acceptance condition' - i.e. one where "neither belief nor desire are present"[15]? Scruton bases his answer on a theory of imagination as an "activity...essentially contrasted with belief"[16]. This in itself is not too difficult to establish, being based on (a) a straightforward conceptual contrast - i.e. if I asserted what I imagined then it would become a belief; (b) an appeal to the psychological phenomenon already mentioned - namely that we just do find ourselves experiencing many emotions, ranging from mild amusement to paralyzed horror:

> as responses to the scenes that a man calls up in his imagination[17]

(c) a far more suspect view of the imagination as paradigmatically <u>voluntary</u>. by contrast with belief.

Behind this separation of imagination from belief, however, lies a far more ambitious aim to base a whole theory of art on a philosophy of mind that radically separates objects of belief from objects of the imagination - with works of art coming wholly within the latter category:

> My experience of a work of art involves a distinctive order of intentionality derived from imagination and divorced from belief and judgment.[18]

This drive towards a belief-free view of art (the central theme of the third section of Art and Imagination) would seem to arise from Scruton's concern to establish that the intentionality of aesthetic response must rule out any attempt to describe such a response independently of the aesthetic object (e.g. by reference to a separately specifiable emotion or personal association, or, as in the third section of the book, to our beliefs about the world at large). Without this anchor in intentionality, Scruton fears that we will inevitably be led towards the undesirable use of works of art such that we only come to value them for the feelings that they arouse in us (or, as he argues in the third section, for knowldege about the world that we might gain from them but which we might as easily gain from a text book). The disappearance of the aesthetic object to which such an attitude is seen to lead, helps to explain the philistine phenomenon often so poorly understood by teachers, of how very banal or sentimental art (such as Tretchikov's 'Chinese lady' or some pop music) can be found more moving be many pupils than Anna Karenina - not that their responses are necessarily banal in themselves. Scruton's argument is questionable, however, in that it arises not only from a Kantian concern with specifying the proper object of aesthetic response, but from a far more stipulative and ad hominem appeal that such a view:

> goes completely against our deep conviction that art does not so much arouse as control the emotions, converting crude feeling

into directed thought.[19]

But can't it also work the other way round? This seems to be an unduly limiting principle for the imagination's operation in aesthetic experience, to which I shall return in a moment.

As with the argument from paronymy, Scruton's most pressing problem in this middle section of the book, then, is to show how we can entertain the thoughts and 'aspect-perceptions' of imaginative experience as a rational activity when normal truth conditions are suspended. To achieve this, he sets out to show that there are other examples of intentional acts that hold belief in suspension yet are generally regarded as rational. This is not too difficult to demonstrate, since there are ready to hand:

> modes of thought that involve not the assertion of 'p', but the more elusive abitity to hold the proposition that p before one's mind, to entertain p as a possibility, or as a supposition.[20]

Imagination is seen to belong to this class of mental acts in virtue of its capacity to "entertain propositions as unasserted", as when we imagine the cathedral columns to be a forest without ever believing that a real metamorphosis has taken place. In all such cases:

> the content of our thought is the content of a belief; but the thought process itself is independent of this belief.[21]

Whether or not the thought is later asserted, as it might be in the case of scientific speculation, the meaning remains the same in either case because 'assertion', as Frege pointed out, is not part of 'meaning'. Imagination then:

> is a special case of 'thinking of x as y'. It has two objects: the primary object (the X or p that has to be imagined), and the secondary object, which is <u>how X or p is described</u>.[22]

However, we clearly can't simply leave it at this, since as it stands, 'y' could be <u>anything</u>. But whereas the rationality of activities like the scientific imagination lies in its ultimately leading to assertion (or what would be the point of entertaining such speculations in the first place?), aesthetic imagining need have no such

goal. Yet we are clearly prepared, in a weaker sense, to assert the appropriateness of our descriptions of imaginative experience, and it is on a filling out of this 'appropriateness' that Scruton's case rests:

> (Imagination) involves thinking of these descriptions as appropriate in some way to the primary object. Imagination is a rational activity.[23]

But if it is "the thought that lies at the heart of the experience" that is now centre-stage in Scruton's theory, what of his empiricist belief that the ultimate intelligibility of our aesthetic descriptions must come to rest in a direct experience of the 'knowledge by acquaintance' type? If Scruton is under pressure from the argument from intentionality to produce a propositional account of art in terms of the rational rule 'entertaining as unasserted but appropriate' (in the Rylean tradition of treating imagination as a species of 'pretending'), he is still under pressure from his empiricist alter-ego to carve out a rationalizable place for non-propositional experience in filling out his 'appropriateness' criterion. Thus although an image (e.g. of the lion as fierce or of the music as sad) is always "a kind of thought about something", i.e. it has intentionality, equally, we learn that it is never <u>just</u> a species of thought, because it has additional properties like "intensity and exact duration"[24]. In fact an almost Humean view of the imagination creeps in when Scruton points out that:

> we speak of images as fading - a description that is not applicable to thought.[25]

Nonetheless:

> Little of interest...can be said about aesthetic emotion, beyond describing the thoughts on which it is based...There are no subtleties in our aesthetic emotions that are not matched and explained by subtleties in the thoughts on which they are founded ...If we attempt to communicate an aesthetic emotion then, we communicate a thought.[26]

The crux of this claim is not so much that the experience is

synonymous with the thought, but that any attempt to communicate it can only be in a propositional form.

However, although it is difficult to see how we can expect a description of aesthetic experience to be anything more than this, the fact remains that, as Scruton agrees, there is still, at the heart of the thought, a resistant core of direct experience, even though conceptually it is nothing:

> Indeed all our ways of referring to images seem to suggest an element of experience over and above the constitutive thought.[27]

Recourse to phenomenological descriptions here cuts no ice with Scruton, being dismissed as "pleasant but uninformative"[28] because they are not 'descriptive' in the required but impossible sense of giving us direct access to such experience. If we are to make any sense at all of this extra-linguistic core, then we must ask:

> What is it about <u>another</u> that enables us to say of him that he has images?[28]

One answer to this is that, although both mental images (e.g. imagining the chairman as an elephant) and aspect-perceptions (e.g. seeing the sadness in someone's face) depend on subjective experience in the sense that they go beyond the literal thought or the habitual reactions of our everyday perception, both nonetheless find expression in a public language in the sense that someone:

> will describe his visual image of x in terms that are equally appropriate to the experience of seeing x.[29]

Secondly, as we have seen, in the absence of normal truth conditions, the communicability of such descriptions will further depend on:

> thinking of the description as appropriate in some way to the primary object.[30]

The problem with the criterion of 'appropriateness' <u>qua</u> rational appraisal is how any particular interpretation of an aesthetic object can be communicated without reference to truth conditions of any kind whatsoever. Scruton's predictable answer to this is that:

> In imagining, propositions are entertained for a reason, and the reason is to be found in the subject matter and nowhere else. This is all we need say here about the concept of the 'appropriate'.[31]

His choice of Alice in Wonderland to illustrate the point for the way that it "exploits...amusing possibilities without paying the least regard to plausibility or truth"[31], works all right, but only because it is a favoured example. His other example of Madame Bovary is less happy:

> (Flaubert) chose the detail of his story in the light of what he thought to be most revealing and expressive of the provincial state of mind, whether or not such details were in any way likely to occur.[32]

To cite this as an example of a 'proposition entertained as unasserted but appropriate' looks like a glaring equivocation on the word 'revealing' that shows just how vulnerable Scruton's radical separation of imaginative objects from objects of belief really is. Of course a proposition that is "revealing of the provincial state of mind" invokes truth conditions in a general if not a literal sort of way and if Flaubert had painted an inaccurate portrait then, in this instance, it would clearly be inappropriate as a description, as opposed to the Alice in Wonderland example where it would be all part of the fun - although even here, one might make out a case that Carroll was giving a 'true to life' account of the absurdities of adult behaviour as seen through a child's eyes. I shall, however, leave a detailed account of this aspect of Scruton's argument until I come to look at the third section of the book. Suffice it to say for the moment that Scruton's account of the intentional side of 'appropriateness' seems to suffer from some of the same arbitrariness that was found in his earlier account of the 'paronymous' meaning of aesthetic terms.

What then of Scruton's account of the role of so-called 'non-cognitive' experience as a contributory factor in establishing our sense of appropriateness? This appears in two ways, related respect-

ively to mental and perceptual imagery. In the case of the former:

> It involves the ability to form an image which 'matches' the experience.[33]

- as when, on reading a poem of Wilfred Owen's, I try to imagine the precise experience of dying in battle that the poem intimates. This ability "is not given by the ability to describe the experience", because, as in the case of Siegfried who wanted to know what fear was like, one would need to know what it was like independently of its description. As we shall see later, it will be Scruton's very important contention, in the third section of the book, that works of art can communicate such 'knowledge', though of course not in the sense that an extra meaning is being communicated.

As with mental 'images', when I imaginatively <u>perceive</u> some aspect beyond what is given by the primary object (e.g. seeing the cathedral columns as a forest of trees), the same appeal to appropriateness is evoked. I may of course also point to analogies and physical correspondences, but insofar as my 'seeing as' transcends the given, then:

> I wish also to show what my image is like, in the sense in which really to <u>know</u> what it is like is to have the image oneself.[34]

Thus, as with mental images, imaginative 'seeing as' has, over and above the intentional interpretation of the object, a necessary element of "unasserted visual experience"[35] on analogy with the unasserted propositions that form the objects of our mental imaginings. As Elliott describes it, in suitably dynamic terms:

> A sort of struggle ensues between the real and imaginal for possession of the visual impression.[36]

- as when, for example, the cathedral columns 'shape up' as a forest.

Where does this leave us? Just as earlier, it was argued that no adequate description of an aesthetic experience could be given that ignored the intentionality of the response, so now the emphasis starts to swing back the opposite way:

> For it is clear that, in the experiential sense of 'seeing as', the thought cannot be isolated from the experience and described independently.[37]

If imagination is thus a type of thinking, then it would seem to be a very unitypical type because in asking others to agree to the appropriateness of our aesthetic descriptions, we are not simply asking for agreement in judgment but agreement in <u>experience</u> - a far more demanding criterion than that which normal assertions seek. For example, whether or not we consider the triplets in Schubert's A minor Sonata to be 'wistfully dancing' or 'tragically stumbling' will ultimately depend, when all the interpretive arguments have been run through, on the fact that we just have to <u>hear</u> them this way - since both interpretations can be supported by reference to first-order features of the work. Interestingly, a kind of analogical imagination is still at work here, although not so much in terms of finding correspondences between the sadness in the music and sadness in real life, as in that:

> the experience of hearing the sadness in the music is in some irreducible way analogous to hearing the expression of sadness in another's voice.[38]

- e.g. Schubert's 'falling' phrase may expressively intimate the experience of someone sobbing with grief rather than just trying to copy the sound of sobbing . In the same way, the 'halting' rhythm may intimate the image of someone tragically stumbling.

In some ways, this is possibly the richest section in this middle part of the book - not only because of Scruton's brave attempt to set the highly subjective-seeming area of our vivid personal experience within a rational framework, but furthermore to make this area the ultimate court of appeal for the appropriateness of our aesthetic descriptions (i.e. to hear the sadness in the music, we must hear it for ourselves). This is seen to be made possible by the power of our imagination to take us into the 'inside' of the work of art, beyond the reach of any description. However, in the absence of truth con-

ditions, such examples as that of the responses to Schubert triplets above may still be very vulnerable to the sceptic's charge in that, as Wittgenstein might ask, 'how could we ever know that this experience of hearing sadness is like a previous experience, without any independent way of checking up on it?'

However, there is yet another pressing problem that Scruton finds left on his hands in his attempt to establish a rational basis for aesthetic responses. Insofar as the emotional elements of such responses are experienced with:

> neither the belief nor the desire characteristic of (them)... present.[39]

it would seem that they may be in the strange position of not actually <u>having</u> any emotional content as such:

> Indeed, it may be that the word 'response' is already tendentious as a description of this experience. For it seems to imply something emotional, while it may well be the case that the recognition of sadness in a work of art involves nothing emotional at all.[40]

Of course, insofar as we are reflecting <u>descriptively</u> on the intentionality of an emotion (e.g. I reflect on Lear's anger, entertaining a rich profusion of propositions about old age, ingratitude, parent-child relationships, the mind attaining insight under great stress etc., all shaping up into a complex thought of the 'anger of an old man'), then Scruton is quite right. It is of the essence of art to enable us to reflect on powerful emotions without becoming their victim - and in this respect, 'entertaining' is virtually synonymous with 'distancing'. But what of the other side of aesthetic response, originally delineated by Aristotle - the 'impulse to draw near', which imagination <u>also</u> makes possible? - i.e. when we are not simply entertaining a work of art but imaginatively entering into it, as when we feel Lear's anger of feel pity <u>for</u> him, not to mention feeling the beauty of the lines in which all this misery is expressed. of course none of this would be possible without a grasp of the intentionality

of Lear's emotions, but Scruton's view that "the intellectual content of the aesthetic experiences may be so pronounced that any talk of 'emotion' seems out of place"[41] suggests that he means to apply this not just to reflecting on the nature of the emotion but to our empathic responses as well. This once again highlights the arbitrariness of his criterion of 'appropriateness'. Such 'detachment' may of course be appropriate as a response to something like Bach's Art of Fugue, but it might also be argued that such an austere or, dare one say it, anaemic imaginative experience may be due to a failure of response on the listener's or reader's part. We recognize, at a descriptive level, all the subtleties of Shakespeare's account of Lear's anger, but find that we are unable to feel it or to feel pity for him. Such a response may also be due, of course, to the inadequacies of the work of art itself - it fails to move us though we may acknowledge its subtle intellectual content, as for example in the case of 'twelve tone' music.

Now if Scruton really means our empathic responses to works of art to be empty of any real emotional content, then we are right back to the problem with which we started - namely, recommending a 'special sense' of emotion which once again threatens to destroy the vital continuity between aesthetic and non-aesthetic experience on which the rationality of our aesthetic responses must rest. Scruton is well aware of the problem, and also of the fact that:

> if aesthetic experience did not involve emotion, or something like emotion, we would be unable to indicate its value.[42]

He therefore makes an ingenious attempt to being empathic emotion back within the pale along the following lines. Just as I can entertain propositions without believing in them:

> Why can I not also 'entertain' desires?...just as I may recreate in my imagination the thoughts that I would have (e.g. that 'the lion is fierce'), so I can recreate the feelings to which these thoughts give rise (e.g. the resulting fear that I would feel if the lion were real).[43]

However if we thought that this promised a more full-blooded kind of emotional response in Scruton's account, we would be wrong. Such an "imagined counterpart" is kept securely tethered by the role of convention in art, the purpose of which, for Scruton, is "to overcome emotional involvement"[44] along with its attendant danger of fantasizing the aesthetic object.

> Convention neutralizes fantasy and removes the sterile gratifications which fantasy seeks in art.[44]

Furthermore, insofar as, in the 'knowledge by acquaintance' sense:

> little of interest...can be said about aesthetic emotion beyond describing the thoughts on which it is based[45]

the aesthetic emotions do seem to end up for Scruton in a special category of 'ineffability':

> Hence the so-called ineffability of aesthetic emotions is a logical consequence of their being mental states at all. [45]

What we seem to be left with then, for all Scruton's injection of 'knowledge by acquaintance' into the argument, is a fundamentally propositional view of art in which 'non-cognitive' emotions as such play nothing but a strange 'ineffable' role. Much of the problem that Scruton seems to have with putting our aesthetic experience on a rational footing lies in his preoccupation with keeping a rather narrow view of the aesthetic object centre-stage, while keeping at bay any argument that seems to bring extraneous intentional objects into the proceedings - be they real emotions or anything else. This leads him to ignore, among other things, the crucially important role that imagination may often be needed to play in giving 'body' to a work of art by filling out its missing gaps (a role that it plays in ordinary perception too) - which may range from supplying the concealed landscape behind a character's head to concluding that Hamlet studied metaphysics when he was at university. It might also be argued therefore that the imagination has a similar constitutive role to play in supplying emotions of the 'knowledge by acquaintance' type to fill out

the subtle thoughts of the text. Sartre, for example, argues that:

> The literary object has no other substance than the reader's subjectivity. Raskolnikov's waiting is my waiting, which I lend him.[46]

Scruton's argument, as we have seen, is based on the premise that to experience real emotion in relation to works of art is not to experience the work of art, but something else. But this begs the question by assuming that real emotions must be tied to real objects to be rational. Now while this may be true outside the world of art (e.g. in the case of delusions and hallucinations), Scruton has not shown why it should be true of art as well. True, as he points out, belief drops out and along with it the impulse to act, but this in itself is not sufficient to cause us to reclassify aesthetic feeling as a special 'ineffable' emotion. What of the more or less universal tendency to 'suspend disbelief' in the presence of artistic fictions? We really do weep over Anna Karenina for all that we know she is only a fictional character; and, since all talk of 'appropriateness' in relation to aesthetic response must come to rest in an ad hominem appeal (the only kind of appeal you can make to 'knowledge by acquaintance'), I would venture to suggest that most people would regard this as a reasonable response - more reasonable, in fact, than not being so moved. This would imply that Scruton has not so much defined the nature of imaginative feeling as advanced a recommendation that we make the goal of aesthetic experience a very high-level intellectual response. How he reconciles such normativeness with his professed aim to present an empirical account of the terrain is none too clear. Scruton's theory may be seen as a useful corrective to the 'affective' theory's emphasis on emotional response at the expense of the intentional object of that response. However, as a general theory, it not only runs counter to what, as I shall argue later, is a more reasonable and more natural response to art, but also ignores the very im-

portant role that involuntary imagination may be seen to play in such experience - both as regards the 'free play' of associations (crucial to a work of art's evocativeness) and the phenomenon, already mentioned, of being 'in the grip' of an emotion.

The 'involuntary imagination' has been greatly neglected in aesthetic theory because it has generally been dismissed as mechanical and arbitrary, the province of Kant's 'empirical imagination'. However, particularly with respect to the role of emotion, we cannot avoid taking into account R. S. Peter's crucially important argument[47] that emotions are connected not only with beliefs and judgments (the 'appraisal' side), but also with causal factors that are bound up with individual and social psychology (the 'passive' side). While it is the 'appraisal' side of emotions that makes an understanding of them possible (i.e. as emphasized in Scruton's account), their 'passive' (i.e. involuntary) side seems to have a life of its own that largely escapes the influence of reason and objectivity - hence the deep misgivings of philosophers like Scruton that have been echoed from the time of Plato onwards. Nonetheless, without the presence of this 'passive' element we cannot be moved in any way by the work of art, however much we have grasped it at the descriptive level. Insofar as this element is involuntary, it can only arise spontaneously within us - although it is more likely to do so if we give our imagination and understanding 'free play'. If such an emotion does not arise within us, as in Scruton's case of trying to imagine the experience of what it is like to die in battle, or standing in front of a painting whose aesthetic 'message' one has not yet felt, then one can only await its dawning, which may not occur, rather in the way that we try to send ourselves to sleep by inviting sleep to come. It is further typical of such experience that the harder we try to bring it about through an act of will, the more elusive it is liable to prove - yet often, in a

sudden moment of relaxation, when we least expect it, it may arrive, thus underlining its involuntary nature. It may, of course, come as the reward of close and arduous attention to the meaning embodied in the aesthetic object, but it may also arise in a very immediate way, as when we seem to apprehend the tragic quality of a symphony from a few opening bars, even though we have clearly not had the time to give it our close attention. Sometimes we may feel overwhelmed by an emotion or association of ideas evoked by a work of art, and yet be unable to identify the source of such an experience. In such cases, the whole process works in reverse and it is the experience which sends us off in search of a meaning, as in the well-known case of Proust's madeleine[48].

In all such cases of the 'involuntary imagination' at work, we have to offset the potential dangers of self-indulgent fantasizing and what T. S. Eliot called "having the experience and missing the meaning" against what seems the equal danger of Scruton's approach that we may over-intellectualize the work of art and miss its legitimate 'magic'. Kant certainly seems to recognize the importance of the free play of involuntary imagination in his account of 'aesthetic ideas' in para. 49 of the Critique, which I shall be considering later in relation to Scruton's chapter on 'Symbolism'. For the moment, suffice it to say that insofar as Scruton's account refuses to acknowledge a role for the involuntary imagination, it does indeed start to look rather anaemic when set alongside the kind of epiphany to which such imagining can give rise, as exemplified, for example, in Kant's account of the 'aesthetic idea' to be explored later, or in the works of Proust, or in R. K. Elliott's free-ranging account of the spontaneous associations generated by the perception of the cathedral columns as a forest of trees:

> We experience a rush of associations, astonishment, a sense of privilege and freedom, and, since the world of the forest is a

remembered world, perhaps a feeling of nostalgia. It is as if the spectator suddenly experienced the meaning of some joyous idea which had been gathering force in his unconscious.[49]

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CHAPTER FOUR: Do works of art point beyond themselves? Scruton's account of 'representation' and ' expression' as "special cases of aesthetic interest".

How does the aesthetic 'world' (i.e. the world of perceptual form as an 'end in itself') relate to the wider world that might seem to be represented, expressed or symbolized in most works of art? Until now, there is a sense in which the whole discussion has been dogged by a nagging ambiguity in our use of the word 'aesthetic', as between its 'pure' use in relation to the beauties of perceptual patterns and, on the other hand, its connections with standard, non-aesthetic human emotions - an ambiguity deliberately exploited by Scruton to preserve the continuity between aesthetic and non-aesthetic experience. Such ambiguity tends to arise because too 'tight' an account of aesthetic response can only lead either to the unnatural contortions of the 'formalists' who treat the non-aesthetic content of works of art as if it were a mere peg on which to hang the exotic garment of 'significant form'[1] or else to the ultimately banal collection of 'aesthetic objects' which Kant invites us to consider as exemplifying 'free beauty':

> Birds...sea shells...delineations à la Grecque, foliage for borders of wallpapers...all music without words.[2]

Not even Kant can have been too happy about classifying music along with wallpaper!

On the other hand, if we turn away from the narrowness of the aesthete's use of 'aesthetic' and attempt to extend its use to cover our responses to the representational and expressive elements within the work of art, then we are in equal danger of falling prey to the aesthetic insensitivity of the philistine insofar as this entails replacing the aesthetic object with something <u>outside</u> the work of art as the focus of our attention. As such, no account of the nature of our <u>aesthetic</u> interest can then be given. Once again therefore, we are back with the problem of how we can do justice to the aesthetic

qualities of works of art while maintaining their continuity with the world at large.

Of course, as with the previous account of imaginative experience, that works of art combine aesthetic and non-aesthetic features is not in dispute. Thus at one end of the scale, there are works of art which create worlds whose governing principle seems to be aesthetic (e.g. Turner's romantic sea ports), while at the other end there are works whose main interest seems to be to give us a view of the world, governed by a quest for truth (e.g War and Peace). It is part of the richness of art as a human enterprise that it has encompassed such a range, virtually from cave paintings onwards.

However, no appeal to the 'facts' of art history can help us to solve the immediate problem with which we are confronted here - namely, how we are to give a unified account of our response to the 'mixed' nature of most works of art (i.e. all those works of art which don't feature on Kant's list), without forcing art into the distorting moulds of the aesthete or the philistine (i.e. the 'philistine' who would only value art as a quasi-text book).

One solution to the problem has been to treat the forms that are the intentional object of pure aesthetic response as though they had a further, and in some cases metaphysical significance. Clive Bell, for example, in his self-confessed 'wilder moments' is sometimes tempted to make pantheistic claims for 'significant form' as revealing "the God in everything...the all-pervading rhythm"[3], while it is central to Kant's later arguments in the Critique that our imaginative perception of 'design' in nature gives us intimations of the unassertable 'rational ideas' of freedom, immortality and the summum bonum. Whether or not we go along with such special claims for aesthetic form however, it will not be of much help to us in solving the problem of the 'mixed' work of art as regards the rest of its non-aesthetic

content. Unless, therefore, we can give a unified account of our response to such works, we may be left with having to accept that the aesthetic and non-aesthetic 'worlds' are mutually exclusive, thus making their contiguity in works of art a totally arbitrary state of affairs - a thesis that the aesthete can hold without inconsistency (i.e. as long as 'significant form' is achieved, it doesn't matter whether you are writing about 'war and peace' or painting a bowl of fruit), but which for others might be seen as tearing the work of art apart.

Now in one way, the whole issue can be seen as distorted insofar as it has been set up in terms of a contrast between what takes us 'outside' the work of art and what leads us to make the work of art our only focus (the Kantian 'end in itself'). This is because in fact, the demands of the 'pure' aesthetic response also end up by taking us as much 'outside' the individual work of art as do the seemingly non-aesthetic demands of representation and expression. This may be seen if we look at the conventional categories under which cultures divide and sub-divide their art forms. Thus, to read a poem <u>as</u> a poem (or a lyrical ballad <u>as</u> a lyrical ballad) must presuppose that one has at least some idea of what is meant by the concept 'poem' (or 'lyrical ballad'), which will in turn, as Scruton points out, be:

> determined by an intention, which is in turn, dependent upon a system of conventions and traditional effects. Aesthetic interest will, therefore, depend for its full expression on a complex knowledge of human institutions.[4]

In this respect, the individual work of art <u>qua</u> aesthetic object does indeed point beyond itself to the public world of the 'aesthetic community' in which it takes place, such as that of Renaissance painting, New Orleans jazz, Cubism or even the 'community' of the 'Dada' movement which could only properly be understood, at least in part, in terms of the conventions that it overthrew. Thus if Kant had taken the view attributed to him by Scruton:

> that aesthetic appreciation does not depend for its existence on any classification of its object[5]

then he was clearly wrong - although it seems unlikely that Kant did think this, in the light of the following passage in the Critique which suggests that beauty in art is probably 'dependent':

> if the object is given as a product of art and as such is to be declared beautiful, then, because art always supposes a purpose in the cause...there must be at bottom in the first instance a concept of what the thing is to be ...it follows that in judging of artificial beauty the perfection of the thing must be taken into account.[6]

In other words, our ability to recognize that a particular work of art aspires to be a 'sonata', a 'romantic landscape' or a 'tragedy', and that it exemplifies the goals of a particular 'aesthetic community' such as that of 'Cubism', 'Symbolist Poetry', 'Early Renaissance' or 'Late Romantic', must play a part in any intelligible aesthetic response. Insofar as all aesthetic appreciation must therefore presuppose, however minimally, our familiarity both with the work's formal type and the context of the 'aesthetic community' in which it arose, then it follows that no aesthetic judgment worthy of the name can arise sui generis.

However, although such familiarity is a sine qua non for the proper appreciation of any work of art, this is never a simple matter because it must also include an awareness of how, for example, succeeding 'aesthetic communities' and especially our own contemporary ones, have revalued past works of art. This in itself may lead to much confusion in aesthetic judgment insofar as we may make demands upon a work of art that may suit our own perspective but be inappropriate to the work within the context of its original 'community of taste' - e.g. like criticizing 'twelve tone' music for its lack of melody, Shakespearian drama for its failure to follow the classical 'unities', or New Orleans jazz because it's not 'progressive'. Since

such complexities don't directly affect the argument in hand, perhaps all that we need say at this point is that it is a tribute to the inexhaustibility of great art that it survives and even flourishes on revaluation. All that concerns us immediately, however, is that the aesthetic identity of works of art is necessarily bound up with reference to formal and cultural criteria, which may themselves need to be grasped at an 'acquaintance' level, as we argued in Chapter Two - i.e if we are, in Scruton's sense, to 'see the point' of 'sonata form', 'Cubism' etc. (for ultimately, what <u>is</u> the point of e.g. the 'twelve tone' row as opposed to e.g. 'late romantic' music?). In practice of course, we may still respond aesthetically even when we are working, in our ignorance, with very general and therefore imprecise categories - e.g. pupils do not need to know about sonata form to respond to Schubert's sonata <u>as 'music'</u> or what a sonnet is to respond to a Shakespeare sonnet <u>as a 'poem'</u>, but then from an educational point of view, this is precisely how our general concepts of 'music' and 'poem' take on new and more subtle shades of meaning so that ultimately, we come to appreciate the sonata <u>as</u> a 'sonata', the satire <u>as</u> a satire etc. As Scruton says:

> The attribution of thought requires a certain background of behaviour. I can only attribute mathematical thought to someone who is able to display a measure of mathematical competence. In a similar way, there must be a recognised background of 'musical behaviour' before we can meaningfully attribute musical experiences to a man...The background of musical behaviour is culturally determined, and its place in human thought and feeling is given by its place in a culture as a whole.[7]

The acquisition of such a background would involve our attempts to 'share the gaze' of the aesthetic community from which such conventions grew - even though this would not be seen to exhaust the work's potential significance for other cultures and epochs - an assumption that must be made, incidentally, by any educator advancing a 'multicultural' aesthetic education.

However, as was said earlier, it is not just by aesthetic cate-

gories that we identify particular works of art, but also by what we see them as representing (e.g. 19th century society, Guernica, the sea) or expressing (e.g. sadness, irony). It would seem then that an appropriate response to such an object must presuppose not only an understanding of formal conventions, traditions etc. but also an understanding of that to which, however obliquely, it refers:

> It seems then, that the experience of art, unlike the experience of natural beauty, involves understanding. A man may understand, or fail to understand, the Four Quartets.[8]

Such a view of the role of understanding immediately seems to admit vast areas of knowledge and experience into our appreciation of art for:

> there is a sense in which no one unfamiliar with religious experience can understand the late quartets of Beethoven, no one ignorant of mediaeval civilization can understand the Divine Comedy.[9]

In his book Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy for example, M. Baxendall points out of Piero della Francesca's Annunciation that:

> if all Christian knowledge were lost, a person could well suppose that both figures, the Angel Gabriel and Mary, were directing some sort of devout attention to the column.[10]

Expression in art likewise points beyond itself to acquaintance with the mental states being expressed:

> To understand expression in art, we must first understand the intention that underlies expression in life...Being expressive is related to being evocative. I cannot find an object expressive unless it 'reminds' me of something.[11]

- as the face of Piero's Mary, according to Baxendall, would have evoked for an audience familiar with the 'annunciation' story, a complex emotion in which would be mixed surprise, disquiet, reflection, inquiry and submission. Here the work of art doesn't just point the reader beyond itself towards knowledge of the world but also to 'knowledge by acquaintance' with the mental states which the work is expressing. Because this knowledge can't be put into words, it looks as

if Scruton is here advancing the 'paronymous' argument again (i.e. the music strikes me in some way as expressive of the feeling of sadness). However, as with our response to aesthetic conventions, Scruton also links such expression (e.g. the expressiveness of Rodin's hands or Brancussi's birds) once again to a public background:

> Someone with sufficient culture and experience will grasp from these works something that he may be unable to put into words.[12]

What follows from all this is that works of art not only point beyond themselves to things in the world, including mental states, but also to the 'aesthetic communities' in which they take shape. But there is also a further implication here, which Scruton does not seem to take into account. Insofar as the identity of a work of art depends on its representational and expressive aspects, it will inevitably reflect the nature of its 'aesthetic community'. Thus, in those cases where the community itself is partly defined by its interest in non-aesthetic issues - e.g. the preoccupation of early French 'romantic' painters with revolutionary subjects, Impressionists and Cubists with celebrating everyday life, or Jacobean drama with political corruption - Scruton's attempt both to recognize the artist's intention and to deny that the work of art can ever take 'strong' truth conditions, must inevitably come into conflict with works of art that belong to such traditions (i.e. where a concern with truth is central to the tradition).

The importance of understanding works of art then, has naturally suggested to many aestheticians the view that art may be seen as:

> an instrument of knowledge...In particular art has the power to represent reality and to express emotion.[13]

This is characterized as the 'cognitive' theory of aesthetic response - the problem being of course, how one can call it a theory of aesthetic response when it presupposes that something beyond the work of art must be the object of our attention. It is to be distinguished

both from the weaker 'semantic' theory and Scruton's own attempt to treat representation and expression as "special cases of aesthetic interest" - both of which aim to keep the 'aesthetic object' centre-stage. The 'cognitivist's' view of representation is exemplified e.g. by Weitz[14] who argues that literary statements in general, while making no original claims to truth, are nonetheless capable of implying other statements that do make verifiable truth claims. Thus, for example, the 'surface' fiction of Balzac's novels implies many verifiable propositions about 19th century France, among which are those discovered by Engels, when he speaks of Balzac's:

> complete history of French Society, from which, even in economic details (for instance the rearrangement of real and personal property after the Revolution) I have learned more than from all the professed historians, economists and statisticians of the period put together.[15]

Croce serves to illustrate a kind of 'cognitivist' view of 'expression' insofar as he regards the real work of art as residing in the artist's original 'intuition' or vision for which the 'surface' structure of the work is a mere vehicle of communication. What Croce and Weitz have in common is that the work of art as such comes to be seen as

> one symbol among many, with a function that is primarily referential.[16]

In fact Croce actually describes his aesthetics as "a general theory of linguistics"[17].

The 'cognitivist' then is someone who values art primarily for its power "to stimulate our curiousity about the world" qua representation and/or its power to communicate an original 'intuition' qua its expressiveness. Whether or not such a position can be reconciled with keeping our main focus on the work of art, I shall be considering later. In the extreme form in which Scruton presents their case however, it would seem that there is little place left either for (a) aesthetic pleasure, insofar as aesthetic form is reduced to an unim-

portant feature of the 'surface' structure, or (b) the imagination, at least with regard to its relationship to representation where the only role that seems left to it is one of lightening the burden of learning with vivid, but ultimately dispensable images.

Unless the 'cognitive thesis' can survive such objections, then it follows that works of art assume the status of quasi-text books:

> I learn from works of art, facts about the human condition[18] says Scruton, and as such there is always the possibility that the particular work of art could be replaced without loss of meaning by something which did the job much better, such as a psychology or sociology text book. In Book X of The Republic Plato did in fact take the view that the artist was at best a writer of inferior text books, since if poets or painters really knew anything "about cobbling or generalship or anything whatever", then they wouldn't waste their time in producing works of art, but would get on with some real cobbling, or go off and fight a battle! Seen through such philistine eyes, the artist can only look like a pseudo-expert who writes about things of which he has little knowledge or experience. Furthermore, even if it were argued that there are many occasions on which the artist does make a better job of it than the 'expert' (e.g. Balzac on French history), then Scruton would still have to argue that the work of art was only being valued for the cognitive 'translation' that was being wrenched from it, leaving what remained (i.e. the aesthetic form and imaginative content) as an empty husk.

Scruton's objection to the 'cognitive thesis' is not simply confined, however, to a protest that it makes the work of art potentially redundant, but that, in introducing 'strong' epistemological truth conditions, it entails a mistaken view of art as a 'translatable' language. For Scruton, translatability is of the essence of 'natural language':

> For translation is a possibility as soon as there is an interpretation, and all natural languages are inherently interpreted. In other words 'reference' in a natural language seems immediately to open the possibility of translation...Truth introduces the idea of equivalence, and hence of translatability.[19]

To treat art as a language, however, not only makes for insuperable difficulties in the case of forms like music (where the analogies between grammar and musical form are very superficial), but directly conflicts with Scruton's view that (a) works of art come to rest in an 'untranslatable' experience of the 'knowledge by acquaintance' type, as when he says that:

> The recognition of expressiveness belongs in part to 'knowledge by acquaintance', and cannot, therefore, be fully replaced by description.[20]

and that (b) the very sense of a work of art is uniquely tied to its particular form of expression, so that any 'translation' must entail the misrepresenting of this 'embodied thought'. For example, in the case of perceptual imaginative experience:

> Insofar as it might be useful to conceive aspect perception as the sensuous 'embodiment' of a thought, we must recognize that the thought itself can never be fully specified independently of the 'perception' in which it is embodied.[21]

The same goes for the mental 'images' evoked by literature, which are seen to be equally tied, unlike the 'translatable' thoughts embodied in natural language, to the aural impact of sounds and rhythms which are the literary work's counterpart to the sensuous qualities of the visual arts and music.

> At every point where a poem presents something that needs to be understood, understanding comes to rest in an experience, and not a mere hypothesis or paraphrase.[22]

Indeed, this is the one area where Scruton is prepared to admit that works of art can be a source of knowledge, in the only sense of 'knowledge' that is compatible with the 'untranslatability' thesis - namely 'knowledge by acquaintance':

> Their value resides partly in the fact that one can learn from them what an experience or state of mind is like, even when no words can convey this knowledge in their stead.[23]

Such an argument is particularly attractive in considering such notions as 'atmosphere' and 'evocativeness' in works of art:

> The very suggestion that we could say what is expressed by the lines:
>
> Dans l'interminable
> Ennui de la plaine,
> La neige incertaine
> Luit comme du sable...
>
> is absurd: in understanding such a poem we come to see that its atmosphere is indescribable.[24]

Nor is it of much use for the 'cognitivist' to protest that what he is really concerned with is something beyond the literal significance of the words, i.e. all the subtle layers of meaning that 'lie below the surface', because insofar as he is still concerned primarily with uncovering verifiable propositions then, as with non-aesthetic propositions, these can be phrased in any number of different ways, as long as the truth-criteria remain the same:

> In the sense in which one may understand the thought of a scientific or historical treatise, the identity of a thought is secured not by the identity of its expression but by the identity of the conditions for its truth.[25]

Unlike other assertions then, no work of art can be seen as a member of a class of equivalent expressions whose meaning can be specified independently. Thus for Scruton, not only are the thoughts of art untranslatable into truths of other forms of knowledge (which is the case in <u>any</u> form of knowledge - e.g moral truths cannot be put mathematically etc.) but it would also follow that each particular work of art embodies a thought which can never totally reappear in the thought of another work of art. Insofar as this distinguishes art from <u>all</u> other forms of knowledge, it is here that its special identity and value is to be found. This still leaves the nature of the relationship <u>between</u> the arts and other forms of knowledge to be sorted out, and I shall return to this all-important question after I have examined how Scruton fills out the thesis. First however, we must look at a major problem arising from the above account. Insofar

as Scruton seems to be arguing for a complete identity of sense and expression, then how can he explain the existence of works of art that are over-ornamental or verbose, or, on the other hand, too elliptical? Furthermore, Scruton would also have to admit that even the alteration or omission of a few insignificant words or brush strokes would affect the work's identity. The fact is that artists tend naturally to rewrite and correct their work, even to the point where, as in Wordsworth's rewriting of The Prelude, we might prefer to talk about two different poems rather than more or less successful versions of the 'same' poem. The fact that 'one to one' correspondence between the artist's intention and its surfacing in aesthetic expression seems therefore to be only an ideal (or what Kant might call a 'regulative demand of reason') might seem to lend support to Croce's dualistic account. However, as I shall be exploring in more detail in the chapter on 'objectivity'[26], what the artistic process of rewriting and correcting really seems to suggest is the presence of very subtle and difficult to describe acts of aesthetic judgment, such as Wittgenstein describes:

> How do I find the 'right' word?...Without doubt it is sometimes as if I were comparing them by fine differences of smell: That is too....., that is too....., - this is the right one.- But I do not always have to make judgements, give explanations; often I might only say:"It simply isn't right yet"....Sometimes I can say why. This is simply what searching, this is what finding, is like here.[27]

As Wittgenstein argues all along, such judgments can never be formulated as rules, but only arrived at through sustained experience of the appropriate 'form of life'.

Similar considerations also apply (a) to those works of art that do not 'represent' as well as they might (e.g. a portrait that does not quite 'hit it off'), but as this would also involve considerations of truthfulness, I shall leave aside such cases until later in the discussion; (b) to the all too familiar tension that is often to be

found between our imaginative experiences of works of art and the often seemingly feeble attempts that we make to express them: As Elliott says:

> Descriptions made immediately after an imaginal experience...are beginning to lose their authority even before we have written them down. What exactly <u>did</u> the cathedral look like when it was as if floating?...Remembered contents of a state of rapture always seem very scanty and disappointing.[28]

Such an experience also gives us an intimation of what the artist may go through - although we must be careful not to slip back into too much of a Crocean view, for here the danger is always that in making a 'ghostly' intuition the main focus of our attention, we down-grade the sensuous 'surface' of the work of art to a mere vehicle for the communication of an independently specifiable truth, and thus bring on the unacceptable type of 'dualism' against which Ryle and Wittgenstein so often warn us.

The main problem with the 'cognitivist' thesis, as far as we are immediately concerned, is that in giving an extensional construction to what's represented and expressed in works of art it refers us beyond what is in the work to what is in the world at large, including mental states. In its full-blown form, this inevitably leads to the 'philistine' thesis that values a work of art "because its a good likeness", however much the crudity of this formulation is replaced by more sophisticated interpretations of 'resemblance' going beyond notions of literal likeness. Since aesthetic appreciation must, of necessity, be directed primarily towards the aesthetic object and not beyond it, the problem for Scruton therefore is how he can incorporate representation and expression <u>into</u> the aesthetic object, while at the same time preserving their <u>intensional</u> connections with the world at large. Unless the intensional connection between things in the fictional world and things in the real world can be preserved, then the account will once more be dogged by the problem of 'special

meanings' that beset the earlier account of 'the music is sad'.

This is, in fact, precisely where the 'semantic thesis' put forward in various forms by such writers as Langer and Goodman, runs into difficulties. The 'semantic thesis', a weaker version of the 'cognitive' one, seeks to account for representation and expression in art not in terms of its actual resemblance to the real world (i.e. extensionally), but in terms of the way it denotes in virtue of its sense (i.e. intensionally). Where fictional objects are concerned, it is suggested that we may therefore explain their 'representational' function as we would an 'empty' description - i.e. they have a definite sense, but no reference, like 'The present King of France is bald'. In trying to give an account of intension without reference however, a 'semanticist' like Goodman is led to posit a 'special' intensional construction of fictional objects as class-terms embodied in the notion of 'unbreakable one-place predicates' like 'Pickwick-picture':

> What tends to mislead us is that such locutions as 'picture of' and 'represents' have the appearance of mannerly two-place predicates and can sometimes be so interpreted. But 'picture of Pickwick' and 'represents a unicorn' are better considered one-place unbreakable predicates, or class-terms like 'desk' and 'table'...Obviously a picture cannot, barring equivocation, both represent Pickwick and represent nothing. but a picture may be of a certain kind - be a Pickwick-picture or a man-picture - without representing anything.[29]

Now this highly ingenious 'solution' in fact raises almost exactly the same problem as Sibley's 'special' use of 'sad' in that it fails to give an adequate explanation of how the (intensional) sense of 'unicorn-picture' connects with what we normally understand by 'unicorn' (i.e. which enables us to apply it extensionally). As Scruton points out:

> It can be immediately objected to this that it fails to explain the sense in which our classification of pictures is secondary to our classification of the objects they portray.[30]

In other words, to appreciate that 'a is a picture of b', it must be possible to see the content of the picture as 'b', and so there must

be a relationship here with a prior intensional grasp of 'b', even though 'a', qua fictional object, consists in a re-arrangement of elements taken from the actual world that wouldn't be found there in that particular form - as in the case of a fictional hero drawn from a composite of real life characters, or, in the case of the unicorn, taken from a synthesis of such realistic categories as 'horned animal' and 'horse'.

Nor does the 'semantic theory' fare much better in its handling of the non-fictional content of works of art - as in the attempt of writers like Langer[31] to give an extensional account of expression in terms of an 'untranslatable' revelation about individual existence. For such writers, according to Scruton:

> Artistic symbolism is entirely sui generis: it does not express knowledge of universals; instead, it conveys a sense of individual existence. It is for this reason that works of art cannot be translated. Art is not conceptual, but rather 'immediate' or 'intuitive'.[32]

In Langer's argument, for example, because words do not present the logical form of individuals and because it is in virtue of sharing logical form that works of art refer to individuals, works of art are therefore to be seen, qua expression, as untranslatable 'presentational' symbols. But once again, this suffers from all the obscurity of other 'special use' arguments, in this case because its trying to be both cognitive and non-cognitive at the same time - i.e. in the sense that works of art are seen to refer to individual existence, but without any rules of reference:

> The work of art picks out an object (in this case a feeling), but predicates nothing of it.[33]

At best therefore all that we can say about the relation between the work of art and what it refers to on such an account, is that it's analogous to saying "Look at that!" and pointing. Of course such a view of 'untranslatability' is to be distinguished from Scruton's own version where the thought is 'embodied' in the text, rather than

beyond it.

A further damaging consequence of the 'semantic thesis', which it shares with the 'cognitive thesis' although for different reasons, is that the work of art qua sensuous surface once again disappears from view. This is because, insofar as "(a painting's) place in the (symbol) scheme is fixed not by its reference but its sense"[34], then it follows that:

> The relation between representation and visual appreciation will now be entirely arbitrary.[35]

Insofar as no account can then be given of the role of iconic imagery in art, all connection between aesthetic interest and representation is now severed - which now starts to make the 'semantic' thesis look even more extreme than the 'cognitive' one.

Scruton's own aim, then, is to show that representation and expression in art, far from taking us beyond the work of art or being aesthetically irrelevant, are in fact "special cases of aesthetic interest"[36], helping both to explain our interest in the work and acting as a guide to the imagination. Furthermore, as part of the more general programme of maintaining continuity between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic worlds, he must show, as against the 'semantic theory', how the relation between the intensional and extensional constructions of what is represented and expressed can be understood. The solution for Scruton lies in parting company with both versions of the 'cognitive' thesis by severing all connections with 'reference' and in its place providing an extensional construction in terms of the 'intentional object' that comes into our mind as we attend to the work of art - a solution that is clearly phenomenological in conception despite Scruton's misgivings about this school of thought:

> If 'a is a picture of b' were to mean 'a is intended to resemble b' or 'a can be seen as b', then 'b' would occur in each case as part of a complex psychological predicate, and serve to identify the so-called 'intentional object' of a mental state[37]

- in the same way as believing'that p' doesn't entail the existence of p, although the meaning of 'p' would be the same in either case (i.e. both intensionally and extensionally). Here, the 'intentional object' carries the weight of extension without any need to account further for the lack of reference. The parallels with phenomenology are obvious. Thus I can be <u>thinking</u> about e.g. Blake's tiger intensionally (which is what Husserl calls the 'empty intention' or bare thought of the object - image-free and feeling-free) while at the same time, attempting to <u>realize</u> an appropriate embodiment of it in my imagination (which is what Husserl calls 'intuitional fulfilment' - the 'filling out' of the bare thought with a proliferation of imagined viewpoints of the tiger):

> The intensional sense would then be prior, the central component of meaning in either construction.[38]

I shall reserve a detailed discussion of what this implies until Chapter Six.

However, as it stands and in such a 'phenomenological' form, such a concept of the 'intentional object' is far too free-floating for Scruton in that it can't account adequately for any of the following: (a) the distinction between genuine and accidental 'seeing as' (e.g. seeing pictures in the clouds), or the seeing of resemblances where none were intended (e.g. seeing a Mondrian 'abstract' as a species of modern architecture); (b) the distinction between 'realistic' representation (e.g. a Chardin 'still life' of a bowl of fruit) and 'unrealistic' representations of the same object (e.g a Cubist 'still life' of a bowl of fruit); (c) the way that aesthetic 'seeing as', as we have seen, is inescapably affected by our knowledge and experience of conventions and traditions.

In order to accommodate such objections (which all relate to the limitations that public language necessarily places upon intentionality), Scruton has therefore to limit the scope of his account of

aesthetic response by reference to two deeply interwoven external factors. Firstly, the artist's own intentions have to be taken into account (allowing for the fact that in many cases we may never be in a position to know them with any certainty). This in turn entails reference to the background of conventions and traditions in which, or against which, the artist worked:

> Convention and tradition imbue the painting with a sense of intention; the artist's meaning becomes through their aid a visible reality.[39]

Whether or not the introduction of the intentionality of the work of art effectively takes care of gratuitous aspect-perception will, of course, depend ultimately on how far one believes that the identity of a work of art can be defined in a non-arbitrary way. 'Structuralists', like Barthes for example, reject the whole idea of the auteur and along with it the 'bourgeois' notion that there is any such thing as a 'privileged' reading of a text. Since, for them, the relation between the 'signifier' and the 'signified' is quite arbitrary, an infinite plurality of readings is possible - for example, that King Lear could be about Manchester United, as has been suggested in a recent article, because:

> the Munich air disaster has been called a tragedy for Manchester United, and the managerial difficulties of the club have certain similarities to the problem of succession in Lear.[40]

Is this any less legitimate than interpreting the play as a Christian allegory, for example? Scruton chooses to ignore the battlefield surrounding this issue but, if pressed, would undoubtedly say that a full-blown pluralism would render impossible any rational basis for aesthetics, and that although his account of intentionality "by no means implies the heteronomy of aesthetic judgement"[41], one has to draw the line somewhere.

As with similar arguments in the first two sections of the book, Scruton's ultimate arbiter on 'aspect perception' is still the 'irred-

ucible' experience of the work - although this now has to be modified to allow for our knowing as an external fact that the work of art is meant to be seen as 'b', whether or not we can see it as that for ourselves. Nonetheless, in the case of a work's expressiveness:

> The 'identity' of expressiveness is not determined by the application of an external standard. This identity is the identity of an experience.[42]

And similarly for representation:

> By the intentional construction I mean the sense in which a similarity of appearance depends on a similarity between the experience of seeing an aspect and the experience of seeing the object ...A realistic representation a of b's face is not one where a looks like b's face, but one where the face I see in a is like b's face.[43]

Insofar as Scruton is here arguing that works of art do point beyond themselves (i.e. not only to the artist's and his aesthetic community's intentions, but also to our own experiences of those things which are expressed and represented by the work of art), it is crucially important not to confuse this with the kind of symbolic or iconic theories of reference put forward by the two cognitive theories. This is because what Scruton is arguing is that there's an identity between our experience of 'x' (e.g. seeing a starry sky at night) and our experience of the aspect, both representational and expressive, presented to us by the painting (e.g. Van Gogh's 'Starry Sky') which transcends both similarity of appearance (the 'cognitivist thesis') and reference in virtue of sense (the 'semantic thesis'). Furthermore, in the case where we never really noticed starry nights until Van Gogh opened our eyes to them so that now we see the stars as Van Gogh did (or as in Alyosha's 'Kantian' vision of the starry night in Brothers Karamazov[44]) works of art then become, as has been pointed out, an important source of 'knowledge by acquaintance'. Such an account also allows Scruton to put forward a theory of 'realism' in art that frees it from the naive philistine view of surface resemblance and locates it instead in the way that an artist, however

abstractly, 'hits it off':

> It makes sense to say that, while Guido Reni's head of Christ is a realistic portrait of the appearance of a suffering face, the Christ of some more primitive master (such as Cimabue) is more realistic as a depiction of the suffering.[45]

The main point here is that, even when no identity of appearance is involved, the work of art still does not function as a symbol, but as an embodiment of the experience. Such an account of 'identity' is also echoed by Wittgenstein:

> I draw a few dashes with a pencil and paper, and then ask: 'Who is this?' and get the answer: 'It is Napoleon'. We have never been taught to call these marks, 'Napoleon'...No one would say 'This is the same as that' in one sense. But on the other hand, we say 'That's Napoleon'...We have learnt the use of 'the same'. Suddenly we automatically use 'the same' when there is not similarity of length, weight or anything of the sort.[46]

Here, our grasp of the identity between Napoleon and the hastily drawn caricature is as incorrigible as our perception of the sadness in Cimabue's portrait - although of course not everyone will see it this way.

Unlike the 'formalist' then, Scruton does accept that a work of art may point beyond itself, even to the point where we may have to attribute an 'objective' aspect to it (as in the case cited by Beardsley[47] of the poet Housman's intention that his poem '1887' in A Shropshire Lad be taken seriously as a patriotic statement) despite the fact that we find ourselves unable to experience it this way (e.g. we find that we can only respond to the Housman poem as satire). So how does Scruton reconcile this with his view that representation and expression are 'special cases of aesthetic interest', leading us into the work of art, rather than away from it? Scruton's answer is that without a complex background knowledge (both qua description and experience) of aesthetic conventions, traditions, the artist's intentions, the things being represented and the states of mind being expressed, we could not even identify the work as a work of art, let alone make any sense of it. In the case of literature, owing to its

'mixed' nature, he is even prepared to allow that an interest in truth may have a role to play:

> The thought involved in appreciation of literature is, characteristically, 'unasserted', but this does not mean that truth is irrelevant to aesthetic interest. On the contrary, without an interest in truth, it would be impossible to be interested in meaning, and hence impossible to be interested in literature at all...One may admire a play or novel for the truthfulness of its vision...It is part of the 'impurity' of the novel that, more than other literary forms, it hovers in this way between assertive and unassertive discourse.[48]

However, for Scruton, such truth as we discover can never be the object of aesthetic appreciation because if it were:

> The content of the work could be phrased in any abstract way and one's interest would not outlive the perception of its truth.[49]

Furthermore, although Scruton doesn't raise this point, such propositions as we do abstract may often seem very banal as compared with our response to them as 'embodied thought' in the work. As Archibald MacLeish comments on Herrick's well-known poem To Daffodils:

> If you take the sayings of the poem out of the poem you have little more than the obvious banality of the observation that life is brief - that men are as mortal as daffodils. If however you put the sayings back into the poem something seems to happen to this banality...In Herrick's poem we are mortal - all at once and without warning we become this knowledge we think we possess and are shaken by it.[50]

For Scruton then, as we have said, the work of art does point beyond itself towards an outside context of great complexity which no account of aesthetic appreciation can choose to ignore - in fact one can almost define different aesthetic theories by where they choose to draw the line here. However, as I pointed out earlier, this does not mean that no one can appreciate works of art until they have a comprehensive mastery of such a background since, as with Wittgenstein's account of how we learn about colour, a hierarchy of aesthetic concepts would inevitably be involved in the learning process. Thus young children, operating with very general categories, could still appreciate ballads and free verse as poetry, or Impressionist painting or indeed the abstraction of their own art work as painting - although

clearly it is the task of aesthetic education to take children beyond such general categories, developing and refining them through a process of exposing children to a range of art forms, including those from other cultures.

However, for Scruton, the complex context towards which the work of art points is to be seen ultimately, not as a cognitive goal but rather as a set of 'enabling conditions' - i.e. a necessary background, the possession of which facilitates the guiding of our imagination along the paths of appropriateness. Once you have the background, then as with phenomenological 'bracketing', you put it behind you and attend to the work of art as the autonomous 'intentional' object of your reflection:

> We appreciate it not as a means for conveying information but rather as a vehicle of thought in whatever form.[51]

The problem is, once you have admitted in such a background (which includes truth conditions) can you really manage to turn your back on it so completely without putting the whole notion of the 'aesthetic' into question? Institutionally it would seem that art, like e.g. geography, is a 'mixed mode' with no sharp cut-off point between artistic activities and many other kinds of human activity. Novelists are frequently preoccupied with such 'non-aesthetic' issues as the interpretation of history, psychology, morality and metaphysics - invoking or challenging our preconceptions about the world in a way that seems to demand a response far closer to belief than merely to 'entertaining in imagination'. The interest of many painters in perspective and how we perceive light and colour borders on the mathematical and phenomenological. Furthermore, the suspension of belief becomes particularly acute (a) in certain cases where a value that we hold strongly is powerfully contradicted - e.g. the objectionable anti-semitism in Eliot's Gerontion; (b) in those cases where the writer intends to put some general truth across, but gets it wrong - which is

often taken as a distinguishing feature of bad art, e.g. as in the ludicrous sentimentality of some Pre-Raphelite paintings, certain novels and poems that give an idealized picture of war, Barbara Cartland novels etc. Of course this wouldn't apply to works of art that are intentionally fantastic like fairy stories and idyllic pastoral poems, nor would it apply to those cases where the artist gets some particular truth wrong - e.g. the way that Shakespeare got his facts wrong about Richard III. Where it does, or at least ought to bother us, is where a work of art presents us with something false masquerading as a general truth, as in the bland and sanitized 'portrait of the artist' in the film Moulin Rouge, which was nonetheless a beautiful film to watch. On Scruton's account, such examples of falsification could not be seen as 'inappropriate' unless they embodied an aesthetic failure. Of course it also has to be said that 'getting it right' doesn't guarantee aesthetic success either.

Insofar as Scruton maintains his thesis consistently, it can't of course be decisively refuted any more than can the 'formalist' position. Ultimately, however, despite its far greater cogency, it is as prescriptive as the 'formalist' and 'cognitive' theses which it challenges. The unity of all of them inevitably comes to grief on the Janus-like nature of most works of art which point both inwardly towards an imagined world whose full realization certainly does depend on the kind of 'acquaintance' that Scruton outlines; and outwardly towards the real world, as expressed in the propositions, implicit or explicit, contained within their aesthetic framework. One tempting solution to this problem of ambivalence is to say that the work of art renders such truth as it contains far more vividly than any text book, but this is still to downgrade the representational and expressive side of art in the end, to the level of a mere illustration of anecdote. What therefore seems to follow from all this is that in order

to do justice to the notion of an <u>appropriate</u> appreciation of works of art, we may need to set aside the logical demand and accept that the concept of the 'aesthetic' is a fundamentally ambiguous one - an idea that I shall be examining in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

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CHAPTER FIVE: Can 'evocativeness' in works of art have a rational basis? - Scruton's account of 'symbolism' in the arts

Just as we learn to interpret the material signs of language so also, with the aid of imagination, do we learn to 'read' the world around us as another, veiled 'language', symbolizing thoughts and emotions that lie beneath the level of surface appearance. What distinguishes such non-linguistic signs from linguistic ones is that they already have a primary meaning (e.g. a red light) which according to its context may come to symbolize a secondary one (e.g. that traffic must come to a halt, or that we are entering a 'red light' district). To borrow for a moment the convenient terminology of 'structuralism', we may recognize the world around us either at the 'surface' level, where we take everything at its 'face value', or else at the 'deep structure' level, where our response to objects often goes far beyond any simple act of recognition. In the case of works of art, certain expressive symbols may come to dominate the whole work so that rather than presenting us with an 'aspect', as Scruton points out[1], they come to 'suffuse' the work with a special atmosphere in which the 'secondary' thought is 'embodied' - Virginia Woolf's lighthouse, Mallarmé's faun, Baudelaire's temple of nature, Henry James' pattern in the carpet, Conrad's shadow-line and Lawrence's rainbow, for example. The question is, on what basis do we ascribe meaning to such symbols?

The problem really arises because such acts of symbolic recognition may come about in a bewildering variety of ways. Thus, at one end of the scale, there are those categories of symbol which approach the truth-functional 'stability' of the linguistic sign - i.e. all those symbols which depend for their recognition on our knowledge of the conventions of a culture as embodied, for example, in the 'standard' ways that we interpret gestures, clothes, traffic signs, allegorical fables etc. Then there are those categories of symbol which depend for their recognition on our knowledge of some 'deep/sur-

face structure' theory such as that of Freud or modern 'structural anthropology'. This type of symbolic interpretation lays claim to objectivity insofar as we are held to <u>discover</u> the underlying meaning rather than deriving it from a conventional source. Here, the 'expert' sees himself as being able to 'read off' surface structure symbols in terms of their reference to the objective 'deep structure', as in the case of Freud's posited mechanism of the unconscious. This category would also include, however, less 'dogmatic' symbol schemes like that of Kant in which we are invited to consider aesthetic objects as if they were a symbolic representation of morality and a 'designed' universe, even though we cannot assert this as such.

At the other end of the scale, symbols may arise 'sympotomatically' from quite arbitrary personal associations - as the taste of the madeleine comes to suggest Marcel's childhood in <u>Remembrance of Things Past</u>. It seems likely that most, if not all people have their storehouse of such 'private' symbols which, for the individual concerned, have powers of evocation that are beyond the reach of any other type of symbol:

> No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate than a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses...and at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory - this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence.[2]

Insofar as such 'symbols' as the madeleine arise from a 'mechanical' association, we can make no appeal to any aspect in the primary object to aid our interpretation. Such 'symbols' as these (including, also, those which may evoke very painful meanings) are empirically although not logically private to the individual who experiences them, in the sense that only that individual can hold the key which unlocks their significance to others, as Marcel reveals the significance of the madeleine to the reader. Even then, the key may be lost to the indi-

vidual himself, as in the case of Marcel's 'vision' of the avenue of trees at Hudemesnil[3]. On the other hand, as I shall examine in more detail later, the reader's ability to recognize the evocativeness of the madeleine at the 'knowledge by acquaintance' level must come from his capacity to relate it to analogous symbols in his own experience - insofar as he himself possesses 'private' symbols which have the effect of restoring his own childhood. This is what Proust himself seems to be suggesting when he says that:

> In reality, every reader is, while he is reading, the reader of his own self...The recognition by the reader in his own self of what the book says, is the proof of its veracity.[4]

However, in the process, what happens to the work of art as the intentional object of the reader's response?

This is, in fact, precisely the problem to which Scruton addresses himself in his account of how the act of gazing at an estuary in hazy sunlight evoked in him 'a mixture of peace and longing' - a state of mind which he then finds 'perfectly expressed' in the lines:

> Vois sur ces canaux
> Dormir ces vaisseaux
> Dont l'humeur est vagabond.[5]

Here, Scruton seems to base the incorrigibility of his judgment that both estuary and poem symbolize the same state of mind, not on any appeal to the 'transparent' intentionality of the work of art, but rather upon the kind of incorrigibility that Kant identified in the 'judgment of pleasure'[6] - i.e. we can be no more mistaken about whatever an object may happen to evoke in us than we can about what pleases us immediately. Insofar as this judgment is based on immediate acquaintance with the state of mind evoked and our ability to 'call it to mind' (Scruton's condition 'A' - see footnote), then

Footnote (extract from Scruton op. cit., p. 231): A. It is necessary that the subject should be able to call the feeling in question to mind, and thus 'imagine what it is like'. The knowledge that is gained from the recognition of expression is, in this as in (P.T.O.)

this is to say no more than that the estuary and poem evoke whatever they evoke - and if they happen to evoke an identical state of mind then this does not necessarily tell us anything 'objective' about the poem itself. Even with conditions 'B' and 'C' added (see footnote), to the effect that such a state of mind must arise from first-hand contact with the work of art[7], this still does not rule out the possibility of accidental and irrelevant associations since, as we shall see in detail later, there is a causal, 'passive' side to the relationship of 'evocativeness', in virtue of which anything can potentially evoke anything according to the individual's case history - e.g. the estuary and poem might evoke incorrigibly for me, a feeling of restlessness. Again, if we look at this problem from the point of view of the artist's intention then Van Gogh's chair, for example, evokes incorrigibly for me a feeling of radiant calmness, but how do I know that for Van Gogh it doesn't symbolize, say, a numbing ennui?

What Scruton's story misses out, apparently deliberately at this stage, is any account of the 'public' side of the primary symbol, although one is evidently available to him, e.g. in the way that boats rocking on the tide tend, by association, to evoke a longing to visit distant shores. In this respect, even if we were able to trace a causal case history for Scruton's 'vision', along the lines of Proust's madeleine, the secondary object (i.e. the feeling of peace and longing) may also been seen to arise from relatively 'public'

(Footnote continued:) every case, a form of knowledge by acquaintance. The subject is made familiar with something which he may not be able to describe in words. B. The feeling should be called to mind by the work of art. That is, the thought or perception of the work should cause the subject to think of, or entertain, the feeling. We cannot say, in the abstract, which features of an object might give it this evocative power, and this accords well with the intuition that what makes a work of art expressive of some emotion cannot be laid down in advance of the particular case. C. It is necessary to perceive or have perceived the work of art if one is to take it as an expression. That is, the experience of symbolism cannot be obtained at second hand. This condition needs, I think, no further comment.

features of the primary object that simply aren't available in Proust's case. Thus, although qua passivity, I have no control over what an object may evoke in me, I may still be able to transcend this subjectivity through reflection on such 'public' features of the primary object. I shall return to this point in a moment. The problem for Scruton is how one manages to do justice to this intentional side of the work of art while keeping our experience of it as the primary object since, as he points out later on, it is quite possible to experience a work of art symbolically in one way, while offering, at the same time, a very different, rational explanation:

> I might experience a work of art as a symbol of regret, while producing reasons for treating it as a symbol of the frivolity of courtly existence (assuming that the Watteau, or some similar painting, will bear both interpretations). In other words, the idea of justification does not in itself suffice to explain how my feeling is 'directed' at the picture.[7]

Before we can go on to examine this further however, we must first complete our enumeration of the different kinds of way in which we may come to recognize symbols. Finally then, somewhere in the middle of the scale between the semantic, conventional symbol at the one end, and the personal 'case history' symbol at the other, comes that class of symbols produced by the power of the 'analogical imagination' where the primary object shares some quality or other with the secondary idea towards which it points, but where there is no 'ready to hand' rule of interpretation in advance of individual cases - as when we see the storm in Lear as symbolizing the inner, mental storms of the old king, or when we see a seascape as Matthew Arnold saw it in Dover Beach as evocative of a whole world of inescapable sadness, repeated endlessly by the sound and motion of the waves, or finally Kant's example of the handmill as a symbol for the despotic state:

> For between a despotic state and a handmill there is, to be sure, no similarity; but there is a similarity in the rules according to which we reflect upon these two things and their causality.[8]

Unlike the other types of symbolism already considered, the symbols

produced and understood by the aid of the 'analogical imagination' are free, both from the determinate rules of conventional and 'deep/surface structure' symbols (unless they end up, as some do, conventional 'dead' metaphors) and from the psychological constraints of 'association' that rule the 'empirical imagination'. Thus Kant puts it:

> The imagination is very powerful in creating another nature, as it were, out of the material that actual nature gives it. We entertain ourselves with it when experience becomes too commonplace, and by it, we remould experiences always indeed in accordance with analogical laws...Thus we feel our freedom from the law of association (which attaches to the empirical employment of imagination), so that the material applied to us by nature in accordance with this law can be worked up into something which surpasses nature.[9]

In this respect, our ability to grasp such analogical symbols has much in common with our similar ability to grasp the use of aesthetic predicates, as discussed in Chapter Two - and most notably as regards the role of 'reflective judgment' here.

Now insofar as such symbols as those already discussed are 'translatable' by reference to the conventional, symbolic codes of a culture, to the 'deep structure' of some theoretical perspective or to an individual's case history of associated ideas, then our ability to respond to such symbols will primarily depend on cognitive procedures - even where, as in the case of semiological 'hermeneutics', a plurality of interpretations is aimed at. Where artistic symbolism is involved, this clearly brings on once again, the familiar objection already outlined against the 'cognitivist' aesthetic in the previous section - namely, that the symbolism only has interest as a code to be cracked. What is of primary interest here, therefore, is whether there also exists a class of symbols to be found paradigmatically in works of art, but also in our experience of the world at large, whereby the sensuous image itself (i.e. the 'primary object') is seen to be an 'embodiment' of 'secondary' thoughts and feelings, not in the

manner of a referential symbol, anecdote or illustration, but rather as an untranslatable 'fusion' of the particular 'primary object' with a universal 'secondary object'. This 'fusion' may, perhaps, be described as an affective response to a meaning. For example, Watteau's Embarcation à Cythère evokes in me what I can only describe very inadequately as 'feelings of regret about the transience of human happiness'. However, I do not see beyond the painting towards a general reflection upon human life that I might have gleaned from any number of sources including real life experiences, but rather the look of the painting itself "provides the elaboration of my thought"[10].

Insofar as such a construction of a 'symbol' is idiosyncratic (although there are important precedents in Kant's account of 'aesthetic ideas' and Hegel's 'concrete universals'), we once again run into the familiar danger of recommending a 'special use' approach with words like 'embodiment' and Santayana's 'fusion', that may effectively explain nothing. As Scruton says:

> Either we invent some new metaphor, or else we turn back in a circle and explain 'fusion' in terms of symbolism, insisting the while that here, symbolism is sui generis and not to be explained in terms of some linguistic or semantic paradigm.[11]

Either way, the connection with normal usage, so important for preserving the connection between the aesthetic and non-aesthetic world, is lost and the mysterious poetical quality that we tend to experience through such symbols degenerates into mystification. Nor does it help, at this stage of the argument, to point, as we did earlier, to features in the primary object which relate to the thought (e.g. the rather mournful light that bathes the landscape in Watteau's painting), since this can only:

> be seen as providing us with the genesis of symbolism, not its analysis. But this does not tell us what it means to say that the poem symbolizes a certain state of mind.[12]

So what do we mean by 'embodied thought' in the work of art? Part of the problem is that if such symbols as Watteau's painting are

recognized not by an appeal to predetermined rules of interpretation (unless, of course, he belonged to an 'aesthetic community' that was developing a symbolic 'vocabulary' like e.g. the Symbolist poets of the 19th century), but rather through reflective feeling and imagination, then as with the similar case of 'the music is sad', how can they enter into a 'public' language? In the case of symbolism which is representative rather than expressive - e.g. a political cartoon that purports to represent the 'militarism' of our present prime minister in terms of a nuclear missile with an identifiable face - one may always appeal to such an 'aspect' to lend stability to the symbol. However, Scruton wants to argue that often, in the case of expressive symbolism, no such 'aspect' is available to us insofar as what I 'see' in the primary world of Watteau's seaport is another 'invisible' world, the transience of human happiness which is the intentional object of my feeling, and:

> It is not yet clear what it means to say that a picture can be seen as something that is in itself invisible.[13]

In particular, Scruton identifies this 'invisible world' with the poetic 'atmosphere' evoked by such works of art, although he will not allow it to function as an 'aspect' - presumably because of its rather dramatic difference from the duck/rabbit paradigm.

> In particular (the notion of an aspect) seems not to cover the phenomenon of atmosphere, in which a large part of the expressiveness of works of art consists. Certain works seem to be 'suffused' with emotion - such as Watteau's Embarcation à Cythère or Tennyson's Ulysses...These are prime examples of artistic 'symbolism'; such works of art are treated as perfect expressions of a state of mind and in this task of symbolism we can think of no prosaic statement that could stand in their place.[14]

For Scruton then, the 'way in' to such 'recognition of expression', in the absence of any referential rule, is via the relationship of 'evocativeness' established between the spectator and the work of art:

> An object is expressive if it 'corresponds to', or 'symbolizes' a state of mind, where correspondence is a matter of evocation, not of reference.[15]

Now the concept of 'evocativeness', which is often regarded as synonymous with the presence of a mysterious (i.e. 'indeterminate') 'poetic' quality in art, e.g. as cultivated by the 'Symbolist' poets like Mallarmé, is a complex and ambiguous one in two main ways, (a) aesthetically, and (b) psychologically.

A) Although there is no necessary connection between responding to objects aesthetically and as symbols of the 'embodied thought' variety, such symbols often do seem to enhance our aesthetic perception, lending to it this 'poetic' quality. Thus a landscape may move me aesthetically, but if it also evokes, e.g. a lost childhood paradise for me, then its aesthetic qualities may seem to be immeasurably enhanced. Is this really legitimate? If others share this reaction, e.g. as a result of sharing a certain cultural background, then it may have aesthetic relevance, providing that it is not abused by making the object a mere spring-board for self-indulgent fantasy - Scruton's recurring and legitimate worry. Scruton himself wants to locate the aesthetic significance of such symbols in the Kantian criterion of desire to prolong the experience:

> Part of the expression of this state of mind will reside in the desire to go on observing a particular object, and this is why we might wish to say that interest in 'symbolism' is always aesthetic.[16]

But it is also a feature of 'evocativeness' that an aesthetically indifferent environment, e.g. a suburban avenue, may be equally as evocative as the rural landscape in virtue of some chance association and seem to take on 'poetic' qualities that it ought really not to possess, in much the same way as Proust's madeleine. Now of course Scruton, following Kant, would quite rightly reject such an arbitrary 'association of ideas' as having any aesthetic relevance, but the problem for him is this: if you make the state of mind that is evoked the primary intentional object of your feeling (i.e. as embodied in the kind of 'affective theory' towards which Scruton is veering in

Chapter Fifteen), then where and how do you draw the line between 'private' evocativeness à la madeleine and 'aesthetic' evocativeness as embodied, for example, in the landscape?

A full discussion of this problem must await the discussion of aesthetic 'objectivity' in Chapter Eight. Clearly however, the contrast that is needed at this stage is one between those cases where a public link is established in virtue of the culturally recognized analogies and associations that go with the primary object (such as the association between 'forests' and 'childhood' reinforced by so many children's stories) and those cases where the link has no other foundation than an accident of personal history in which case, virtually anything could stand in the object's stead, e.g. as the smell of furniture polish or the sound of a lawnmower could stand in the place of the madeleine. Whereas the madeleine, then, only has links at the arbitrary level of a fortuitous 'association of ideas', the landscape, on the other hand, has both kinds of connection - i.e. at the level of 'association of ideas' it has an arbitrary connection such as that I just happened to spend my childhood holidays in countryside like this, but a suburban avenue or even a run-down housing estate might happen to be equally evocative and therefore substitutable as a 'symbol' of that state of mind; however at the more 'public', analogical level there are connections such as the one already mentioned between 'forests' and 'childhood' which many painters and writers clearly take advantage of, for the evocative power that they know these will have for their audience.

The problem remains however, that while one might, without too much imagination, recognize such 'analogical' connections at the cognitive level, these might still fail to evoke, at the 'acquaintance' level, the affective state of mind wherein, for Scruton, aesthetic experience comes to rest. An appeal to public features of the primary

object is therefore not enough in itself to bring the aesthetic experience about because, as with all such experience, there are really two intentional objects here; the 'public' primary object and the subjective state of mind that it evokes. As we have seen, coining words like 'fusion' doesn't help, so what is the relationship and can it ever be given a public basis? Scruton's answer is that:

> When I see a as b, or see b in a, then my perception has two immediate objects: a (which is also the material object of perception), and b, the aspect, these two objects being fused in the sense that what I see must be described in terms of both of them. I think that we must recognize that 'double intentionality' is here entirely primitive.[17]

This leads on to condition 'E'[18] (see footnote) which seeks to establish the intentional connection between my affective state of mind and features in the primary object. But given the arbitrary side of 'evocativeness' that we have just been examining, I do not see how this condition with it'primitive' resting place in direct 'acquaintance' could ever rule out arbitrary associations and their power to enhance aesthetic aspects of the work of art, as when Proust's Swann never admires Giotto or Botticelli as much as when he discovers their style in the faces of women that he loves. As Proust says of Vinteuil's 'little phrase':

> After all, it might be the case that, if Vinteuil's phrases seemed to be the expression of certain states of soul analogous to that which I had experienced when I tasted the madeleine... there was nothing to assure me that the vagueness of such states was a sign of their profundity rather than of our not having learned yet to analyse them (i.e. by reference to the 'association of ideas' - N. M.), so that there need be nothing more real in them than in other states.[19]

In this respect, it is worth contrasting Scruton's position here with

Footnote (extract from Scruton op. cit., p. 234): E. Although the subject's feeling is expressed towards what is symbolized (the attitude, in this case), it is directed also towards the work of art itself in the sense that the subject is disposed to describe, and perhaps to justify, his emotion in terms of features of the work. (He describes the lassitudinous postures of the people in Watteau's painting; he refers to the sombre final lines of Herrick's Corinna, and so on.)

that of Kant because, as we have already mentioned, for Kant there is no problem with establishing the connection between aesthetic and symbolic experience insofar as all aesthetic objects are seen to symbolize (in the sense of 'give us intimations of') morality and a 'designed' universe. Significantly, Scruton too comes round to a version of this view as the ultimate reference for the 'objectivity' of aesthetic values as embodied in the cri de coeur with which he closes the final chapter:

> To be certain in matters of taste is, therefore, to be certain in matters of morality: ethics and aesthetics are one.[20]

I shall not attempt, however, to follow up this particular line of argument.

B) As was mentioned on page 117, over and above the aesthetic ambivalence of 'evocativeness', there is a second type of ambivalence which has already been partly discussed - namely that, as with the similar case of emotional attitudes, it appears to hover between intentional 'directedness' on the one hand, e.g.

> It is the look of the picture that provides the elaboration of my thought.[21]

and on the other hand, an essentially involuntary 'passive' side which itself seems to hover between the 'free play' of the analogical imagination and the causal 'conditioned responses' of 'associationist' psychology (i.e. the terrain explored by Proust). Insofar as our grasp of the work of art at the intentional level cannot, as we have already seen, guarantee the evocation of the affective state of mind therein symbolized, it would seem therefore that acquaintance with this state of mind must involve an involuntary element. At times Scruton seems half to recognize this, as in the spontaneous way that he says he recognizes in the poem the same powers of evocation that he found in the sight of the estuary - but this never really gets developed since it clearly contradicts his view of imagining as a

primarily voluntary activity. As a result of this, he does not pay nearly enough attention to the 'dynamics' of 'evocativeness' which, in turn, leads to a very static view of the phenomenon, as reflected in his examples which all belong to the class of symbols which are seen to be "perfect expressions of a state of mind". In this, he seems to come close to Dufrenne's view that the work of art itself does all the real work and therefore "spares us the expense of an exuberant imagination"[22]. As we shall see later, this is in marked contrast to the far more dynamic, 'asymptotic' account that Kant gives of the 'aesthetic idea' in para. 49 of The Critique of Judgment - 'asymptotic' in the sense of getting nearer and nearer to a goal without ever quite reaching it. Furthermore, as in the case of Scruton's earlier account of the identity of sense and expression in works of art, it is difficult to see how he can give any account of those works of art that imperfectly symbolize states of mind - as in the case of those carved lions that one sometimes sees at the entrance of imposing buildings, that are clearly meant to evoke a sense of grandeur, but fail owing to the rather insipid expressions on their faces. Scruton's account thus markedly contrasts with Hegel's, of the varying fortunes of the 'concrete universal' in the history of art, as when he explains the 'outlandishness' of the 'Symbolic Art' of the Middle East and India in terms of its desperate attempt to embody the "Idea' in concrete form:

> So now the Idea exaggerates natural shapes and the phenomena of reality itself into indefiniteness and extravagance; it staggers round in them, it bubbles and ferments in them, does violence to them, distorts and stretches them unnaturally, and tries to elevate their phenomenal appearance to the Idea by the diffuseness, immensity and splendour of the formations employed.[23]

For Hegel, only the 'Classical Art' of Praxiteles and the Greeks achieves Scruton's norm, whereby we find:

> The free and adequate embodiment of the Idea in the shape peculiarly appropriate to the Idea itself in its essential nature...[24]

For all its obscurity, at least this view recognizes a dynamic interplay between meaning and sensuous image (as also does Kant's account) that seems to be lacking in Scruton's own account.

How then, given the complexities of the evocative symbol, can we put the 'recognition of expression' which it solicits on a rational footing? Could anything in art seem less subject to 'rules' than 'evocativeness' - especially in 20th century art where the obscurity of the personal symbol (e.g. Chagall's violinists on rooftops or Rothko's great, purple slabs) often seems wilfully to dominate, thereby alienating many of its audience? The problem here, to restate it, is that no truly 'poetic' symbol can be governed by any predetermined rule either of a semantic nature (e.g. that fauns symbolize 'unattainable desires' or rainbows, 'perfection'), or of a psychological kind, based on 'mechanical' association (e.g. that the smell of floor polish evokes my childhood). In the former case, this would render such a symbol 'translatable', thereby destroying the subtle and intimate dependency between thought and symbol contained in the notion of 'embodied thought'. In the latter case, the symbol could only by evocative for the individual concerned, insofar as it contains within itself no 'public' features that can be interpreted by a third party beyond this arbitrary association. Yet without something to guide us how can we avoid our own arbitrary associations entering into the 'recognition of expression', particularly insofar as our own perception of the world is laden with a continuum of personal and cultural associations that may be very different from that of the artist's? Surprisingly, Scruton makes no reference here to the way that such symbols may sometimes evolve from within an 'aesthetic community', as in the case of the rather obscure allegories that feature in Renaissance painting like Botticelli's Primavera, or the French 'Symbolist' poets' search for l'universelle analogie[25]. In such cases the 'intention' of the

community and not just the individual artist would tend to determine the interpretation. I shall return to this point in a moment.

Scruton's move, as elsewhere in the book, is to tie the state of mind intentionally to the work of art, thereby overcoming the obscurity of concepts like 'fusion' to which the 'affective' theory has to resort (conditions 'D' - see footnote - and 'E' - see footnote on p. 119).

> For to give a complete account of the thought on which his feeling is founded, the subject must refer to the work of art that is before him. This is so despite the fact that the object of feeling - which is defined by his thought - is not the work of art itself, but rather something beyond the work which it 'symbolizes'.[26]

However, once again, the tension between intentionality and non-propositional 'knowledge by acquaintance' surfaces insofar as such an account would only provide us with evidence of the subject's response at a 'knowledge by description' level. As such, it would be quite possible, as we have already seen[27] to offer one description of the work of art, while experiencing it as something else or not experiencing it in the affective, 'acquaintance' sense at all. For example, a teacher might try to explain the evocative force of the waning moon in Wordsworth's 'Lucy' poem:

> My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
> He raised, and never stopped:
> When down below the cottage roof,
> At once, the bright moon dropped.
>
> What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
> Into a Lover's head!
> 'O mercy!' to myself I cried,
> 'If Lucy should be dead!'[28]

in terms of analogies between the 'virginal' qualities of the moon

Footnote (extract from Scruton op. cit., p. 233): D. To see a as a symbol of b is to react in some way towards b, as a result of perceiving a. It is possible that this reaction should exist in imagination only - 'entertained' rather than adopted; and if b is itself an emotion, then the reaction will have a sympathetic character, as when one responds to the grief in the music of a requiem.

(which, as a matter of fact, hovers between being a 'conventional' and an 'analogical' symbol) and his loved one, and its sudden disappearance as being an 'appropriate' object for the outlandish anxieties of a first love. It would be quite possible for all the pupils to see the point of this, yet remain impervious to the state of mind that Wordsworth is clearly trying to evoke through the symbol. As such, the poem would seem a rather pointless and even faintly ridiculous exercise - at least that is how it seemed to me when I first had it explained to me, along these lines.

The solution for Scruton, as elsewhere, is that the ultimate 'acceptance condition' wherein we most fully come to recognize the point of the embodied thought must lie in our non-describable 'knowledge by acquaintance' with the work (condition 'F'):

> (F). What the subject learns from the painting - what the painting 'brings home to him' - is something that he learns in the <u>experience</u> of the painting, and only in that experience.[29]

However, as the estuary story showed, such experience is by no means incommunicable insofar as I may recognize in the poem the evocation of a state of mind with which I am already partly familiar, although the poem sheds new light on it:

> While the poem expresses the feeling more completely, it stands in a relation to the feeling that is essentially similar to the relation that exists between the feeling and the estuary.[30]

We may illustrate this by returning to the Wordsworth poem. Supposing that the teacher had then said (as actually happened to me), "Have any of you ever had an experience like this - waiting outside the cinema for your girl-friend who is late, and saying to yourself 'if she doesn't arrive by the time that screwed up bit of paper has blown across the pavement and into the gutter, then it must mean that she doesn't love me any more!'?" At that point I think nearly all of us recognized the expression of the Wordsworth poem in a way that would satisfy condition 'F'. As Elliott has said of such 'recognition':

> Though it cannot be stated, it can be communicated through conversation and through art, including the art of the writer and teacher...If it were knowledge at all, it would be a kind of knowledge by acquaintance.[31]

But how can we ever be sure that our response at the 'acquaintance' level is 'appropriate', in Scruton's sense of being true to the artist's intentions? - allowing of course for the fact that an artist may sometimes deliberately create ambiguous symbols or even symbols that are capable of many interpretations (e.g. Shakespeare's 'bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang') as an integral part of their evocativeness. At the descriptive level, of course, 'public' criteria of a kind are available. For example in the case of the screwed up paper blowing across the pavement, there are accessible 'poetic' analogies such as being blown about by the winds of fate, the hopelessness of lying in the gutter etc., and even if one substituted a purely 'private' symbol such as clutching a 'lucky charm' that one's girl-friend had given one (i.e. a symbol that has no recognizably analogical connections with the waning moon), then as long as the individual for whom it has significance explains it to us (as Marcel explains the private significance of the madeleine), then the symbol enters the world of public language. As Scruton says:

> This experience of recognizing symbolism is, like all the phenomena that share the formal properties of imagination, within rational control. There is such a thing as defending an interpretation as appropriate to a given work of art...[32]

The fact remains though, that insofar as the 'acquaintance' side of it is, in Scruton's words 'sui generis' (the nearest that he ever gets to acknowledging an 'involuntary' element) than, as Scruton would be the first to admit, however much analogical and other features may control our response to the primary object, they can never get as far as guaranteeing that the work of art will evoke the intended state of mind in us. Consequently the 'acceptance condition' 'F', in the end, looks like little more than an act of faith.

Now this would not matter so much if Scruton were working with a more dynamic model such as that of Kant wherein the spectator's own imagination, associated experiences and thoughts clearly have a constitutive role to play - the 'aesthetic idea' being like a pebble tossed into the pool of our mind, generating ever widening ripples of evocativeness as our understanding and imagination undergo a mutual 'quickening' and enter into 'free play' with each other. As I pointed out earlier, this is essentially an 'asymptotic' process insofar as the 'aesthetic idea' in Kant's terminology is a 'representation of the imagination' for which no concept is adequate, while the 'rational idea' hinted at by the symbol (e.g. 'freedom' or 'immortality') is a concept for which no 'intuition' is adequate:

> Thus, for example, a certain poet says, in his description of a beautiful morning:
>
> The sun arose
> As calm from virtue springs.
>
> The consciousness of virtue, if we substitute it in our thoughts for a virtuous man, diffuses in the mind a multitude of sublime and restful feelings, and a boundless prospect of a joyful future, to which no expression that is measured by a definite concept completely attains.
>
> In a word, the aesthetical idea is a representation of the imagination associated with a given concept, which is bound up with such a multiplicity of partial representations in its free employment that for it no expression marking a definite concept can be found; and such a representation therefore, adds to a concept much ineffable thought, the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, which is the mere letter, binds up spirit also.[33]

There is little doubt that this last sentence refers to the same thing as Scruton's own 'knowledge by acquaintance', but without the idea of arriving at a definite end such as is implied by Scruton's account.

The fact is that Scruton has created a real problem for himself here by suggesting that, at the 'acquaintance' level, we can recognize works of art like Watteau's Embarcation à Cythère and Tennyson's Ulysses as "perfect expressions of a state of mind"[34]. What can he mean by 'perfect' here? (especially when you consider that Watteau actually painted no less than three versions of The Embarcation! Is

Scruton aware of this, one wonders?). He cannot mean it in the Crocean sense that the work of art has perfectly communicated to us the artist's own state of mind because, then, the work of art would be expendable. What he must mean here, I think, is that the work of art is something like a realization of the essential meaning of something, both incorporating and transcending the individual viewpoint - just as Wordsworth's poem manages to realize the 'essence' of first love through the retailing of a particular realization of it. In reading the poem, we feel that no one else has ever realized it quite so well. Wittgenstein speaks of such an experience in The Brown Book:

> I will examine one particular case, that of a feeling which I shall roughly describe by saying it is the feeling of 'long, long ago'. These words and the tone in which they are said are a gesture of pastness. But I will specify the experience which I mean still further by saying that it is that corresponding to a certain tune (David's Bundler Tanz - "Wie aus weiter Ferne"). I'm imagining this tune played with the right expression...Then this is the most elaborate and exact expression of a feeling of pastness which I can imagine.[35]

The point here is that this feeling of 'pastness' is inseparable from the particular form of expression (the tune) that gives rise to it. It is certainly not to be confused with the abstraction of some essential meaning, since as Scruton says:

> (Such) 'recognition' has a dimension of 'fullness', and in this sense, recognition cannot be explained simply as a case of realizing that a certain proposition is true.[36]

The posited irreducibility of such 'embodied thoughts' is also echoed by the French critic Deleuze when he considers Proust's achievements in this direction:

> Beyond subjective chains of association and resurrections by resemblance or contiguity, are the essences...They transcend the states of subjectivity no less than the properties of the object...
> This is why each essence is a patrie, a country. It is not reducible to a psychological state...nor even to some form of a higher subjectivity...
> Combray rises up, not as it was experienced in contiguity with the past sensation, but in a splendor, with a "truth" which never had an equivalent in reality.[37]

However, as in the case of Scruton's earlier attempts to recon-

cile 'representation' and 'expression' with an 'autonomous' view of art, it would seem that, in the end, our sense that some work of art may be seen as a 'perfect' symbol for a state of mind (i.e. the state of mind that affectively embodies the essence of 'first love' for example) must ultimately depend on reference to an outside context, including, for example, truth-values and moral beliefs. To take an example from outside the field of art for a change - suppose that I am gazing up at the tower-block which houses the head-quarters of the National Westminster Bank and see it towering over me as a moving and 'perfect' symbol of what I can only describe very inadequately as 'the power of advanced capitalism, dominating the city in which I live'. As an experience this is incorrigible for me, but is it an 'appropriate' act of recognition? Suppose now that I am changed into the chief manager of the NatWest, I might then be gazing at this same building, floating gloriously above the city - a 'perfect' and moving symbol of all that's best in a 'free market' economy. Such an experience would be equally 'incorrigible', but once again, would it be 'appropriate'? Clearly no amount of looking at the tower-block will settle which is the more appropriate response because we are not just talking about the building here, but also about a whole background of beliefs about the economy, society etc. Furthermore, as was mentioned earlier, such 'symbolic' perception does tend to enhance our aesthetic awareness of the architecture, e.g. as 'oppressive' or 'glorious'. If Scruton is therefore going to invoke the criterion of 'appropriateness' for our recognition of such symbols then in the end, I don't see how he can turn his back on such a background of belief, as he did in the case of imaginary representation, because unlike imaginary representation, the 'essences' in the above examples are not fictions.

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CHAPTER SIX: Where does imagining take place? The imagination and 'embodied thought'.

Perhaps the most important message to come out of Art and Imagination is that the reader's/listener's/viewer's imagination plays a paramount role in giving him special access to the work of art - a world that is not simply there awaiting an adequate description, but to be lived through "in the imagination". This empiricist positing of a special access challenges the prevailing orthodoxy of 'analytic' philosophy. For Ryle and Wittgenstein, to posit an account of imagination in terms of extra-linguistic 'experiences' that accompany a meaning and "bring it to life" is to posit, at best, expendable and philosophically uninteresting appendages to that meaning (e.g. mental 'pictures' and the physical shakes and trembles that accompany emotions) and, at worst, impossibly 'occult' phenomena (the 'beetles in the box'). This same view, with regard to 'images' at any rate, is also taken by Sartre in his critique of the 'illusion of immanence'[1]. Over and against this view then, it is fundamental to Scruton's position that the difference between a thought (e.g. that 'human happiness is transient') and the embodiment of a thought in a work of art (e.g. Watteau's 'picturing' of this idea in The Embarkation to Cytherea) is not just a superficial one of the presence or absence of semantically expendable 'experiences'. Thus he says of 'aspect perception', for example:

> When we examine the phenomenon we must conclude that it is impossible to treat the sensory aspect of 'seeing as' as a mere optional addition to an underlying core of thought.[2]

Put thus, as I shall argue later, it would seem that Scruton is pursuing a goal very similar to that of Kant in his account of 'aesthetic ideas' in para. 49 of The Critique of Judgment, and more recently, that of Husserl in the sixth of the Logical Investigations, where it is argued that the 'empty intentions' of bare thought seek completion in the 'intuitional fulfilment' of image and perception. How-

ever, as I have tried to show in earlier chapters, the empiricist form in which Scruton presents his case might seem to make the communicability of such imaginative 'experiences' a problematic act of faith: "That there is some connection between the meaning of our utterances and our mental states is undeniable," he says, underlining the dualism that frequently characterizes his philosophy of mind, "but in the case of aesthetic experience the connection proves hard to describe."[3] Yet at every stage of the argument, he is only too well aware, of course, that Wittgenstein is looking over his shoulder with the familiar warning that:

> Here, it is easy to get into that dead-end of philosophy where one believes that the difficulty of the task consists in our having to describe phenomena that are hard to get hold of, the present experience that slips quickly by, or something like that.[4]

In fact, at the semantic level, Scruton and, as we shall see later, phenomenologists like Husserl, are in full agreement with the analytic position that the embodiment of a thought or 'empty intention' in image or perception does not and cannot add any new meaning to what was already there before. As Husserl rightly points out:

> The word has its sense quite apart from its attachment to (any) intuition...since this sense is everywhere the same.[5]

Similarly, Scruton is quite clear that the meaning of any aesthetic description is exhausted by what we have put into the description:

> There are no subtleties in our aesthetic emotions that are not matched and explained by subtleties in the thoughts on which they are founded...If we attempt to communicate an aesthetic emotion, then we communicate a thought.[6]

Seen thus, at any rate from an 'analytic' perspective, it would seem natural to think that an aesthetic description like that referring to the Schubert triplets as 'tragically stumbling'[7] is indeed all that we have got, making any further talk of 'experience' redundant.

The crucial question to be answered therefore is this: if the posited 'experience' in which our imagination summons up the very

presence of Schubert's tragically stumbling triplets nonetheless adds nothing more to the meaning of that particular description, then what does it matter whether our grasp of this meaning is or is not accompanied by images of stumbling, 'sympathetic' bodily accompaniments to the tragic emotion and the like? In other words, how does the presence of posited phenomena like 'knowledge by acquaintance' and 'intuitional fulfilment' lead to a greater understanding of the work of art if not in terms of an addition of more meaning? The answer to this question must, however, await its turn. First we need to remind ourselves once more of the central aesthetic problem to which Kant addressed himself in the 'Antinomy of Taste'. Thus, on the one hand, no one can appraise the beauty of something that he or she has not experienced at first hand, because:

> the feeling of the subject, and not a concept of the object, is its determining ground.[8]

On the other hand:

> The judgment of taste is based on concepts, for otherwise...we could not quarrel about it.[9]

Therefore, as Scruton points out, any theory which seeks to locate the source of the aesthetic world in subjective responses invariably has serious difficulties in accounting for the directedness of such responses towards a public, independently specifiable world of meaning. Thus an experience, be it image, feeling or perception, only makes sense in terms of what it is an experience of, and never as a hypostasized phenomenon in its own right, the 'beetle in the box'. Similarly, no account of what the imagination is in terms of what we know 'from experience' about its workings and the place that it occupies in human nature can be given without reference to the fact that the concept of 'imagination', like that of any other mental act, is characterized by the special ways in which it directs itself towards its object. Like any other mental act, it cannot escape from its public

rule-governed features, such as how it differs from, and what it has in common with other mental acts like wishing and believing.

What then characterizes aesthetic discourse for Scruton is the tension between semantic and 'experiential' imperatives - the latter, which is the point at issue, claiming epistemological priority. Thus, however persuasive we may find the many reasons as to why we should imaginatively hear Schubert's triplets as 'tragically stumbling' (e.g. with reference to the minor key, the slow tempo, the yearning melody and hesitant rhythms etc.), the ultimate 'persuader' is held to be the experiential response whose spontaneity cannot be commandeered on a rational basis alone. Of course, as we have seen, no account of this subjective side of imagination can be given without presupposing a linguistic and cultural background. From this point of view, there will inevitably be a conventional element built into any analysis of the inter-subjective basis of aesthetic discourse, since our views of what counts as 'art' and 'imagination' are clearly subject to historical change. However Scruton, while accepting all this, is adamant, along with Kant, that unless our grasp of aesthetic description equally presupposes that it both expresses and evokes the 'presence' in our imagination of e.g. the 'tragically stumbling' triplets and moves us with the discovery, then all talk of 'inter-subjective' agreement will have an ultimate 'disembodied' emptiness about it - i.e. we will only 'see the point of it' at the level of a plausible conceptual connection which has no need of images and feelings. The description may also fail to persuade us of course, if it is inappropriate in some way. But then, in the last analysis for Scruton, and herein lies the problem, the response that underlies the appraisal has an element of incorrigibility about it that overrides any appeal to public norms, despite the fact that over a period of time it may enter 'paronymously' into public usage. Thus, on Scruton's account, my appraisal

that 'the music is sad' could be appropriate, even though I were in a minority of one, providing that I could 'see the point' of my own usage - hence the ultimate obscurity of his account, as was discussed in Chapter Two.

What follows from all this is that any adequate aesthetic theory must meet the challenge of relating (a) the public, rule-governed side of the 'aesthetic object' as we find it embedded in the various 'aesthetic communities' that human beings have evolved, to (b) the way that, as a matter of fact, we just find ourselves responding to such objects - which is to say as subjects who not only think the 'empty intentions' of pure meaning, but who also experience these meanings 'noetically' as the phenomenologists have termed it, from the point of view of an experiencing subject who does the actual perceiving, imagining and feeling. Clearly, 'embodied thought' would not be possible in the first place unless there were also embodied subjects to provide a 'location' for such experiences. As Merleau-Ponty has argued on many occasions:

> The body...is on the side of the subject; it is our point of view of the world, the place where the spirit takes on a certain physical and historical situation.[10]

It is (b), then, that would seem to create the need for a properly empirical enquiry. As we have seen however, Scruton's own approach to the problem is to attempt to yoke together the two opposing steeds of a traditional empiricist philosophy of mind whose province is what we know 'from experience' with a 'public language' argument whose original purpose was to demolish this very position. Not only does this seem to be, in the end, a near impossible task, but as a result (as I shall expand upon in a moment), it seems to inherit certain major problems inherent in both the empiricist and analytic accounts of mental acts. Thus, from its empiricist roots I shall argue that Scruton's account ultimately retains the obscurity that has

always surrounded this version of 'knowledge by acquaintance'; and that furthermore, as a result of this, Scruton never properly deals with the phenomenological inadequacy of Hume's 'standard' account of 'vividness'. On the other hand, from its 'analytic' stance, I shall argue that it derives a most unempirical view of both works of art and our imaginative responses to them, in terms of a highly stipulative and thereby narrow account as to how we should experience works of art. Moreover, as I have attempted to show earlier, Scruton masks this stipulative side of his argument by ad hominem appeals of a dubious nature[11]. I shall argue in due course that the kind of synthesis of empiricist and analytic views advanced by Scruton points naturally towards, and would be better served by, a more phenomenologically orientated resolution of this tension between experiential and semantic demands. Here I have in mind the kind of intimate relationship between (a) the way something appears to us in what Husserl has called the 'intuitional fulfilment' of what was hitherto grasped only as a 'bare' thought, and (b) the viewpoints from which we perceive such appearances, whether posited as perceptual or imaginary. As Merleau-Ponty has said, "Is not to see always to see from somewhere?"[12] and the same goes for acts of imagining. Before exploring this further however, let us first turn to those aspects of empiricist and 'analytic' philosophy which relate respectively to the obscurity and over-stipulativeness inherent in Scruton's argument.

One way of looking at the classical empiricist view of the imagination as put forward by writers like Hume is to see it as, in part, an attempt to answer the important although potentially misleading question - "Where do phenomena like imagining and feeling take place?" The empiricist answer, as is well known, is that imagination takes place on a kind of inner screen on which are projected fleeting and elusive 'pictures', desperately chased by language. Such a view, as

Cowley points out[13], derives from an uncritical acceptance of the scientific model of 'representational perception' in which our consciousness of an object is identified with the object of our consciousness so that, for example, my view of this tree becomes a view of my image of the tree, rather than of the tree itself as seen from this point of view. The objects of the imagination are then seen to be pale 'after images' of what was once located on the retina. On this view then, the 'eye' is not regarded as something which looks out upon the world, but rather as the 'passive receptor' of behavioural psychology.

The Rylean and Sartrean objections to such a hypostasized mental image are conclusive. It is Helvellyn itself that I imagine in its absence or see in its presence, not my image of Helvellyn. In the case where the object imagined is a fictional one, it is still the case that it is not <u>my image</u> of e.g. a dragon towards which my imaginative thought is directed, but rather the dragon as it would be if it existed, for how could a mere <u>image</u> of a dragon be terrifying? In other words, when I imagine a fictional world, however fantastic, I am still imagining an external 'out there' world as it might be, given the fulfilment of certain material conditions, such as that dragons exist[14]. To posit the image itself as the intentional object, then, is to succumb to what Sartre has called the 'illusion of immanence', whereby "we picture consciousness as a place peopled with small likenesses"[15]. And, of course, insofar as these "small likenesses' are conceived to have a kind of existence independently of our thinking about them, so that 'acquaintance' with them can only come through introspective 'observation', then we arrive at the total obscurity of a 'private language'.

A further consequence of this empiricist account of the 'image', of crucial importance to aesthetics, is the phenomenological inade-

quacy of Hume's distinction between 'imagination' and 'perception' in terms of the greater force and vivacity of the perceptual image - as though imagination were straining itself to achieve the condition of perception without ever quite managing it. This leads to a view that a 'vivid' image is simply one with greater clarity and sharpness, as in Hume's example of perceiving and imagining Paris:

> I have seen Paris, but shall I affirm I can form such an idea of that city, as will perfectly represent all its streets in their real and just proportions?[16]

But clearly we can perceive Paris obscurely, say in a fog, and yet imagine the city vividly in its absence just perhaps from a half-sketched outline of tables on a sidewalk, a hint of accordion music or the vaguely remembered smell of furniture polish or a Gauloise. In fact we would not really call a 'photographic' mental image of Paris 'imaginative' at all, but rather 'unimaginative and literal minded' in the manner of an uninspired 'photographic' type of painting. Furthermore, any attempt that we do make to imagine in a quasi-photographic way is often feeble and even, on occasions, rather ridiculous as when I try, for example, after reading A Tale of Two Cities to imagine myself storming the Bastille as though I were the star of a 'private' epic film on the French Revolution. That 'vivid' images depend for their vividness, not on one-to-one correspondence but rather on their power to evoke the 'presence' of the imagined object may be illustrated by the following Japanese Haiku:

> To the yearning seekers of blossoms
> With pride would I offer
> A delight of the eye,
> The green from under the snow,
> In a mountain village in springtime.[17]

Here, the power of a single image, 'the green under the snow', to evoke the whole 'presence' of spring for our imagination contrasts with the literal-minded 'seekers of blossoms' who seek to 'capture' spring much as a tourist with a camera does. I shall, however, leave

aside a more detailed account of 'vividness' until later on.

Now insofar as Scruton consistently treats imagining as a way of thinking, embodied in acts of public expression, he certainly cannot be accused of positing a 'private language' for imagination. Yet insofar as he wants to maintain a key role for empiricist 'knowledge by acquaintance' as the ultimate arbiter of the 'acceptance condition', what is lacking in his account is any clear, alternative way of characterizing 'embodied thought' as a phenomenon, particularly as regards the 'vividness' of such experience on which, presumably, its persuasiveness comes to rest. This is probably because the only real alternative account of 'acquaintance' open to him, namely a phenomenological one, is dismissed by Scruton, as we have seen, as hopelessly introspective[18]. This is not to say that Scruton does not frequently hint at an alternative account as in his occasional excursions into quasi-phenomenological descriptions like that of the 'estuary' story[19], which do seem to point towards an 'evocative' rather than a 'correspondence' view of the mental image. Yet at other times, he seems to be sailing perilously close to positing a Humean hypostasized image - i.e. where it is the mental image itself which is attributed with perceptual features:

> images can be more or less vivid or intense, while remaining constant in respect of detail...It is a characteristic expression of visual imagery that one should screw up, or even close one's eyes, as though subjecting oneself to an impression, and the impression may be strong or not so strong when it finally comes.[20]

Surely one closes one's eyes not to get an impression, but to get it less distractedly, by shutting out the intrusive perceptual world?

Ultimately therefore, what is the 'x' that stubbornly remains after we have described our impression? The nearest that we ever get to it with Scruton is that it is an incorrigible, experiential or 'non-cognitive' state of mind that necessarily can only be characterized in a negative sort of way. We know it when we have it, but

this does not add anything more to what we can _say_ about it. In the end, one just has to _hear_ the Schubert triplets as tragically stumbling, or _see_ Watteau's _Embarkation to Cytherea_ as evocative of the 'transience of human happiness' which, as I have argued before, put this way, sounds like little more than an act of faith on the part of the speakers that the 'same' experience is being communicated.

Before we come to alternative ways of approaching this problem however, let us first return to the other main difficulty in Scruton's account - namely, the decidedly unempirical way in which he stipulates the limits of our imaginative response to art. For Scruton, although the aesthetic world cannot help but share the same meanings as the real world, what characterizes the aesthetically imaginative response is that our normal beliefs and emotions are suspended, to be replaced by the 'language game' of "entertaining as appropriate but unasserted". I want to argue here that this side of Scruton's position arises primarily from a problem in the analytic 'public language' account of the imagination, and in particular from the analytic answer to the question 'where does imagining take place?'. Now in a sense, the 'analytic' answer to this is two-fold. (a) It is not denied that our imaginative thoughts may be contingently accompanied by such things as mental images and 'sympathetic' bodily accompaniments to emotions which will, as such, have some kind of bodily location - although this is seen to be of little philosophic interest. (b) In another way however, it is seen as entirely the wrong sort of question to ask because, insofar as we are talking about the _meaning_ of our images, emotions and 'aspect' perceptions, then such thoughts are not the sort of things that _can_ take place anywhere being, like Husserl's 'empty intentions', a-positional, imageless and feeling-free. For analytic philosophers like Ryle and Wittgenstein then, who are concerned to argue against any theory that would make meaning an extra-

linguistic, 'occult' accompaniment to the sign, it is a matter of indifference whether our mastery of a description is or is not accompanied by any additional 'experience' like a mental image or bodily feeling -

> Meaning is as little an experience as intending. But what distinguishes them from experience? - They have no experience content. For the contents (images for instance) which accompany and illustrate them are not the meaning or intending...The language-game "I mean (or meant) <u>this</u>" (subsequent explanation of a word) is quite different from this one: "I thought of (x) as I said it." The latter is akin to "It reminded me of (x)."[21]

The view that such 'experiences' are expendable comes, as we have seen, from the fact that someone who experiences, imagines or feels something for the first time that he has hitherto only known by description, would not be able to <u>say</u> any more about it than what he could before. Thus the only difference, for example, between Siegfried knowing 'fear' by description and by acquaintance, on this account, would be the presence in the latter case of philosophically uninteresting shakes and trembles, possibly accompanied by 'mental pictures' of impending disasters. For the analytic philosopher then, there is no more to our <u>understanding</u> of an 'experience' than our mastery of the use of the concepts which it is instantiates. R. S. Peters, for example, in writing of the emotions, argues that:

> My thesis...about the appraisals involved in emotion is not that they provide very valuable evidence as to what the distinct emotions are; it is rather that these different appraisals are largely constitutive of the different emotions.[22]

On such a view then, the 'experience' or 'mental state' is relegated to the status of a redundant appendage to the concept, serving at best, as in the case of 'mental images', a peripheral, illustrative or <u>aide de memoire</u> function, as in Wittgenstein's 'language-game' of "I thought of...as I said it". Like book illustrations, such images function merely as an alternative way of picturing the same thing, but as Wittgenstein says:

> It is no more essential to the understanding of a proposition

> that one should imagine anything in connection with it than that one should make a sketch of it.[23]

Images as such, therefore, can only arise as a by-product of our thought and not as something independent of it, from which we can gain new knowledge - hence the "essential poverty" that Sartre attributes to this view of the image[24].

Can there be <u>any</u> justification then for positing an extra-linguistic 'experience' that 'animates' the sign, as both Scruton and Husserl (and not forgetting Kant) in their own ways maintain, if it cannot add anything significant to the meaning? As we have seen, Husserl does not dispute that acts of meaning are quite independent of perceptual and imaginative acts. Like Wittgenstein, he points out that we can understand the meaning of a definite description like "There flies that blackbird" without seeing or imagining its reference[25], and the same goes for general propositions like "Human happiness is transient" whose meaning is clearly independent of any illustration that I might supply. For Husserl however, the intuitional 'emptiness' of such purely semantic intentions has what one might call an experiential incompleteness about it that seeks 'intuitional fulfilment' in terms of the same thought becoming embodied, by degrees, in synthetic acts of perception and imagination - closely echoing, as we shall see later, Kant's similar account of 'aesthetic ideas' in para. 49 of <u>The Critique of Judgment</u>. There is no such provision in the 'analytic' account however, except in terms of our increasing mastery of the use of a concept - "In use it is alive," says Wittgenstein[26]. Thus the 'analytic' philosopher does not so much <u>look</u> at the world as 'look' at how we use words. It would be wrong to think however that on the phenomenological account, the words simply 'drop away' once 'intuitional fulfilment' is attained, since images, perceptions and feelings are as shot through with intentionality as their 'empty' counterparts. As Cowley points out:

> The world as we express or describe it is inseparable from the world itself. Thus the distinction between the fact and the statement, the real and the true, the state of affairs and our description of it, always tends to disappear. Our experience is not separable from our power to say, to express and to describe.[27]

However, although images, as well as aspect-perceptions and emotions, are inescapably 'thoughts' in this sense, as they are also for Scruton, 'thoughts' in the sense of 'empty intentions' are not images. Images do not intend their objects just as meanings, as thoughts do.

To try to understand just how 'intuitional fulfilment' does intend its object, let us now attempt to see how the phenomenological answer to the question "Where does imagining take place?" differs from the empiricist and 'analytic' accounts. Like the similar acts of perception and feeling, 'Imagining something' in the phenomenological account is seen to be a 'fulfilling' act, the essence of which is that something should appear to us, if only partially - a 'presence' that is immanent in our field of awareness, although posited as absent or non-existent (as in the case of fictional 'worlds'). As Sartre says:

> The essential character of the mental image is a certain way an object has of being absent within its very presence.[28]

This imaginative 'presence' is not however 'immanent' in the same way that a Humean 'image' is held to be (i.e. as itself an hypostasized intentional object) since at every point it is turned outwards towards a free-standing intentional object, posited as either real or imaginary, and of which the imagined 'presence' represents a view from a certain viewpoint (N.B. I have already discussed the free-standing status of fictional objects on page 137.) I can, for example, measure the height of this tree, feel the roughness of its bark, be moved by its beauty, or imagine myself doing all these things (e.g. as when I try to estimate the height of the tree from memory); but what I cannot measure, feel, or be moved by, as Cowley points out[29], is my image of the tree in the sense of a Humean 'representative perception' since

what I intend is the tree itself as seen or imagined e.g. 'from over here'. As we shall see later, this particular viewpoint will also implicate others as I gradually build up a 'full' intuition. For the phenomenologist therefore, I know how my experience is, not by 'observing' it introspectively as the empiricists conceived, but rather through directly having it, as when I touch the tree, or imagine it in blossom when it has only just come into bud. What matters is not how I come to see the tree in this way (since this question, insofar as it presupposes an 'objective' world independent of the human mind, is "bracketed off"), but rather that I do see the tree in this way, ever more fully through a proliferation of appearances held together by the imagination.

Thus, far from belonging to a class of 'free-standing' objects inside our consciousness (which would be to render it logically private), the imaginative 'presence' is 'transparent' before what it intends, in the sense that any object, real or fictional becomes such an appearance when considered from a point of view. How else in fact could we experience any object, person or state of affairs except from a positional, and therefore partial viewpoint - though as we shall see in more detail later, such viewpoints may gradually come to encompass a much wider view than what is given in the initial experience insofar as we seek to 'picture' the object in its entirety - as when we hear not just a note or brief phrase of music, but the whole melody in which it is enveloped, as Husserl points out in The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness[30]. The object itself (e.g. the melody), like the meaning towards which the 'empty intention' is directed, remains the same, although elusive, throughout - unlike my positional intuitions of it which may be changing all the time, as human consciousness in general tends to do, in virtue of its restless, constantly changing standpoints.

Whether or not such an 'immanent awareness' can be rendered in public language (especially as regards its affective and aesthetic aspects) is another matter, and certainly insofar as 'phenomenological description' is claiming to be a 'language' of direct access to first-person positionality, it is attempting the impossible. Nonetheless, insofar as the intentional object of the description is not logically private, the possibility of communication is always there, although in a way that may have to be intimated rather than stated insofar as the statement stops short at the third-person 'empty intention' level. Now insofar as Scruton, in his various references to phenomenology[31] seems invariably to be equating its view of 'presence' with that of a hypostasized mental image, then he has clearly misrepresented Sartre's thinking on the subject. For Sartre there is no such thing. Husserl, on the other hand, is perhaps more ambivalent, and indeed Sartre himself at one point accuses him of such a lapse:

> We cannot admit that the image comes 'to fill in' an empty consciousness: it <u>is</u> itself a consciousness. It seems that in this theory Husserl was the victim of the illusion of immanence...[32]

However, in turning his back on phenomenology, Scruton does cut himself off from the rich account of 'intuitional fulfilment' as itself a mental act (adding not meaning but positionality to the underlying thought), which, I would suggest, is just what would give his own account of 'knowledge by acquaintance' the extra 'body' that it needs. Not that 'intuitional fulfilment' is the whole story of 'embodied thought' however, for as we shall see when we come to Kant's account of the 'aesthetic idea', not only further imaginative 'fulfilments', but also further, related <u>thoughts</u> (along with <u>their</u> imaginative 'fulfilments') are generated by the initial starting point.

From a phenomenological point of view then, 'experience', whether perceptual, imaginative or affective (and mostly, as we shall see, it is all three together) always entails the adoption of a positional, as

opposed to a merely conceptual viewpoint - 'positional' because it emanates from an embodied subject towards an independent object. As we have seen, unlike the meaning towards which the 'empty intention' is directed (which is 'empty' precisely because it is a-positional, imageless and not an object of feeling), the object towards which the 'intuitional fulfilment' is directed unwraps itself in space and time as we strive to realize an overall picture. This 'picture' or 'synthesis' is achieved in varying degrees of fullness as we 'walk around' the object, either in reality or in our imagination, or view it from different emotional standpoints, or again from the historical 'positionality' of our class, culture and education - or, if it is some general theme, such as 'the transience of human happiness', imagining various ways in which it might be embodied (e.g. as Watteau 'pictures' it in The Embarkation to Cytherea). As such, it represents the fulfilment of the disembodied 'empty intention'. As Sartre puts it:

> When I think of a cube by means of a concrete concept, I think of its six sides and eight angles all at once...I am at the centre of my idea, I seize it in its entirety at one glance...This is the reason why we can never perceive a thought nor think a perception. The two phenomena are radically distinct: The one is knowledge which is conscious of itself and which places itself at once at the centre of the object; the other is a synthetic unity of a multiplicity of appearances, which slowly serves its apprenticeship.[33]

Nonetheless, if for Husserl as much as for Wittgenstein, meaning is "untouched by the flux of our subjective picturing"[34], then we still need to ask why and when 'intuitional fulfilment' is held to be necessary in order to understand the underlying thought of a description - rather than simply being seen as a phenomenon which has a temporary and expendable role to play. Now clearly it can't be necessary in the case of the those intuitions that merely serve to verify some definite description, since once we have 'read off' the relevant aspects, the intuition has served it function and drops away. Nor can intuitions have more than a temporary utility in those cases where we

produce illustrative or counter-illustrative examples to test out some general proposition, since as Warnock points out (echoing Scruton's main objection to the 'cognitive' view of art):

> It is a necessary feature of an example or illustration that it should be theoretically dispensable.[35]

Perhaps at this point, the evidence of language itself can come to our aid. Significantly, we do talk of 'experiencing', 'imagining' or 'feeling' the 'full force' of meanings, rather like being confronted with a Platonic archetype, as when we say "As I looked at The Embarkation to Cytherea, I felt the full force of the transience of human happiness!" Never, however, do we speak of 'knowing' the full force of something, except in an 'acquaintance' sense. This is because whereas the 'empty intention' is not the kind of entity that admits of degrees in terms of 'intensity' or 'fullness', the concept of 'experience' arguably does - as when we say "I knew it at the time (i.e. I understood in a general sort of way e.g. the meaning of 'human happiness is transient') but only later, after experiencing its full force (when I looked at the painting, suffered the loss of a friend etc.) did I realize/begin to realize what the expression intended." We can't say anything more about it than we could before, but what has changed is the position of our viewpoint of it as the meaning is 'brought home' to us in varying degrees of 'fullness' - all of which is implied in the concept of 'realization'. As R. K. Elliott has pointed out:

> Typically, realization occurs owing to our experiencing for the first time some state of whose nature we are already able to give an account. We 'realize what it is' in the living of it.[36]

The 'order of learning' may sometimes be reversed however, as when an experience appears to us as strange and mysterious (e.g. Proust's madeleine) and 'sends us off' in search of a meaning. In fact, as far as aesthetic experience is concerned, this seems more likely to occur in the case of the visual arts and music (because, in one sense, the

'imagining' has already been done for us, at least, up to a point), whereas literature would seem more often to commence with an 'empty intention' which moves towards imaginative 'fulfilment'.

Now one way that we might attempt to characterize experiences such as the above is to say that they relate to a class of description (which includes not only our descriptions of aesthetic experience, but also works of art themselves qua descriptions) which intimate what cannot be fully conceptualized - as when an expression like 'the music is sad' (as discussed in Chapter Two) intends a perceptual configuration that goes beyond the normal, publicly accepted extensional 'horizon' of 'sad'; or when The Embarkation to Cytherea (as discussed in Chapter Five) evokes, in Kant's words, "a multitude of thoughts and images"[37] around the central image of the painting which could not fully be conveyed by even the most subtle conceptual unravelling of the thought that 'human happiness is transient'. Such descriptions may be seen as coming to rest in an experience of what have been called 'emergent' or 'tertiary' configurations[38] - i.e. those aspects of the perceptual or imagined object that are not automatically revealed either by its familiar features or, in advance of the intuition, by the concept which it is seen to be 'fulfilling'. Of course as Scruton has pointed out, such descriptions may 'paronymously' enter accepted usage over a period of time, just as a poetic image once fresh becomes conventional. Once such usage has become fully conventional however, perception then becomes automatic, or what Ruby Meager has called "the mere habit-facilitated immediate recognition of qualities patently possessed by objects"[39]. As a result, the necessity for intuitional fulfilment disappears and along with it, of course, the possibility of its continuing to be an aesthetic description.

Why is it, then, that there are occasions when an underlying thought can only be partially conceptualized and depends for its com-

pletion not on further attempts at conceptual analysis, but rather on an 'intuitive fulfilment' of what can only be hinted at by the words? In such cases it may be argued that it is because the 'empty intention', which can only take place at the 'lowest common denominator', as it were, of public, third-person agreement that so preccupies Scruton (and not without reason!), is necessarily an abstraction, excluding the mass of <u>positional</u> reactions, perceptual, affective and imaginative which our perception of such novel 'emergent' configurations carries in its wake. The 'analytic' account of such experience, insofar as it is based on a view of the self-sufficiency of (a-positional) meaning, fails to account for how the incomplete 'empty intentions' of our thinking, and especially our thinking about art, here need to be 'realized' in image, perception and feeling in just the way that Ryle and Wittgenstein, in their concern to rid language of the 'occult', deny. As a result, the bodily location of our experience tends to be neglected and instead, we find ourselves being considered as abstract minds occupying some epistemological region inhabited only by 'third persons' of which we are one. Of course Ryle and Wittgenstein don't deny that we have a body, but tend to treat it 'externally' in the behavioural sense, rather than as a location of a point of view. Thus 'aspect perception' is seen as essentially viewing something from no particular position under the 'empty intention' of a public description which the image serves merely to verify or exemplify as we 'read off' the aspects.

However, it is characteristic of descriptions that express a viewpoint, particularly where the intentional object has an 'emergent' character that, in Husserl's words, "it is essential to orient (their) actual meaning to the occurrence, the speaker and the situation"[40] - i.e. the hearer must attempt to put himself in that same position, or as near as possible, in order to 'realize' either (a) the novel,

extensional application of the words, as in 'the music is sad', or (b) the thought that can never be more than partially conceptualized at the a-positional 'logical' level, such as when a landscape comes to represent some particular emotional mood. Whereas the 'empty intention' on its own is limited to guiding our thoughts along the public path of consistency and entailment, 'intuitional fulfilment', on the other hand, works on the freer and inevitably more subjective principle of our taking up possible viewpoints, real or imagined, from which hopefully, the 'emergent' configuration will shape up. It is here that the much looser, or what Ruby Meager calls the 'velvet glove' criterion of 'appropriateness' comes into its own. Insofar as our sense of such 'appropriateness' depends on our powers of imagination, perception and feeling which we all possess in varying degrees, then this is potentially an area of education and particularly of aesthetic education that we should be seeking to develop, alongside the 'rational powers' that go with our 'empty intentions'.

Before bringing this account of 'intuitional fulfilment' to a close, let us now finish off with what we set out to do, which was to look at the unempirical 'normativeness' of Scruton's position. How then does Scruton answer the question 'Where does imagining take place?' As we have seen, there is no doubt that Scruton rejects the 'self-sufficiency of meaning' thesis in relation to aesthetic descriptions. However, for all his empiricist emphasis on special access to the work of art via 'knowledge by acquaintance', he ends up presenting us with a disengaged, contemplative paradigm, in which our imaginative response to art is over-narrowly defined by the way that we are supposed to voluntarily 'entertain' the aesthetic object in a highly controlled sort of way. Thus aesthetic description is subject to the guiding rule of "entertaining as appropriate but unasserted", entailing the suspension of all our normal beliefs and emotions, the invol-

untary nature of which is contrasted with the supremacy of the will in imaginative acts.

Scruton's argument here is determined, at least in part, by an acceptance of the semantic demand that the aesthetic object be unambiguously a world unto itself - a world moreover that must become expendable if it is seen to coincide in any way with the real world towards which our beliefs and feelings are properly directed. I have already questioned whether the 'aesthetic' is as unambiguous a term as Scruton imagines, and shall return to this point in another chapter. Scruton's view also owes much to Wittgenstein's account of 'aspect perception', particularly insofar as Wittgenstein seems to take the kind of mental effort that we have to make to see the duck as a rabbit as paradigmatic of the imagination at work:

> Seeing an aspect and imagining are subject to the will. There is such an order as "Imagine <u>this</u>", and also: :Now see the figure like <u>this</u>"[41]

This is a view of the primacy of the 'voluntary imagination' that I have also already questioned in relation to <u>aesthetic</u> aspect perception.

Most important of all, however, is that in his concern to satisfy the 'third person' criterion demanded by 'analytic' philosophy, Scruton has failed to appreciate what phenomenologists have rightly drawn our attention towards and what has been a main theme of this chapter - namely, that all 'knowledge by acquaintance' must presuppose bodily positionality. Notwithstanding this however, he does present us with a 'position' of sorts from which we may view the work of art - namely, from the perspective of 'Apollonian' distance which, although clearly of crucial importance to art, is by no means the only position available to us. As a result, 'embodied thought' for Scruton tends to be something that is only embodied in the work of art itself and not at all in the body of the viewer - although to be fair he does not

consistently maintain this position, as is indicated by the warmth and vividness with which he invariably describes his encounters with individual works of art, such as the Schubert sonata.

Nonetheless, at a stroke, Scruton's criterion of controlled distancing rules out whole areas of the wilder shores of the 'involuntary imagination' with its special relationship to (a) 'sympathetic' bodily responses, of which Sartre has rightly pointed out:

> The entire body participates in the make-up of the image...There are no feelings without a harmony of bodily phenomena[42]

and (b) the 'secondary' associations of the 'empirical ego' which, despite the ever-present dangers of inappropriate and self-indulgent fantasizing, must nonetheless have a richer significance for the individual concerned than that yielded by 'standard' public meaning. Moreover, the fact that many such associations shade off into more public 'secondary associations' as generated within a particular culture or community (such as the association between 'forests' and 'childhood' mentioned earlier), should warn us against operating with too conventional a view of the concept of 'meaning' here. The distinction between the 'primary' and 'secondary' meanings of a word must always, up to a point, be a grey area (as with the very similar, and related problem of where one draws the 'intentional horizon' around the work of art itself, that we shall be exploring in the next chapter). However, somewhere between the totally impersonal meaning of the 'standard case' of a word's usage and the quite random associations generated by chance encounters that it may have for someone (like the significance of the madeleine for Proust's Marcel), there would seem to be a more personal side to the concept of 'meaning' than Scruton allows for, which may well be germane on occasions to our appreciation of a work of art's significance.

It is a further consequence of Scruton's stipulative position that the work of art itself is seen to function paradigmatically in

terms of shaping and controlling our response, rather than exciting it[43], which rules out the possibility that works of art may, and in fact often are intended to provoke both kinds of response, and that insight into the work may be achieved as much by the excitement of the 'involuntary imagination' as by its reflective counterpart. In many cases moreover, reflection and excitement can stimulate each other, producing the kind of viewpoint that Nietzsche has evocatively compared to:

> that marvellous combination possessed by a noble wine, which at once heats the blood and induces meditation.[44]

There is no provision in Scruton's account then for what Ruby Meager has called:

> a power in the (aesthetic) object to invade our experience, rather than a feature of the object to be noted duly by a refined exercise in intelligence.[45]

A properly empirical enquiry can't afford to be selective in this way, ignoring the many-sidedness of the imagination's role in art, which we know 'from experience' may range far and wide around the central content and have no obvious limit in so doing. In fact, letting our imaginative response have a free rein and seeing where this takes us (just as we might wander around a city 'where the spirit guides' in order to discover its atmosphere) would seem to be just as much an essential condition for 'reflective' thought as the demand to rid our thinking, as far as possible, of preconceptions.

Underlying the whole argument so far must be the assumption that works of art themselves are typically 'realizations' in visual, mental and musical images of underlying themes which are intimated but can never be fully conceptualized - as when the familiar thought that 'human happiness is transient' becomes transformed by the imaginative and perceptual 'plenitude' and affective 'intensity' of Watteau's painting, but not in a way that can be adequately 'put into words'. This is more or less the view put forward by Kant in para. 49 of the

Critique, where he suggests that it is a characteristic purpose of art to 'represent' concepts and themes in the form of an 'aesthetic idea' which:

> cannot become a cognition because it is an intuition of the imagination for which an adequate concept can never be found.[46]

Kant particularly, but not only, has in mind here the attempt of the artist to 'represent' (or in the most successful cases, to 'express') those 'rational ideas' such as the idea of 'immortality' or the summum bonum which can only be hinted at by 'intuition' owing to their noumenal nature - an aspect of the 'aesthetic idea' that I shall leave aside for present purposes. Thus for Kant:

> The poet ventures to realize to sense, rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation etc.; or even if he deals with things of which there are examples in experience - e.g. death, envy and all vices, also love, fame and the like - he tries, by means of imagination...to go beyond the limits of experience and to present them to sense with a completeness of which there is no example in nature.[47]

Such a view, of course, goes against Kant's earlier argument in the section on 'The Judgment of Taste'[48] that 'representation' in art belongs to the sub-class of 'dependent beauty'. However insofar as I want primarily to focus on Kant's 'phenomenological' presentation of the workings of the 'aesthetic idea', I shall leave aside his rich and complex argument that seeks to establish an essential link between such ideas and the concept of 'beauty'.

Where the work of art comes into its own, then, is in its power or geist, qua 'aesthetic idea', to intimate experiences that relate to the underlying thought which the thought on its own cannot completely reach. As such, it generates in the minds of the audience both a flood of further images, insofar as it:

> is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a given concept with which, in the free employment of the imagination, such a multitude of partial representations are bound up that no expression indicating a definite concept can be found for it.[49]

and much more thought, insofar as it induces:

> on its own account, such a wealth of thought as would never admit of comprehension in a definite concept.[50]

- both images and thoughts being individually 'partial', but collectively aiming at the whole content of the 'aesthetic idea' which contains the thoughts. Clearly the idea of 'emergent' configuration is at work here, in that an 'aesthetic idea' involves a 'manifold' of the imagination, the constituents of which have to be felt to cohere, which arises from the special pleasure involved in seeing the configuration 'shape up', e.g. as when the details of Watteau's painting shape up into an image of transient happiness - although, as with aesthetic response in general, the coherence can't derive from a rule imposed in advance by the theme or concept being embodied, as this would be to reduce it to the level of a more or less adequate illustration (or 'instance'), and hence would render it expendable.

So what actually happens when we undergo such an experience? On the one hand, each further thought (i.e. the 'empty intention') that the 'aesthetic idea' provokes (e.g. the thought that 'one might dedicate one's life to the pursuit of pleasure as an antidote to such transience') will itself seek further 'intuitional fulfilments' (i.e., images of pleasure) both within and, by implication, beyond the painting. These in turn will lead to yet further thoughts and their 'fulfilments' and so on, as our reflections enter into the state of 'free play'. On the other hand, each further intuition generated by the above thoughts (whether it is an 'aspect-perception' perceived 'in' the painting, or a 'mental image' of something absent but implied) will implicate yet further images of what it 'gives on to' insofar as each individual image embodies only a partial viewpoint (i.e. from a particular spatial, temporal, emotional or other such position). For example, in looking at Watteau's painting I might be drawn to see the bay through the eyes of one of the departing lovers, or actually imagine myself setting sail on board the boat bound for Cytherea, and

give myself up to images of that destination, voluptuous or sentimental. This in turn might lead me to 'wander' among related images of the classical past or my own past, engendering pangs of regret at the brevity of such happiness and so on. At the furthest 'horizon' of such 'harmonious free play of the imagination and understanding', we may even find it hard to tell whether what we are aware of is a thought or an image, as the 'aesthetic idea' ripples ever wider outwards.

At this point one naturally wants to ask how we can ever know whether such a response is legitimately intimated by the painting. The short answer to this is that it must be a matter of very sensitive judgment for which no hard and fast rules can be given - for if one accepts the Kantian view of the 'inexhaustibility' of great works of art, there <u>can</u> be no specifiable limits, although equally, this does not mean that just <u>any</u> response goes. Here in fact, we may get some help from Husserl's argument that all such partial 'intuitional fulfilments' of the object as we may have will be intentionally ambiguous as between (a) our immediate consciousness of the appearance of something at a particular point in time (e.g. that part of the melody that we are presently hearing) or space (e.g. the landscape seen from point 'a'), and (b) its directedness towards the free-standing 'aesthetic idea' as seen from this particular position. This idea itself remains elusively the 'same' throughout all our partial views of it although at the same time, it becomes increasingly implicated in each succeeding intuition - e.g. the 'whole' melody that we only 'hear' on reaching the last bar, or the 'whole' of Paris that is implicated in this view of a street cafe. Thus, although any particular intuitional fulfilment can only ever be a partial one, in virtue of its positionality (i.e. the appearance can only be given 'from the front', 'from the side', 'at this moment in time' etc.), it always contains implicitly

much more than is immediately given. As Husserl says of our temporal consciousness:

> The now-apprehension is the nucleus of a comet's tail of retentions referring to earlier 'now points'.[51]

so that each moment of 'lived experience' contains within itself its immediate past (without which there could be no awareness of 'time'), which in turn contains the immediate past of that moment, and so on, back to the beginning and forward to the end of our temporal consciousness of the object. Thus, the snatch of music that we actually hear at any one time becomes increasingly modified and enriched as the rest of the melody before and after becomes implicated in it (just as of course, every other part of the melody is being modified at the same time, which gives some idea of the phenomenological complexity of the process!) - e.g. as when the simple melody on which Bach based the Goldberg Variations sounds quite different when we hear it once again at the end of all the variations, from our first encounter with it at the beginning.

The potentiality of partial intuition to intend synthetically the 'whole' configuration in a kind of epiphany, whereby, in Husserl's words:

> Thoughts repose as if satisfied in the sight of their object [52]

is quite the most remarkable achievement of the imagination, and also helps to explain (as was discussed on p. 138) why a 'vivid' image has little connection with 'one-to-one correspondence - the latter being an impossibility anyway, since real 'one-to-one' correspondence would necessitate hearing the melody 'all at once' as opposed to 'hearing' it implicated say in the last chord, or seeing the object from all points of view at once - another impossibility, despite the reckless attempts of some Cubist paintings to do just that!

In responding to the 'aesthetic idea' then, we gradually gather up all the partial viewpoints, spatio-temporal, emotional, personal

and cultural into an 'emergent' configuration that, in the case of great art, may move us to our depths. It is often said, as it is by Kant, that such works of art are 'inexhaustible' because no thought, however comprehensive, nor intuition, however synthetic, could yield fully the 'emergent' configuration in its totality. As Sartre says:

> The reader...knows that he could always go further in his reading, and that he could always create more profoundly, and this is why the work appears to him inexhaustible and impenetrable as an object.[53]

However, it would be a mistake to apply this 'inexhaustibility' criterion too stringently insofar as many enjoyable though 'minor' works of art would certainly wither away beneath the strain!

To summarize then: (1) It would seem reasonable to assume that as a matter of fact, most works of art 'represent' underlying themes and concepts in the Kantian sense, and that this is an essential part of their value, despite the attempt of the 'formalist' to downgrade this side of art by 'sticking to the letter' of the 'aesthetic'. (2) When we ask someone to see a work of art under some general theme or concept, we are indeed trying to intimate something that cannot be 'realized' by a grasp of the words alone - namely, our experience of a unique 'emergent' configuration from an embodied <u>positional</u> viewpoint, which is where 'imagination takes place'. This notion of 'positionality' seems to be more helpful than that of Scruton's more obscure use of 'knowledge by acquaintance'. (3) Insofar as we have related the work to a concept or theme, we have not left the world of language behind us, as long as we remember that the relation between the thought and its embodiment is not a tight one of fully determinate concept to expendable illustration, but rather the more intimate one of 'appropriateness' arising from the experience. (4) Although aesthetic experience is, by its nature, too subjective for us to be able to specify some ideal viewpoint, we may nonetheless question our sense of 'appropriateness' by turning our attention away from the aesthetic

object and towards the position from which we are viewing it. As Merleau-Ponty says:

> Reflection loosens the intentional threads that bind us to the world, and thus brings them to our notice.[54]

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CHAPTER SEVEN: Is there a necessary 'horizon' to the work of art? - the intentional ambiguity of aesthetic response.

In the last chapter, it was argued that the work of art typically 'gives onto' an ever widening intentional horizon, implicating many thoughts and images that are not strictly given within its own horizon - i.e. within the manifest text of the novel, the complete performance of a piece of music or the total appearance of the painting within its frame. Of course the power to evoke in this manner is not exclusive to works of art. As Osborne has pointed out, the thought of 'a bicycle built for two', over and above its primary meaning, may "throw the image of a past decade on the reader's mental screen"[1]. Apart from whatever private associations that objects of any kind may evoke, this is particularly true in all those cases where the idea in question carries with it a predictable range of publicly established 'secondary' associations arising from a cultural background - for example, forests, ancient ruins, the sea shore, tower blocks and starry skies. Only too often with such familiar symbols, of course, the associative horizon appears in an automatic and stereotyped way - a conventionality much exploited by the cinema in particular. However this need not preclude the possibility of a more contemplative less pre-determined response when, as in the case of works of art, we may feel, like a wind blowing towards us, intimations of a new and unfamiliar horizon that promises to take us beyond strictly conventional, pre-determined associations.

The possibility of objects and states of affairs <u>other</u> than works of art generating such evocativeness rules out, then, the presence of evocativeness as a sufficient condition for something to count as a work of art - although we may still accept Kant's insistence that the reverie induced by the evocative image may be aesthetically relevant and appropriate insofar as it counteracts the automatic responses of prosaic perception and conventional association that blind us to the

aesthetic aspect of things. Perhaps this should not worry us unduly, however, since where we find such contemplative states arising from objects and situations in real life, the non-artist is probably getting as near as he or she ever will to experiencing the free play of the imagination and understanding that the artist experiences in the act of creation. Furthermore, the ability of the teacher to help pupils experience such contemplative states for themselves and in so doing to go beyond habitual responses is clearly an important precondition for generating aesthetic creativity in the classroom. This, in turn, raises the problem as to how such contemplation, with its essential ingredient of indeterminacy, can be encouraged to take shape in poetry, paint, movement, etc. without the child falling back on more conventional perceptual or mental images. Both influences may be seen at work, for example, in the following couplet written by a ten year old girl that I once taught, in which the conventional description of the first line is quite transformed by the evocativeness of the second:

> The sea is rough, the sea is calm,
> But I cannot hold it in my palm. (Julie Turner)

However, the main problem that I want to tackle now is this: if, as has been argued, the work of art typically evokes more than it shows, then <u>where</u>, if at all, can we draw a line around the 'proper' object of aesthetic response that will both (a) preserve its distinctive identity, and (b) retain its evocative links with the wider world? The problem arises because, as it stands, the work of art itself would seem to be the intentional object of aesthetic response, and yet at the same time, the work of art also seems to be directing a quasi-intentional glance towards the world that it is evoking - a glance that we are invited to share. Thus on the one hand, the work itself may be experienced from different viewpoints, as when our eye

wanders around the landscape that constitutes the imaginary world of Watteau's painting or savours its over-all structure; on the other hand, the same painting may be seen as itself giving a positional view onto objects, emotions and states of affairs that might or do exist in the primary world. Between these two ways of approaching the work of art, a tension is set up insofar as attention to the first obscures the work's significance in relation to anything beyond itself, while attention to the latter leads to the apparent 'disappearance' of the work before what it intends since, as we have seen in the argument against the hypostasized image, it is not the image itself which is the object of our thought, but what it is an image of.

Many aesthetic theories, including Scruton's, take this underlying ambiguity to be self-contradictory, and therefore tend to come down on one side or the other. Since any theory that treats the work of art as a totally expendable carrier of meaning must cut the ground from under its own feet as an aesthetic theory, let us first look at the alternative position before examining whether this posited ambiguity is, in fact, as disastrous as it seems. The alternative position then, which has considerably dominated aesthetic theory in recent years, seeks to limit our responses to that which is self-sufficiently 'in' the work of art itself. Such an 'autonomist' view comes in two basic guises - (a) The first version, originating in 18th century aesthetics as exemplified by The Analytic of the Beautiful section in Kant's Critique and deriving a new-found strength from 20th century abstract art, is of course the 'formalism' which posits 'pure' aesthetic qualities as the autonomous and self-justifying goal of aesthetic response - the only kind of response worthy of that name. (b) The second version is more commonly associated with literature on account of the virtual impossibility of achieving 'pure' form with words alone - for what could that be like, divorced from any significance, except

something like the babble of 'concrete' poetry? This version, then, argues that the work of art is constituted by a 'secondary world' of the imagination, to be enjoyed just as much as aesthetic form 'for its own sake', and in no way to be confused with the primary world towards which our beliefs and emotions are properly directed, however much it may resemble that world. Kant, while not totally embracing this view himself, conveniently summarizes it in the Critique:

> The imagination...is very powerful in creating another nature, as it were, out of the material that actual nature gives it. We entertain ourselves with it when experience becomes too commonplace...[2]

There are basically two main objections that I want to advance against such 'autonomist' positions as the above, although both are so intimately connected that it is not easy to treat them separately. The first one, based on an appeal to our experience of art, is that the 'autonomous' account makes it impossible for us to take works of art seriously. The second objection is that the very idea of autonomous 'significant' form is a logical impossibility.

(A) The argument from experience - Here, the main problem for the 'autonomist' argument, in both its versions, is that it cannot ultimately explain the seriousness with which many people take art over and above its hedonistic value - a problem that Kant, as we have seen, realized only too well when he abandoned the 'formalism' of the earlier part of the Critique in favour of the far more catholic 'aesthetic idea'. If all connections with non-formal considerations were severed, then it becomes very difficult to see how one could take what is left, i.e. 'pure' form, with any more seriousness than one would take e.g. patterned wallpaper. Insofar as this residue is seen to be the proper object of aesthetic attention, then it would seem that the experience must soon become tedious not to mention virtually unintelligible since, in the absence of any significance, what is there to guide us beyond the arbitrary whims of the artist? This is not,

however, intended as a reductio ad absurdum of allegedly 'formalist' works of art, but only of the dogmatism inherent in any extreme application of 'formalist' principles. In some such cases it may be possible that the apparently 'pure' aesthetic response is simply attributable to the hypnotic properties of certain combinations of colours of rhythms. In the main, however, I want to argue that very few works of art as a matter of fact may be seen to fall completely under the category of 'pure' (i.e. non-signifying) form. This is because, if we rule out the unadulterated hedonism of the type exemplified by Huysmans' Des Esseintes, then it would seem that an unacknowledged metaphysical or quasi-religious aspect is hovering in the background of most 'formalist' claims, as it does more explicitly in Kant's account of the 'sublime'. Even Clive Bell, perhaps the most celebrated 'formalist' of all, from time to time toys with a 'metaphysical hypothesis', as when, in moments of intense contemplation of 'significant form', he asserts that:

> We become aware of its essential reality, of the God in everything, of the universal in the particular, of the all-pervading rhythm.[3]

Furthermore, despite the preoccupations of many 20th century painters with what Picasso has called:

> An art dealing primarily with forms, and when a form is realized, it is there to live its own life[4]

equally, many such painters, from Cezanne onwards, have seen their work as reaching through to a more profound reality than that which is accessible to ordinary perception or abstract thought, as for example in the following comment of Braque on the genesis of Cubism:

> When objects shattered into fragments appeared in my paintings about 1909, this for me was a way of getting closer to the object.[5]

But then to admit this, which in Braque's case often involved a celebration of the objects and events of everyday life, is to reintroduce significance into the work of art, thereby undermining the 'auto-

nomist' thesis, as Bell, like Kant, must have been only too well aware when he postulated his own 'metaphysical hypothesis'.

Nonetheless, the limitations of the postulated 'formalist' horizon may be powerfully felt, in the case for example of much atonal music and non-representational art insofar as their evolution has been conceived of by the artist in terms of exclusively 'formal' considerations - as when serial and atonal music came about as a reaction to the 'exhaustion' of Western tonality by composers like Wagner and Mahler. Without the manifest concern of these earlier composers with fundamental human issues however, such music came to be experienced by many people as arbitrary and virtually unintelligible. Where such music does happen to move us in a serious and sustained sort of way (e.g. Webern's 'Five orchestral pieces') then I should want to argue that this is only because, over and above whatever aesthetic pleasure we may take in these particular configurations of sound, they also happen to evoke for us non-formal thoughts, emotions and images that may easily be mistaken by devoted followers of such music for a purely formal response.

This ambiguity of the 'aesthetic' horizon pursues us even in those seemingly 'pure' cases, as when we talk of the 'inner logic' of new musical developments like the twelve-tone row, since our use of 'logic' here (like the similar formal employment of 'balance' and 'proportion') inevitably borrows from our normal use of the term as much as it also depends for its 'paronymous' extension in each particular case on our less predetermined powers of aspect perception. Fugues, for example, have their own elusive kind of 'entailment'. As Wittgenstein points out of our experience of music, in <u>Culture and Value</u>:

> If I say for instance: here it's as though a conclusion were being drawn, here as though someone were expressing disagreement, or as though <u>this</u> were a reply to what came before, - my understanding of it presupposes my familiarity with conclusions, ex-

pressions of agreement, replies.[6]

What the 'autonomist' argument also chooses to ignore here is that the perceptual features which give rise to the experience of aesthetic form, such as flowing lines and receding planes, the hues and intensities of colours, the proportions of cubes and cones etc. usually start off in life as features _of_ something familiar in the primary world such as mountains, rooftops, buildings, horizons and the curves of the human body - though the artist may expressively highlight, rearrange or 'distort' them - techniques which, after all, are of the essence of 'abstract' art. 'Abstract' art in other words must always be an abstraction _of_ some original perception. Without this link to the primary world or to some further, posited 'reality', then it would seem impossible to take art seriously, nor would it seem possible to enjoy it for long, without getting thoroughly bored.

The second version of the 'autonomy' thesis, while escaping the charge of boredom, likewise entails the 'non-serious' view of art insofar as it inevitably leads on to the trivializing, popular view of art as entertainment pure and simple - as when we talk of a 'rattling good yarn'. In the Scrutonian version it may appear, of course, as a very high-level intellectual pastime wherein we cultivate the 'entertaining' of an 'unasserted' secondary world, but in the end how can we take this any more seriously than a good game of chess?

Nonetheless, such appeals to experience as this, it has to be admitted, work both ways. Great claims have been made for the seriousness of the 'pure' aesthetic response. Joyce, for example, refers in _Ulysses_ to:

> The luminous, silent stasis of aesthetic pleasure.

Bell's writing, like Scruton's, is full of equally powerful appeals to experience to support the seriousness of his claims - as when he suggests that no one who has not experienced the full force of 'signi-

ficant form':

> can ever guess at the austere and thrilling raptures of those who have climbed the cold, white peaks of art.[7]

Could 'pure' form alone really sustain such a lofty response for long? Since all such experiential appeals tend to be inconclusive either way, let us now turn to the second objection, mentioned on page 166.

(B) The logical argument - In both versions of the 'autonomy' thesis, for all their dependence on experiential appeals, the overriding impetus is the logical one - i.e., if our response to the aesthetic object goes beyond the horizon of 'significant form' or the unasserted secondary world, then it must cease to be a response to the work of art qua work of art. However, before examining the logical problems to which this view gives rise (especially for the first version), it is worth pausing for a moment to consider the historical background to such a 'transcendent' claim insofar as this may shed some light on the powerful influence of 'formalism' in contemporary aesthetics.

From this point of view then, the drive towards 'autonomy' along with the corresponding rejection of 'naturalism' that characterizes so much contemporary aesthetic theory may be likened in some respects to the way in which earlier philosophers like Locke saw a main part of their task as freeing scientific enquiry from the irrelevancies of cosmology and theology. Thus for writers like Harold Osborne[8], 'autonomist' aesthetics represents not a transient phase of cultural history through which we are now passing, but rather an increase in our understanding of what art is all about - i.e. of what is distinctively aesthetic. Such a 'transcendent' view seeks to find confirmation, as we have see, not only in the 'formalist' preoccupations' of so much 20th century Western art and also cross-culturally e.g. in the arts of Japan and Africa, but also retrospectively in showing that the distinctively aesthetic has been present in human artefacts since

earliest times, though often obscured by more immediate and obvious functional and representational ends - as when a cave painter despite his immediate concern to work some kind of 'magic' on the hunted animal, may have nonetheless been spontaneously moved by the beautiful curve running along the neck of such a creature and expressed this in his painting, which we may still feel three thousand years later.

However, can we so easily separate the logical refinements leading to the 'autonomist' position from its more arbitrary origins in a particular phase of our cultural history, especially when such a position is also so heavily dependent on experiential appeals? In the last chapter, it was argued that any account of 'experience' must make reference to the phenomenon of positionality, and that this includes not only a spatio-temporal dimension but also an historical-cultural one[9]. Interestingly Scruton himself raises at one point the question of the historical and cultural positionality of 'autonomist' aesthetics, though only to dismiss it as of little philosophical interest:

> It can be argued, and to a certain extent persuasively that the supposed intuition of an autonomist character in aesthetic appreciation is nothing more than the reflection of a transient historical bias in favour of one sort of attitude to art, which has no more right to be classified as <u>the</u> mode of aesthetic appreciation than any other.[10]

Though the historical location of 'autonomist' aesthetics would not in itself constitute a necessary objection to its 'transcendent' impetus, nonetheless it ought certainly to have a bearing on the <u>empirical</u> side of the inquiry insofar as the 'autonomist' is searching for an experiential base to his theory in human nature, as Hume did for example in his account of an 'educated public' and as Bell does in his account of our capacity to feel 'aesthetic emotion'. For Scruton's avowedly 'empiricist' aesthetic the historical location ought to be of more than passing interest. In his article 'Aesthetic Instrumentalism', Diffey is quite explicit that over and above any logical grounds:

> (the) commitment to aesthetic autonomy is something historically located, something manifest in an attitude to art that has been gaining in strength since the 18th century to a position of dominance today.[11]

This is not the place to enter into any lengthy speculation as to why this should be so, but if the above objections to the 'autonomist' thesis are justified, then there is no doubt that as the 'autonomist' view filters down through our educational system, the arts will come to be seen by many people as increasingly peripheral to our serious needs.

Of course writers like Scruton and Osborne don't deny that non-aesthetic beliefs, emotions and values may as a matter of fact be powerfully present in the way that we sometimes respond to works of art. However their presence is seen rather as, at best, an essential preliminary to the aesthetic response proper where they simply wither away. Thus, as Osborne points out in Abstraction and Artifice in 20th Century Art[12], much of our ability to detect the formal structure even of very 'abstract' painting, must necessarily be dependent on our first recognizing any representational element that is present however minimally - e.g. as when our purely 'formal' pleasure in a gracefully curving line is inevitably modified as regards the emphasis and impact of the 'emergent' aesthetic qualities, upon our recognizing that it is the curve of a naked breast or torso.

Just how we are to put aside this non-aesthetic aspect remains something of an enigma however, as does the requirement made by Cubists like Juan Gris that we are to see e.g. a Cubist 'guitar' not in any way as a distorted real guitar, expressively reconstituted, but rather as a 'pure' aesthetic object in its own right. Seen thus, whether the 'guitar' (if one can still call it that) is the central feature of the work or, as is more often the case, part of a larger 'emergent' configuration, then in the end it becomes merely a dispensable peg on which to hang the garment of 'pure' form. But how, one wonders, could the 'emergent' aesthetic configuration stay the same

once we excluded any kind of non-aesthetic significance from it? As Wittgenstein has pointed out, the dependence of formal configurations on expressive and representative elements is such that they cannot be separated without drastic modification of the former, as when a picture of a smile when turned upside down ceases to be a smile - so the formalist thesis must be wrong:

> Two schools:
> (1) "What matters is the patches of colour (and lines - S)."
> (2) "What matters is the expression on these faces."
> In a sense these two don't contradict one other. Only (1) doesn't make clear that the different patches have different importance, and that different alterations have totally different effects: some make all the difference in the world.
> "A picture must be good even if you look at it upside down." Then, the smile may not be noticeable.[13]

Thus Kandinsky's often quoted remark that he discovered the possibility of 'non-representational' art through accidentally seeing one of his pictures on its side and being thrilled by it[14] is misleading, to say the least.

Furthermore, once we have recognized the guitar (or the smile) as such, how, one wonders, could we compel ourselves not to see it in any way as a guitar, however much its appearance may be expressively modified - a guitar moreover that may distinctively evoke much else, expressing perhaps the pleasures of café life, the charms of music or even the transience of human happiness? In this respect, it is not just that we have been conditioned, as Osborne has argued[15], by a cultural tradition deriving from the Greeks that happens to view art as paradigmatically representational, ut pictura poesis, but rather that every sign (be it symbolic, iconic or expressive), however minimally present in the work of art is, necessarily, intentional - pointing towards, expressing or evoking what it signifies. Thus, even if we were able to detach ourselves from any non-aesthetic significances in the work of art and view what was left as a totally self-sufficient configuration, then we would really just be looking at

coloured patches, squiggles and blotches which would literally be insignificant, though perhaps of passing curiosity value - certainly 'significant form' would be a misnomer here.

It would seem therefore that either 'pure' form is covertly significant, or else unintelligible - though as I have already suggested, most works of art with 'formalist' pretensions really fall into the former category. The confusion here seems to have arisen because 'significance' in art has too often been simply equated with the aspiration towards one-to-one correspondence - the least fruitful of all aesthetic goals, as Plato was the first to point out in his critique of 'mimesis'. Thus, the many other ways in which works of art can intend something beyond themselves was, theoretically at any rate, overlooked, though in practice it was precisely these rich avenues of e.g. symbolism, evocativeness, expressiveness and abstraction that the modern movement so successfully explored. As Herbert Read points out, though it is rather stating the obvious:

> Exactitude is not truth is the thesis of the whole of the modern period in art.[16]

The second version of the 'autonomy' argument, on the other hand, clearly escapes the charge of insignificance insofar as it is held that the work of art signifies an imaginary world. However, as I have argued earlier, insofar as this imaginary or 'secondary' world is held to be 'unasserted' in any way, then this makes it exceedingly difficult to take the work of art seriously - unless that is, a relationship can be established between the 'secondary' and 'primary' worlds in virtue of the ambiguity of the imaginary object which is the theme that I intend to explore in the second half of this chapter.

One final objection remains to be made against the 'formalist' position. Insofar as the artist himself is indifferent towards the objects and states of affairs that he portrays in his work except insofar as their shape offers him a chance to exploit certain aesthetic

possibilities, then this indifference towards the primary world becomes actually objectionable - compared with the reverence, for example, with which Van Gogh approaches a humble chair. Yet if, on the other hand, we can see e.g. Cubist still-lifes not only as breaking up the familiar world into exquisite crystalline structures, but also as celebrating in a novel and expressive way the simple pleasures of everyday life - the café, the meal, listening to music etc. - then the problems of insignificance and indifference to the primary world disappear, but only of course at the price of abandoning the extreme 'autonomist' position.

Though at times the most hardened 'autonomists' seem to waver, as in the case of Osborne's interesting suggestion in The Art of Appreciation that we may be able simultaneously to see the work of art as both 'abstract' and representational at one and the same time, in the end, as Elliott points out in his review of that book:

> He makes concessions to the critics of Formalism, but powerfully reaffirms its essential spirit.[17]

The same might also be said of Scruton, who starts off with the firm intent to avoid any position in which "aesthetic interest will become an entirely autonomous and unrelated section of human activity"[18], but ends up with a powerful defence of the second version of the 'autonomy' thesis. Thus, as we have seen[19], like Osborne he allows an enabling role for our knowledge of the work's content and cultural context, but only as a prelude to entertaining it as an unasserted secondary world.

Nowhere, then, is it considered that the concept of the 'aesthetic' might itself be seen as systematically ambiguous - causing us both to look inwardly towards the horizon of the work's formal values and the 'secondary' world that it displays to our immediate gaze, and yet also outwardly towards what the work thematically intends within the horizon of the primary world - just as we may try to understand a

person as an autonomous being inhabiting the world as viewed by us, or try to see the world "through their eyes", and in fact it is exceedingly difficult to separate the two. In arguing for the systematic ambiguity of the aesthetic object, however, it must be emphasized that this is an ambiguity that is irreducible in either direction, be it towards the dogmatism of the 'autonomist' or the insensitivity of the 'cognitivist' position towards which 'analytic' aesthetics tends. Of course insofar as the aesthetic object does signify, then as with any other sign it cannot be the same as what it signifies - except in the special sense that I shall come onto later, that the 'x' intended may seem on occasions to enter into the sign and perhaps for a brief, epiphanous moment take possession of it. However, unlike conventionally iconic and expressive signs (such as 'children crossing' signs, smiles and frowns), and also unlike the expendable aide de memoire mental images of memory and illustrative thinking, the work of art qua image may also be viewed as an object of interest in its own right - i.e. not just for what it intends, but as an intentional object in itself (the painting of Paul, as opposed to Paul himself). As Merleau-Ponty says of the role of the perceptual image in art:

> The picture and the actor's mimicry are not devices to be borrowed from the real world in order to signify prosaic things which are absent.[20]

If 'borrowing from the real world' were seen to be the prime function of art, then of course such a view would be subject to all Plato's familiar objections as to the pointlessness of mimetic art understood as aspiring to one-to-one correspondence.

It is of the essence of the aesthetic object, however, that whatever it intends as its subject matter, and however closely its appearance may approximate to it, nonetheless it must always involve some transformation of our conventional view of the intended 'x', however minimal. This creative feature of all aesthetic objects will still

not justify the 'autonomist' case however, since 'creativity' understood as imaginative transformation must itself always be intentionally ambiguous. Aesthetic transformation, however radical (e.g. Mondrian's tree), must always be a transformation _of_ something. Thus, while the aesthetic object must always bring to light some new aspect of the intended 'x', it must nonetheless still refer to the intended 'x' in some way, or it could not count as 'transformation' of that 'x'. This clearly applies to those works of art that evoke an absent primary world, as Dickens evokes the world of the Victorian child, while at the same time presenting us with a transformation of that primary world into something more heightened and unified, aesthetically and dramatically, than would ever have been found in the original. It would also apply to those non-existent worlds like _Alice in Wonderland_ which, however fantastic, must always borrow their material from the primary world (which in this example is also the world of the Victorian child), though dramatically rearranging it.

At the very heart of this posited ambiguity lies the enigmatic status of the work of art as 'imaginary object' - and which, for present purposes, I shall take to be synonymous with the 'aesthetic object'. It is the reality of this 'imaginary object' which would appear to be the most fundamental presupposition of Scruton's account of the imagination, in the sense that to know something imaginatively 'by acquaintance' must presuppose that we are in the _presence_ of something more than just an 'empty intention'. It is to the experience of this 'imaginary object' Wittgenstein refers when he says that:

> the flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought[21]

though such a way of talking always carries with it the greatest temptation to posit 'private' mental objects, independent of the thought. Nonetheless, even for Wittgenstein, there is an underlying ambiguity in our talk about imagination, as in the following comment where he

seems to be implying that the role of the image in 'aspect perception' is both a something and a nothing:

> 'Seeing as....' is not part of perception. And for that reason it is like seeing and again not like.[22]

Insofar as the posited 'imaginary object' may be seen as an intentional object in its own right, though not to be confused with what it intends (which is what leads to the hypostasization of the image), it would seem to resist the attempts of 'analytic' philosophers like Ryle and Ishiguro to reduce it to a bare thought - just as much as it also resists the 'autonomist' attempt to deny its intentional connections with the primary world in virtue of its significatory function. In this respect, the having of an image is clearly inseparable from intending what it is an image of.

Having thus examined in the first half of this chapter some of the shortcomings of the posited horizon which the 'autonomist' would place around the aesthetic object, let us now return once again to that horizon entailed by the 'analytic' account of the imagination insofar as it argues for the total 'transparency' of the image before what it intends - the image being like Wittgenstein's ladder that we throw away once having climbed it, since it is only regarded as an alternative way of 'picturing' the same thought. Thus Ishiguro, for example, says of the perceptual image that:

> If I can be said to see anything in a picture or photograph, it is only objects or persons and not images or portraits of objects and persons.[23]

But if the ambiguity of the 'imaginary object' is accepted, then this is only half the story. The problem with this account, as with Ryle's, is that, whether we are dealing with mental or perceptual 'imaginary objects', then, insofar as the intended object is posited as absent or non-existent, even though our thoughts may be pointing 'in the right direction', we find ourselves in the strange position of imagining nothing at all, which is, in fact, identical with what Ryle

calls 'pretending to see'. We may observe this, for example, in Ryle's uneasy formulation that:

> Roughly, imaging occurs, but images are not seen.[24]

Now, apart from the obvious problems that this creates for the 'analytic' position in giving an account of the 'perceptual' images offered us by painting, cinema, the plastic arts etc., there are perhaps two main reasons why a formulation such as Ryle's doesn't sound quite right - the first being on experiential grounds, and the second deriving from the 'logical grammar' of 'imagining': (A) The first problem is simply that of the recalcitrant vividness of the 'imaginary object' itself, over and above the vividness with which it enables us to evoke that which is absent or non-existent. That this was a major problem for Ryle is illustrated by a paper that he gave to the Colloque de Royaumont in 1961, in which he looks once again at the notion that when someone is 'hearing a tune in his head':

> he must be in fact <u>thinking</u> how the tune goes...without its being played and without humming it...But what stopped me was that I did not know what more to say on this notion of <u>thinking how the tune goes</u>. For a man can say, even with an air of surprise "It was almost as if I really heard the notes". The kind of thinking in which he was engaged was so lively and had such a degree of resemblance with the real thing, that it led him to compare the notes which he had simply thought, to heard notes, with however, this crucial difference that the notes in thought were only notes in thought, but were not heard at all...It is because of this concept of quasi-sensory vivacity of auditorily imagined notes, among other things, that I was sure of not having succeeded in finding my way.[25]

As such, this 'quasi-sensory vivacity' may be seen as a remarkable empirical feature of the human mind, a capacity more developed in some people than others, which cannot be fully squared with the logical demands of intentionality. Thus, though the intentional object of my thoughts may be e.g. an absent or ideal, but never actually performed, performance of the closing chords of a Beethoven quartet, the chords that ring out in my imagination may, in some cases, have sufficient presence to stand in for the actual performance. To insist that such

an experience is still only to be regarded as ' the thought of how the tune goes', or worse still, 'pretending' to hear it, is to stretch our concepts of 'thinking' and 'pretending' far beyond what we normally understand by them - though in passing, it should also perhaps be pointed out that the music example is rather a special case insofar as it is also, at least in part, a memory image. As such it may owe a good deal of its vividness to the reactivation of the emotions that were evoked at the time of hearing the original performance. In the same way, as Cowley rightly argues in A Critique of British Empiricism:

> To imagine an infuriating situation that arose yesterday is actually to be angry all over again, not just to remember one was angry.[26]

(B) It is not only on experiential grounds, however, that it is necessary to argue for the 'presence' of the 'imaginary object' over and above what it intends. In order to imagine the 'world' evoked by a piece of literature, to 'see' those aspects in a painting that are not strictly given by its positional appearance, or 'hear' in our imagination the closing chords of a symphony or the sound of Braque's guitar, something must be present to us over and above the thought, or we could not distinguish between thinking and imagining. To imagine something in its absence or non-existent, then, cannot be just to think about it but in some sense to perceive it in the guise of an analogue which, in the case of the aesthetic 'imaginary object', would seem to be an essential precondition for realizing the work in the kind of 'fullness' outlined in the last chapter. It is in order to make this necessary distinction between the 'empty intention' and its 'intuitional fulfilment' that Husserl rightly argues that in the case of both the 'inner' perception of imagination and 'outer' perception:

> It is of the essence of perception that something should appear in it.[27]

Thus to realize the point of a request like Wittgenstein's, "Now see

the figure like this"[28], a grasp of the intended thought alone will not guarantee the requisite sense of appropriateness unless one actually apprehends e.g. Olga's face in Picasso's cubes, or the 'transience of human happiness' in The Embarkation to Cytherea. This is, of course, the lynch-pin of Scruton's argument.

Now, clearly, the response of 'pretending to see' won't do at all here. We would certainly not be complying with the request to see Olga in Picasso's painting if we only pretended to see her when in reality all we saw was a jumble of cubes! There are limits to our powers of self-deception and the full absurdity becomes only too apparent when we 'pretend to see' the 'transience of human happiness' in The Embarkation to Cytherea - though perhaps this type of 'pretence' is practised more often than we realize by pupils who are simply eager to please their teacher. There is, however, another and more acceptable sense of 'pretending to see' which may occur in the following type of situation[29]. Sometimes, a teacher may be, for example, reading a vivid passage of poetry to the class while seeing vividly 'in his mind's eye' the poem's content - e.g. Porphyro's vision of Madeline at her prayers, bathed in the multi-coloured moonlight that floods down through the stained glass in Keats' St. Agnes Eve. Upon looking up at the row of faces before him, he observes nothing but blankness. The children are not imagining the content of the poem at all, nor even going through the motions of pretending to see what he sees. He therefore puts on an act and pretends himself to see what is, in fact, vividly present to him, looking up at the high casement window and then down at the enchanting figure beside the bed, adopting what he takes to be the amazed expression on Porphyro's face, and so on. However, though all this mimicry may legitimately be described as 'pretending to see', its real aim is precisely to produce in the pupils the very mental image of the poem's content which Ryle regards

as unnecessary. As with Socrates' view of the philosopher as teacher, it is thus that the poetry teacher acts as 'midwife' to the children's imagination - though, as always, he is up against the involuntary side of imagination, particularly where powerful emotions are concerned, which I have already discussed and shall return to.

Can the 'analytic' philosopher, then, distinguish between the act of thinking of 'x' in its absence, and imagining it? In her paper on Imagination Ishiguro seems to suggest that the distinction both can and can't be drawn - perhaps echoing the remark of Wittgenstein's quoted at the bottom of page 177 of this chapter. Thus, on the one hand a degree of autonomy is granted to the image in those kinds of cases like the one where I remember someone's face but only later remember that it is the face of an old friend. In such cases, the thought e.g. of the face alters, but the image remains constant[30]. Again, she seems to accept that our understanding of a verbal description does not guarantee that we will be able to 'picture' the absent 'x' or see that aspect in the painting that we are invited to see[31]. Ishiguro regards this as a purposive activity that we need to cultivate. Indeed, at the end of the article, she goes on to set the very highest store by it:

> The skill - this exercise of the imagination - which enables one to be susceptible to seeing various aspects, or stop oneself from being captured by one aspect one sees - seems as important as training oneself to reason.[32]

Insofar as this is linked in Ishiguro's paper with the view that:

> in the case of seeing images or aspects there is an added element of something beyond our control, of being an experience probably governed by causal factors we do not understand.[33]

then it is very much in line with the view advanced in earlier chapters of this thesis concerning the involuntary side of the imagination.

On the other hand, like reflections in mirrors and unlike pictures that have a material base in paint and canvas, she holds that images only have an intentional existence which thus enables her to advance

the view that:

> Mental images...can be said to be 'in the same grammar' as our concept of mental images, because...they have no existence apart from the awareness of the person who is imagining the objects...[34]

and a little later:

> the 'grammar', or the logical features, of expressions or concepts can be ascribed to objects that fall under them only if the objects have no identity independently of our thoughts about them. Thoughts, images,...aspects,...are primarily intentional.[35]

Here, then, it does indeed look as if Ishiguro completely assimilates the mental image of 'x' to the thought of it, thereby contradicting her earlier example of the imagined face that we only later 'put a name to'. Thus we are once again back to the familiar argument that it is not the image to which we ascribe aspects, but what it is an image <u>of</u>. In thinking of the sun, for example, "I do not see an orange image," she says, "but an image of an orange object"[36]. Thus 'seeing' mental images is differentiated from the 'seeing X as Y' of the positionally located perceptual image, insofar as:

> In the case of mental images the X's disappear, as it were, and we are just left with the activities of 'seeing as Y'.[37]

But what sense can we make of such an 'activity'? In order to talk of 'seeing' at all, however parasitically, there has to be <u>something</u> which is present to us over and above the thought, and which is the <u>image</u> of 'Y', even though it is the 'Y' itself that we intend. To talk of '<u>seeing</u> as Y' (and note how we make an involuntary pause between 'seeing' and 'as Y' when we speak it, in order to fill in the obviously missing gap), sounds just as odd as Ryle's formula, since all we can really mean by it is that we are thinking of 'Y' without seeing it in any way at all - what Husserl describes as an 'empty intention' in fact. If this is all there is to 'imagining', then the distinction between imagining 'x' and thinking of it must surely collapse.

Once again we need the notion of the ambiguity of the 'imaginary object' to rescue us from this impasse, for it may be quite possible to be thinking of 'x' but seeing 'in our mind's eye' what we recognize to be an analogue which both resembles, however minimally and evokes further images and thoughts of the absent 'x' which we necessarily cannot see. For this to be possible, there is no question but that an image must appear. As Sartre argues:

> it is evident that the mental image must also have a material, and a material which derives its meaning solely from the intention that animates it. To see this clearly I need only compare my initial empty intention with my mental image of Peter. At first I wanted to produce Peter out of the void, and then something loomed up which filled my intention.[38]

What this 'stuff' is which bears the aspects of the imaginary object is really a question for the kind of speculative psychology in which Sartre engages in the latter half of The Psychology of Imagination. Sartre in fact, for whom 'consciousness' is synonymous with a pure and 'empty' intentionality directed towards the world (a position which closely resembles the 'analytic' view of 'meaning'), attributes the material out of which the imaginary object is made to our consciousness of the body:

> the entire body participates in the make-up of the image.[39]

Thus, in looking at a Braque still-life, we may not only come to imagine a many-sided evocation of the visual aspects of cafe life, but also be led to 'hear' the sounds of animated conversation and strumming guitars, 'feel' the warmth from the stove, 'smell' the tobacco smoke and 'taste' the bowl of fruit - insofar as all these aspects are hinted at as contributing to the overall 'atmosphere' embodied in the painting.

However, the question as to exactly what this 'stuff' is composed of which makes such acts of the imagination possible need not concern us here. For present purposes it is sufficient to say only that its existence must be presupposed in order to explain how such imagining

is possible, in much the same way that a 'rationalist' psycho-linguist like Chomsky finds himself having to presuppose a 'biologically founded' innate 'language acquisition device' in order to account for how language is possible in the first place.

What really concerns us here is that insofar as it is accepted that the mental image does appear then, contrary to Ryle and Ishiguro, it does not constitute a separate category from the perceptual images of painting and the plastic arts and therefore it may be seen to share their intentional ambiguity. What can we say about this posited 'mental image' without falling back on a Humean type of account? On the surface, it does look rather Humean as in Husserl's remark that:

> However far an imaginative presentation may lag behind its object, 'it has many features in common with it, more than that, it is like this object, depicts it, makes it really present to us.[40]

However, it is crucially important to grasp that this "lagging behind" of the imaginary object is not to be understood in the same sense as that of the hypostasized 'mental image' - i.e. as an inescapably less vivid replica of the intended 'x' than our actual perception of it would offer. Rather, I would suggest that it may be best understood as the mental counterpart to the perceptual images that we encounter in painting, cinema, drama, music etc. As has already been pointed out, the perceptual images offered to us by these art forms, to a greater or lesser degree, go some way towards doing our actual imagining for us, in the sense that our perception of such images - be they iconic, expressive or evocative, partial or multi-positional, as in Cubist painting - acts as a springboard, enabling us to 'picture' absent or non-existent worlds. In this respect, as has already been argued, the amount of detail in the image bears little relation to its vividness, as in Japanese prints where two or three lines may powerfully suggest a whole landscape. As Sartre points out:

> In the act of consciousness the representative element and the

> element of knowledge are united in a synthetic act...This is the reason why extremely poor and curtailed images, images which are reduced to a few spatial determinations, can nevertheless have a rich and profound meaning.[41]

From this point of view, the aesthetic imaginary object is not like Wittgenstein's expendable ladder because, without it, it would be impossible to evoke the kind of imaginary world that was discussed in the previous chapter. As Sartre points out in contrasting word and image:

> In its meaning, a word is but a land-mark: it presents itself, awakens a meaning, and this meaning never returns to the word but goes out to the thing and is dropped. In the case of a physical image, however, the intentionality constantly returns to the image-portrait. We face the portrait and we observe it; (It is this observation which becomes the quasi-observation in the case of the mental image); the imaginary consciousness of Peter is being constantly enriched...[42]

We are now in a position to see how the connection between the mental images evoked by literary works and the perceptual images offered us by the visual arts is, in fact, a very close one. For example, some paintings, especially very 'abstract' ones like the Cubist presentation of music or café life, merely hint at an evoked world, placing heavy demands on the viewer to realize what is intimated - which, as I have already suggested, may include the whole gamut of imagined sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch, not just the visual dimension. In the same way, some literary descriptions, such as the following couplet from Milton's L'Allegro:

> Such sights as youthful poets dream
> On summer eves by haunted stream

by their very openness send the reader's thoughts and imagination off into an almost limitless reverie such as Kant describes in his account of the 'aesthetic idea'. The blank Chapter XXXVIII in Tristram Shandy in which Sterne invites the reader to compose his own description of the widow with whom Uncle Toby has fallen in love is perhaps an overly extreme example of this!

There are other paintings and literary works, however, which

achieve their effect in the opposite way through amassing a wealth of detail and thereby leaving much less room for our imagination to go off on its own - as in Botticelli's Primavera which contains, among other things, over 150 identifiable species of wild flower native to Tuscany, or Dickens' description of the fog settling on London at the beginning of Bleak House which likewise achieves its effect through a prodigal accumulation of detail, though, as with the Primavera, each particular detail is subordinated to the overall, cumulative 'emergent' configuration.

Of course, whatever 'imaginary object' does rise up before us in such cases will require some justification by reference to the work of art itself as the intentional object of our response. If one goes too far beyond this horizon, then there is a draining away of legitimacy - the work receding away from us like an out-going tide. This accounts for the tremendous authority that any 'autonomist' can command in calling for a return to the work of art itself. However, though the work must, to a greater or lesser extent, direct our responses or it would be redundant, as Scruton never tires of telling us, this is not at all the same thing as exerting total control over them. How could it do that? To say, for example, as an 'autonomist' like Margaret McDonald does, that:

> What Jane Austen tells of Emma Woodhouse exhausts Emma Woodhouse [43]

is either trivially true, in virtue of the stipulative identification of the imaginary object with what is explicitly given in the text, or else quite inadequate as an account of the complex imaginary person that we build up. For example, there is no mention of Emma eating breakfast in the text, but does that mean that we cannot legitimately imagine that she ever ate breakfast? Clearly our image of Emma Woodhouse projects far beyond what is immediately given in the text. In much the same way, as Ray Elliott has pointed out to me, a rabbit's

foot disappearing off the edge of a comic strip is legitimately perceived by even the youngest child, not as a disembodied foot but as a fast disappearing rabbit!

In this respect, the 'autonomist's' insistence on the self-sufficiency of the work of art as itself the container of our responses is obscure, insofar as it fails to make clear how, in describing the work, I am describing my own experiences and feelings about it. It also fails to take into account the very varying demands that works of art, as a matter of fact, make on us with a view to realizing the 'emergent' horizon implicit in whatever image that they immediately present to view. As a result, a very interesting evaluative question never gets asked by the 'autonomist' (nor it might be added by many other aesthetic positions), which is this: what can the work of art reasonably ask of the reader, viewer or listener? Without doubt, some works of art, especially of a very 'private' kind, ask too much, while perhaps it might be a criticism of other works of art that they don't ask enough of us, like T.V. 'soap operas'. There are also those works of art which may demand much of the reader or viewer, as in the case of the Milton couplet above and virtually all Japanese haiku, but where we don't feel that too much is being asked of us. This is of course a problem with which most teachers of arts subjects are all too familiar. What can we reasonably expect in the way of an imaginative response to specific works of art from pupils, given their level of maturity, experiential background etc.? As Sartre says of the reader:

> the work exists only at the exact level of his capacities; while he reads and creates, he knows that he can always go further in his reading, can always create more profoundly...[44]

Leaving aside this question for the moment, however, let us now return to the original problem of where, if at all, we may draw the horizon around the imaginary object, given its posited ambiguity. It is something like this ambiguity that Sartre seems to have in mind

when he refers to the essential characteristic of the mental image as:

> a certain way an object has of being absent within its very presence.[45]

Thus, in considering the mental image of a pair of beautiful white hands:

> Desire posits an object which is the affective equivalent of those hands: something transcendent, something which is not myself, is given as the correlative of my consciousness. But at the same time...I am invaded by the knowledge that this something stands for 'two hands'.[46]

Although it may seem a rather 'untidy' solution to the problem, offending the principle of 'Occam's razor', it does begin to look as though we have to accept the presence of a double horizon in our dealings with the imaginary object - according to whether we are attending to (a) the immediate appearance of the image itself qua intentional object, i.e. Sartre's 'affective equivalent' (wherein also its aesthetic features lie insofar as they belong to the surface appearance of the image), or to (b) that far wider and in some cases almost limitless horizon onto which the imaginary object intentionally gives, and which is composed of a synthesis of positional viewpoints generated by the initial appearance of the image.

Though both horizons tend to eclipse each other, according to which one we are attending at the time; and though the thought is different in both cases insofar as in the first case we are thinking of the object as an image and in the second case our thoughts are directed towards what it is an image of - nonetheless, the movement between these two modes of attention may increasingly come to enrich both horizons. For example, we see 'through' The Embarkation to Cytherea to a proliferation of thoughts and images concerning the 'transience of human happiness', but the painting does not or need not thereby 'disappear', any more than does Sartre's mental image of the pair of hands. Rather we return to the painting with new eyes, and then the image of the painting may send us off again towards the

primary world intended by its theme - although of course it is the work of art as intentional object which must be allowed to direct the scope of this broader horizon, which different works of art do, as has been argued, in varying degrees.

However, the movement between the two horizons does not stop there, for in moments of concentrated imaginative attention, the horizons may merge, if only briefly, when the absent or non-existent 'x' seems to enter epiphanously into the analogue, much as the god was thought to enter the statue in early forms of religion. Thus Sartre describes it:

> this spontaneity, this 'intention towards' Peter, causes this new phenomenon to flash forth, which is comparable to nothing else: the consciousness of the image. This consciousness represents a mental <u>form</u>. When consciousness assumes this form it gives rise for a moment to a stable appearance, then the form, carried by the current, disintegrates and vanishes.[47]

Such a 'mental form', which in Sartre's view is formed out of the consciousness of our body, escapes the charge of being a 'beetle in the box', because our ability to perceive it depends not upon introspection alone, but in the first instance upon the thought that summons it up as a quasi-perceptual analogue for the absent 'x'. The 'stuff' of which it is composed resists the 'analytic' charge of 'privacy' not just on experiential grounds, but because the existence of the 'stuff' is an <u>a priori</u> presupposition without which we could not account for 'imagining' as a mental act distinct from 'thinking'. As Scruton points out, having mental images is what we <u>mean</u> by imagining, and in talking of our images we naturally use the public language of perception:

> Indeed all our ways of referring to images seem to suggest an element of experience over and above the constitutive thought... When a man refers to an image that he has, he describes it in terms of a genuine experience, the publicly observable form of which is familiar to us all: he will describe his visual image of X in terms that are equally appropriate to the experience of seeing X. He will imply that having an image of X is in some way like seeing X; if he does not acknowledge this, then we say that he has not understood the concept of an image.[48]

I would only add to this that insofar as the image arises from a distinct kind of mental act bent upon realizing the absent or non-existent 'x', then it has the dual status of being both analogue and sign which is what entails the two horizons distinguished in this chapter. It is this feature of the imagination that underlies the ambiguity of the 'aesthetic'.

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CHAPTER EIGHT: Aesthetic education and the problem of 'objectivity'.

For aesthetic education, the most important implication to be drawn from the 'experiential' thesis advanced so far, is this - teachers of arts subjects need to be concerned not just with what pupils and they themselves say about works of art (and the aesthetically perceived environment in general), but also with the accompanying states of mind wherein the realization of the work through image, aspect and emotion takes place. They should be concerned for example, with the type of case where two pupils both manage to identify certain forms of music as 'sad', or certain kinds of poetry as 'slick' or 'sentimental' on the basis of features in the work that they have learned to identify - yet while one of them feels the sadness or the false note of sentimentality, the other feels nothing at all. Similarly, the same two pupils may both have understood at the level of an 'empty intention' that Blake's Tyger is about some superhuman energy that can barely be restrained by its creator - yet while one of them sees 'in his mind's eye' some bright and fabulous creature being moulded by the hands of a god, or even imagines himself as this creature struggling to get free or as the god shaping or restraining him, the other pupil, though he may think these thoughts, imagines nothing, or perhaps, at best, simply a conventional tiger.

For 'experiential' aesthetics, such mental images, aspect-perceptions and emotions are not simply desirable 'extras' to a public core of meaning that can survive without them. Rather, following the line of Kant and Scruton, the ultimate intelligibility of agreements in aesthetic judgment must itself depend upon the possibility of agreement in experiences of this kind. As Scruton put it:

> The man who does not understand aesthetic description is the man who has no familiarity with the experiences that it is used to express.[1]

Seen thus, aesthetic education would appear to be making a far greater

demand upon pupils than other areas of the curriculum where only agreement in judgment is aimed at - not necessarily more intellectually demanding of course, but demanding of other qualities such as the power to perceive, imagine and feel beyond what is obviously given by conceptual rules and 'everyday' perception. It is here, as has been argued, that the 'positional' realization of aesthetic meaning rests.

What distinguishes aesthetic discourse on this argument is the intimate way in which our reports of such experience also aim at public judgments of the aesthetic object itself. Thus, if I claim that 'the music is sad', then I do not just see myself as reporting on some idiosyncratic experience as the early Empiricists assumed, but rather reporting on an experience <u>of</u> the music itself - or rather of the intentional 'emergent' object that this particular combination of sounds has served to bring about. As we shall also be seeing in more detail later, this argument also presupposes that it is not <u>just</u> a 'feeling' that is involved here (the early Empiricist view), but an '<u>educated</u> feeling'. Of course the 'sadness' is not 'in' the music in the same way that e.g. the key of B flat is, and must therefore depend for its realization on my powers of aspect perception. However, it often happens in such cases that we do not feel that we are speaking for ourselves alone (as we would if it were merely a 'judgment of personal preference'), but rather on behalf of a posited sensitive and knowledgeable audience whose agreement we invite. Nonetheless, in inviting the pupils to hear the 'sadness' in the music that <u>we</u> can hear, we cannot be making the same kind of demand that the science teacher makes in inviting his pupils to verify for themselves the fact that water normally boils at 100°C. Rather, it is part of the unusual 'logic' of aesthetic discourse, as Kant realized better than anyone, that we do attempt to ground publicly valid judgments of objects on

peculiarly private feelings and responses - thereby making them most vulnerable to the sceptic. For the sceptic, such 'judgments' will inevitably appear as no more than arbitrary fiats, arising either from the idiosyncratic make-up of the Kantian 'empirical ego', or from the equally contingent 'collective subjectivity' embodied in the simple majority decision of a group, as discussed by Hamlyn in his paper on Objectivity[2].

Although a degree of objectivity must therefore be presupposed and defended in all such cases, this does not mean that we necessarily value aesthetic objectivity for its own sake - far from it in fact. It has been an underlying assumption of this thesis that the real value and richness of the aesthetic form of life lies in the phenomenological, rather than in the epistemological arena - i.e. in the having of what we feel to be appropriate experiences of works of art, rather than in the pursuit of truth in the field of aesthetic judgment. Of course in the sense that not just any experience of a work of art will count as an 'appropriate' one, an underlying rationality must always be presupposed, such as the one that Scruton posits in his notion, already alluded to, that to justify our aesthetic descriptions:

> may be to justify an experience and not a belief.[3]

We would have to be exceptionally unimaginative and literal-minded, for example, to reject out of hand the claim that the cathedral may be seen as a crouching lion. On the other hand, there are limits. However vivid our imagination, we should certainly look twice at someone who claimed to see it as a crouching frog!

A degree of objectivity must therefore be established for the claims of 'experiential' aesthetics in order to ward off the sceptic charge - for if they were shown to be arbitrary, then the richly evocative claim that the cathedral appears as a crouching lion would have

to be put on the same level as the absurd claim that it appears as a crouching frog, and we would end up talking nonsense. However, we must be very careful to separate the issue of establishing aesthetic education as a rational activity from the issue of what we most value about it. The importance of this distinction may be illustrated by the example of Hirst's argument in his article Literature and the Fine Arts as a Unique Form of Knowledge[4]. Thus, on the one hand, Hirst is quite prepared to concede that the real value of art may lie in its experiential dimension, while the concern of the curriculum legitimator with the pursuit of objectivity:

> may well be the least interesting, indeed the least important or valuable, aspect of the arts.[5]

- a view that is quite compatible with the position that I just advanced. On the other hand, like a latter-day Plato challenging the poets to defend themselves against their exclusion from The Republic (on his terms of course!), Hirst demands that the apologist for aesthetic education demonstrate its 'scientific' objectivity - a thesis that is clearly incompatible with my own insofar as I have argued, following Kant, that the 'aesthetic' (in both its narrow and wider senses, discussed in the previous chapter) can never wholly be captured by any predetermined rule.

As we shall see later, it is not beholden on aesthetic education to meet such an absolute notion of 'objectivity' in order to demonstrate its educational value. If the 'experiential' thesis is to meet the sceptic's challenge therefore, it need not and in fact cannot be at the price of accepting any thesis, such as Hirst's, that demands hard and fast criteria for aesthetic truth. This is because any attempt to posit such 'rules' would be breaking the one rule that, above all others, no theory of aesthetic education can afford to ignore - namely that embodied in Kant's caveat that:

> There can be no rule according to which anyone is to be forced to

> recognize anything as beautiful.[6]

Although Kant, as much as Hirst, is concerned to establish the universality of aesthetic judgments, it cannot, for Kant, be at the price of by-passing the experience since, as for Scruton:

> the feeling of the subject, and not a concept of the object, is its determining ground.[7]

Furthermore, insofar as Kant argues later on in The Critique, that:

> We may describe beauty in general (whether natural or artificial) as the expression of aesthetic ideas[8]

we may extend his caveat to cover our ability to realize the embodied 'aesthetic idea' - in line with the arguments advanced in chapters Six and Seven of this thesis. Thus, our ability to realize Watteau's particular embodiment of 'the transience of human happiness' as much as our ability to feel the gracefulness in the music (and for Kant, the 'rational ideas' of freedom, the summum bonum etc. intimated by this 'gracefulness'), can never be given automatically by appeal to a conceptual rule or conventional act of perception, but must depend on our ability to produce the appropriate mental image or to see imaginatively the emergent aspect.

To go against Kant's caveat, as I shall show in detail later, would be to try to compel the aesthetic form of life to be something that it is not. The real question facing us, therefore, is not whether aesthetic appraisals such as the above need to be objective or not, since the very intelligibility of all aesthetic discourse must presume this. Rather, it is whether a claim can be made for an aesthetic rationality that is both sufficient to refute the sceptic and which takes heed of Kant's caveat - a claim, in other words, that seeks to fit rationality to art, rather than, as in Hirst's case, art to rationality. Before examining the possibility of such a claim further, let us first take a closer look at the two alternative theses already mentioned - namely (a) the sceptic's view that all so-called

'aesthetic judgments' are reducible to 'judgments' of personal preference - which would seem to rule out any possibility of 'aesthetic education', for what would there be to educate? (b) the view that there are discoverable and fixed criteria for aesthetic truth, such as Hirst and Best, in their different ways, hope for - which would certainly make an 'education' of sorts possible, but could it ever be described as an 'aesthetic' education?

The sceptical thesis - The commonplace, sceptical belief that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' (first encountered in Chapter One in the guise of the 'radical subjectivist' position) has entered almost as uncritically into modern-day 'verificationist' philosophy as it has hitherto entered into popular wisdom. Ayer, for example, makes the claim that:

> There is no sense in attributing objective validity to aesthetic judgments, and no possibility of arguing about questions of value in aesthetics[9]

The continuing ascendancy of this belief, deeply rooted even in many teachers (although their practice must necessarily deny it) and certainly among older pupils, must go a long way to explain much of the ambivalence with which aesthetic education is viewed, since on this assumption, any attempt to develop aesthetic appreciation in pupils must seem quite artificial - the imposition by fiat of the teacher's whims or the interests of the dominant social class. We may see this assumption at work in the following passage, typical of its kind:

> It must be understood that the so-called cultural heritage which made Europe great - the Bachs and Beethovens, the Shakespeares and Dantes, the Constables and Titians - is no longer communicating anything to the vast majority of Europe's population...It is bourgeois culture and therefore only immediately meaningful to that group.[10]

While not disagreeing with the first part of this statement as a likely although depressing empirical claim, let us note for the moment that the widespread acceptance of the above type of argument creates an acute problem for arts teachers in two crucial areas, namely (a)

the aesthetically rich area of multi-cultural education, which must come to be seen as particularly arbitrary insofar as no 'transcendent' viewpoint is allowed for, and (b) those areas where there is a notable gap between the 'established' arts traditions to which the passage refers, and the popular culture of the pupils. Music is perhaps the most noticeable example of this divide, although such a state of affairs has not always been the case. 'Classical' composers frequently drew on popular melodies for inspiration, as Brahms, for example, drew on gipsy dances. However, to put e.g. current 'rock' music or Indian dance on to the curriculum simply in order to appease the sceptical argument could only result in succumbing to it - for it can always be objected that no pupils need an education into something on which they are already unquestionably the leading authorities, namely their own personal preferences.

The most obvious objection to the sceptic's bland conflation of aesthetic judgment with what Kant called the 'judgment of pleasure' is that it crudely places aesthetic pleasure on a competitive level with all other pleasures, as expressed in Bentham's famous maxim that:

> All things being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry

- surely a clarion call to all those philistine pupils who prefer arcade games to aesthetic education! However, the main objection to the sceptic's maxim, put forward with characteristic common-sense by Hume, two hundred years before Ayer reiterated it, is this:

> But though this axiom, by passing into proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common-sense; there is certainly a species of common sense, which opposes it...Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton... would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriffe...The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot.[11]

The sceptic's position, in other words, assumes a totally passive, non-intentional account of aesthetic experience, taking no account whatsoever of the <u>object</u> of that experience. However, not all

involuntary responses to works of art are of this 'mechanical' kind. The sceptic here ignores what Hume and, even more so, Kant, realized only too well - namely, that we do distinguish responses of a freer and more disinterested type in virtue of the fact that they cannot so obviously be explained away by causal psychology but seem to be grounded in the nature of the object itself. Of course, a description of the object is not the same thing as a description of my response to it - despite Scruton's obscure suggestion that:

> It is the look of the picture that provides the elaboration of my thought.[12]

Nonetheless, as R. S. Peters has demonstrated for the emotions in general[13], there is an intentional as well as an involuntary side to all aesthetic experience. Not just anything can count as an aesthetic response, and this is typically reflected in the kinds of reasons that we frequently offer for such responses - reasons that would be of no concern to us at all if we were merely concerned to report a personal preference. For example, having put myself into a receptive and attentive mood such as Kant and Scruton describe, I may find that I cannot help hearing a quality of sadness that seems to me to come from the music - but this in no way precludes my reflection on aspects of the music, including my background knowledge of conventions etc., that might seem to support the appropriateness of my response. If the sceptic continues to deny that there may be such occasions when I consider myself to be responding to the work itself, with no ulterior motive, then he must deny my personal autonomy in such matters - the very thesis that he is trying to defend. Let us now turn to the opposite thesis, which seeks to ground such reasons in discoverable, truth-functional criteria quite independently of any 'experience' of the work of art which we may or may not have.

The 'propositional thesis - On this view, there exist, at least in principle, criteria by which we may judge the truth or falsity of

works of art themselves, or of the aesthetic judgments that we make about them. The perennial attraction of the 'propositional' thesis is that it seems to promise a secure justification of aesthetic education, thereby enabling it to compete on equal terms with any other areas of the curriculum. Thus the recent Gulbenkian Report, The Arts in Schools, affirms that:

> The aesthetic, the religious and the moral realms are quite as powerful as...others at conveying knowledge.[14]

On this argument, someone ignorant of the aesthetic domain might still accept its educational value, much as he would accept the importance of physics even though he knew nothing about it, providing that he was convinced that to leave it out would be to deprive pupils of a unique kind of knowledge. Before examining the dubious premise on which this admittedly popular view is based, let us first look at some examples of this thesis which, for convenience, may be divided into three main categories - namely that of: (a) the 'formalist' who takes the view, consciously or implicitly, that aesthetic judgments are truth-functional; (b) the 'cognitivist', whom we have already met in Chapter Four; and (c) the believer in art as a 'unique form of knowledge' - the latter two being distinguished also by the fact that they want to establish the work of art itself as a proposition. I shall attempt to characterize all three versions by how they might appear on the shelves of a school library.

In the 'formalist' library, alongside shelves of art books and literature would be a shelf of books that we consulted in order to gain knowledge about artistic taste. On this shelf, we should find, among others, the works of those 18th Century aestheticians who attempted to isolate and lay down definitive 'rules' for good taste - carried to an extreme by Meier[15], who offered no less than fifty such 'rules'. It was in part a reaction to such works as these that prompted Kant to start writing The Critique of Judgment. Also, on

this particular shelf, one might find the works of all those critics who, while espousing the importance of personal response, are nonetheless not averse to delivering ex cathedra judgments, as does Leavis in his celebrated opening to The Great Tradition:

> The great English novelists are Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad.[16]

(In reality, of course, the strength of critics like Leavis lies precisely in their powers of personal response rather than in their misplaced attempts to lay down aesthetic canons.)

On the shelf above would be a similar collection of texts dealing with the creative side of art, wherein we would read about the attempts of artists to isolate the 'laws' that govern such things as perspective, proportion and colour, the principles of 'Cubism', rhetoric, poetic diction, sonata form and the like. Now, important as the pursuit of such goals has been for the development of art, as least as regards the development of artistic convention, nonetheless as we saw in an earlier chapter[17], any attempt to elevate such 'rules' to the status of truth-functional objectivity must inevitably be self-defeating. This is because it could only lead to our valuing a work of art simply as an instance of some pre-determined rule (Kant's 'judgment of perfection'), which would run quite counter to Kant's caveat - not that such 'rules' are entirely arbitrary however, as we shall see.

In the 'cognitivist' library on the other hand, there would be no special shelves at all for art or literature. Since the 'cognitivist' thesis, as examined in Chapter Four, effectively reduces works of art to collections of non-aesthetic propositions, either explicit or implied, about the world, we should find what we thought of as art and literature parcelled out among the non-fiction shelves such as those of history, psychology and social studies. In this library then, we would go to such books primarily for their illustrative power, as

Engels read Balzac for insight into the economic structures of 19th Century France[18]. However, in such a library, 'art books' would be in constant danger of disappearing off the shelves insofar as more effective text-books were found to replace them - a central part of Scruton's case against the 'cognitivist' thesis, as we saw in Chapter Four of this thesis.

By contrast, in the 'Hirstian' library, art books might sit more securely on the shelves, but what would they be like? Here, alongside the shelves of science text books, history text books and so on, the pupil would come across a shelf containing what looked like novels, poetry, and so on, but which in reality contained yet another kind of text book - namely, an 'art text book'. To these books he would turn when he wanted to acquire 'artistic knowledge', for they would contain:

> Artistic statements, stating truths that cannot be communicated in any other way.[19]

Furthermore, insofar as Hirst must therefore exclude from the aesthetic shelves <u>any</u> attempt to communicate works of art in any other way, these shelves would also have to exclude vigorously any books of critical commentary, exegesis and the like - and even books of art reproductions, since all reproductions imply the statement, 'This is what the original looks like'!

For Hirst, such 'knowledge' is distinguished both by its content and the form in which it is expressed. (a) The content, although verified against criteria that are internal to the aesthetic domain, is nonetheless to be understood on analogy with the content that we are used to finding in the statements of mathematics and physics:

> In my use of the term, 'knowledge' is functioning exactly as when we say that we know that 2+2=4 or that water boils at 100°C.[20]

(b) Although the 'forms' of music, painting, poetry etc. are not obviously species of 'language' in the sense that they lack the

logico-grammatical structure in which we normally frame judgments, nonetheless, insofar as:

> A sequence of notes, a particular metaphor, or particular shape, may have a use in art parallel to that of a word in ordinary discourse[21]

and provided that there exists some public, aesthetic 'symbol system' within which such elements combine to form statements that may be judged true or false, then art may be seen, "in the fullest sense", as a language in its own right. If we find this hard to grasp, we must remember that:

> Languages may be as variable as, say, games and nevertheless remain languages for all that.[22]

Before examining these premises, let us first briefly note what Hirst's thesis is <u>not</u>. As we have seen, it is not to be confused with the 'cognitivist's' pursuit of non-aesthetic truth-claims in art - although like Scruton, Hirst recognizes the dependence of works of art on a background of other types of knowledge, on analogy with the dependence of physics on mathematics. Nor, insofar as Hirst is concerned with aesthetic <u>truth</u> rather than value, is it to be confused with the 'formalist' concern tc establish what makes a work of art good from the aesthetic point of view. As has been pointed out, Hirst is not concerned with aesthetic judgments as such, and their contribution to 'aesthetic knowing', but rather with the work of art as <u>itself</u> a proposition. Finally, he is not concerned, as are aestheticians like Kant and Scruton, with establishing the validity of what we say about how we <u>experience</u> works of art, but rather with what works of art <u>themselves</u> say, unmediated by any response other than the epistemological one as to whether what they 'say' is true or false.

At first glance, Hirst's thesis seems most attractive. Not only does he attempt a justification of aesthetic education on intrinsic grounds, but his view that works of art offer us untranslatable significances might be seen as coming very close to what has been argued

for in Chapter Six of this thesis. On closer inspection however, one problem emerges with increasing insistence - namely, Hirst's manifest failure to characterize in any positive kind of way, the kind of criteria that he has in mind. What are aesthetic statements supposed to be about for Hirst, if they are distinct from all other kinds of statement? All we hear is that:

> No particular character...is being suggested other than that they are essentially artistic.[23]

Perhaps the closest that we get to anything more specific than this is when Hirst, at one point, seems to suggest that works of art are self-referring:

> It is not at all clear that works of art are...about something that exists beyond themselves.[24]

Seen thus, Hirst's position might seem to be approaching that of pure 'formalism' - but what then would the work of art qua statement be saying about itself? It might be saying something about its own form, but then as Elliott has pointed out[25], this would be redundant since the work already shows its own form. Nor can it simply be stating that it exists, since this is already presupposed. So what is left?

Much of this obscurity can be seen to arise from Hirst's premise that works of art are themselves a special kind of language, insofar as they:

> are complex units and can certainly be understood as having sub-elements which have meaning in their use.[26]

Certainly works of art, like sentences, can be analysed into their parts and also be perceived as unities, but then, as Elliott points out[27], so too can hammers and motor cars. Beyond this formal analogy, the claim comes to look increasingly tenuous. Works of art certainly don't have an obvious subject-predicate structure - which one would have thought a minimum qualification for something to count as a language - and to compel them into such a mould can make for insuperable difficulties as in the case of music, where the analogies between

grammar and musical form often seem very superficial. The main objection to Hirst, however, is the powerful argument advanced by Scruton, among others, to show that the 'untranslatability' thesis is quite incompatible with the linguistic premise, insofar as <u>translat-ability</u> is of the essence of 'natural language':

> For translation is a possibility as soon as there is an interpretation, and all natural languages are inherently interpreted ...Truth introduces the idea of equivalence, and hence of translatability.[28]

Hirst's linguistic premise would therefore have to assume the possibility that in principle, any number of works of art could make the same artistic statement providing that they satisfied the same artistic truth criteria. Works of art would thus come to be seen as instances of some set of general 'artistic truths' and thus Hirst's version of the 'untranslatability' thesis would collapse. Worse than this however, insofar as works of art, like mathematical statements, are held by Hirst to be self-referring, then their truth would presumably have to be of a tautologous kind - which raises the distinct possibility that <u>all</u> artistic statements might be replaceable by the simple statement of identity, 'a work of art is a work of art'. It seems unlikely that this is the kind of 'objectivity' that Hirst has in mind for aesthetic knowledge.

However, providing that we can show that a limited amount of actual agreement between people will be sufficient to ward off the sceptic's challenge, then do we <u>really</u> need to concern ourselves at all with the details of Hirst's argument, beyond acknowledging its undoubted influence in certain quarters, such as in the recent <u>Gulbenkian Report</u>[29]? This might of course make it more difficult to justify the inclusion of aesthetic education on the curriculum in terms of Hirst's general criteria for a 'liberal education', but as Elliott has argued, the whole connection between demonstrating that some curriculum area is a unique form of knowledge and its being a

valued activity is a dubious one, since:

> All that can be validly argued is that if nothing else is valued more, the form should be included in the curriculum.[30]

Clearly there <u>are</u> aspects of the aesthetic domain to be valued more highly than the achievement of universal agreement, such as the cultivation of openness and receptivity towards the work and, above all, the richness and vitality of the imagination's various activities which are central to 'experiential' aesthetics. Indeed, as we have seen, Hirst admits as much himself.

Of course such experiences may, on occasions, be of a revelatory nature, intimating truths as was argued in Chapter Six, that cannot be fully conceptualized. However, the value of such revelations lies in the imaginative realization of the work's meaning, rather than in the truth values of whatever propositions we may extract from the work, or that are given explicitly, as in their titles. Thus in the case of Watteau's <u>Embarkation to Cytherea</u>, it is not the truth of the proposition that 'human happiness is transient' that is revelatory - in fact that is a rather unremarkable commonplace. What <u>is</u> revelatory is the realization of the thought that the painting serves to awaken in the viewer's mind. Of course insofar as any work of art contains a meaning in this way, then the bare meaning itself (i.e. the 'empty intention') will always be translatable, and this is reflected in the way that much aesthetic discourse is devoted to putting the meaning of a work of art 'into our own words'. This is possible because, <u>qua</u> 'empty intention', there is no more to any proposition that its meaning, which is independent of any particular way in which it is expressed. What <u>cannot</u> be translated, however, is the work of art's particular realization of this meaning, since the imaginative positional view that it seeks to bring about with the aid of the viewer's imagination is not the sort of thing that can be translated. Rather it can only be grasped at the 'acquaintance' level when our imagin-

ation literally 'puts us in the picture'. The difference between the thought that 'human happiness is transient' and Watteau's embodiment of the thought may therefore be seen as something like the difference between 'prose' (which is translatable), and 'poetry' (which isn't) - see footnote. As with all arguments in 'experiential' aesthetics however, the educational value of such experiences as this can only be self-evident to those who have experienced them for themselves. Since it is not the main purpose of this chapter to justify the inclusion of aesthetic education on the curriculum, but rather to explore how best we may resist the sceptic charge, let us now leave the arena of curriculum ideology and complete our examination of 'propositional' aesthetics by turning to that aspect of it whose influence has been most baneful for aesthetic education.

As we saw in Chapter One, in relation to 'objectivist' aesthetics, if the 'propositional' version of the claim that e.g. 'the music is sad' is correct, then as with the claim that it is in the key of B flat, the sadness must be an objective feature of the music quite independently of the listener's mental state. Best, for example, states that:

> If I make an artistic judgment it is incumbent on me, if challenged, to substantiate it by citing not my subjective feelings about it, but objective features of the work of art itself.[31]

Insofar as it follows from this that the first-person response has no real home in the 'propositionalist' account, then despite the court that writers like Best play to such responses in principle, the very core of 'experiential' aesthetics is delegitimized at a stroke. As was argued in Chapter One, there would appear to be no real reason why, on Best's account, a pupil should not simply accept the legiti-

Footnote: This distinction, of course, cuts across the conventional one made between 'poetry' and 'prose'. By 'poetry' here I include 'non-prosaic prose' such as Donne's Sermons, and exclude 'prosaic poetry', such as the 'poetic works' of William McGonegall.

macy of aesthetic judgments at second-hand, e.g. in those cases where he generally trusts the judgments of his teacher. After all, this is quite legitimate in other areas of knowledge, such as science. Best would most certainly deny that such a 'second-hand' acceptance could have any educational value, but insofar as this possibility does seem to follow from his argument, then one may quite fairly say of the 'propositional' thesis what Marcuse says of 'vulgar' Marxist aesthetics:

> The schema implies a normative notion of the material base as the true reality...and a devaluation of the entire realm of subjectivity takes place, a devaluation not only of the subject as ego cogito, the rational subject, but also of inwardness, emotions and imagination.[32]

Of course, apart from the 'radical subjectivist', no one, least of all Scruton, is denying the necessity of relating our personal responses to a public background, especially where questionable matters of interpretation are involved. But in the end, whereas for Scruton one must have the personal response to realize the point of an aesthetic judgment, for Best it would seem sufficient that we merely 'read off' the public features of the work while referring to our background knowledge of conventions, regardless of whether or not our personal response is in any way in harmony with the public appraisal. Thus, a pupil who thinks that the Mona Lisa is an extremely poor painting, to take Best's example, is seen by Best to display not so much a lack of sensitivity and openness to the work (which would be central to a Kantian accusation), but rather:

> simply has no understanding of what constitutes good painting.[33]

Now this may well be part of the problem, but nonetheless, it would seem that what we are left with is a view of 'personal response', like that of the 'mental image', as a redundant appendage to the public meaning - the standard 'analytic' view in fact.

Since a good deal of my own thesis, following Kant and Scruton,

has been devoted to defending such areas of personal response from the excesses of 'analytic' philosophy, I shall not here go over the same ground, but rather seek to show the contradictions that must arise when a 'propositional' aesthetic standpoint is applied in an educational setting. On the 'propositional' view then, pupils could in principle learn the meaning of works of art, simply by learning to 'read off' the relevant, publicly accepted features, much as they learn to make judgments about ordinary perceptual features of the world to the point where the process of recognition becomes virtually automatic - that 'the music is sad' therefore becomes as indisputable as that it is in the key of B flat, quite independently of the presence or absence of any 'experience'.

Now admittedly this might in one sense be possible. Insofar as aesthetic education must presuppose a cultural and linguistic background among its pupils, then 'objectivity' of a kind may be said to enter into it - (a) as regards the initiation of pupils into aesthetic conventions, which might seem to support the 'formalist' argument for aesthetic objectivity, and (b) as regards any background knowledge concerning the work's content upon which its intelligibility may depend, which might seem to support the 'cognitive' thesis. One could not, for example, expect pupils to read or write poetry without at least some idea of what poetry was. As Hume says:

> Though poetry can never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art.[34]

Nor could one hope for a very meaningful response to e.g. Picasso's Guernica without an understanding of such concepts as 'atrocity' and 'civil war' and some familiarity with the course of 20th Century history - although in all such cases, we must be careful to distinguish between interpretative judgments that are straightforwardly related to 'first-order' features of the work (e.g. 'This is a sonnet because it has fourteen lines'), and aesthetic judgments proper (e.g.

'The music strikes me as sad'), which must arise from a personal response.

In the case of aesthetic forms and conventions then, it might be possible, in a very limited sense, for a pupil to learn with some degree of accuracy e.g. to pick out examples of 'sad' music in virtue of his knowledge of the conventions that, in Western music, link the expression of sadness with minor harmonies, slow tempos and certain discords such as the 'blue' notes of jazz - even though he were completely blind to the experiential side of the music. On the 'propositional' argument, as we have seen, he could even be thinking quite cheerful thoughts as he correctly picked out the 'tragic' elements in Schubert's last A major piano sonata! Nonetheless, could such a 'music-blind' pupil really be said to 'see the point' of such expressions as 'the music is sad', however accurately he were able to identify the posited 'objective' aesthetic attributes in the music? In sofar as his interest in the music could only extend to trying to identify individual pieces as instances of some general rule, then he would clearly not see the point, since as Kant has argued, no rule can compel us to see something aesthetically when we don't see it, i.e. in the 'experiential' sense. Therefore, insofar as the pupil (or teacher) did conceive of aesthetic education in terms of the mastery of discoverable rules alone, then in the absence of 'experiential' confirmation, such 'rules' could only appear as based on quite arbitrary principles - e.g. what on earth is 'sad' about minor chords, apart from their conventional force? Aesthetic activity would thus come to appear as peculiarly pointless in his eyes except perhaps as a kind of game, like a musical quiz. A similar feeling of 'pointlessness' would presumably also arise in those cases mentioned earlier, where the pupil simply accepts at second-hand, e.g. out of respect for the teacher, the validity of particular aesthetic judgments.

The same objection applies equally to 'cognitivist' emphasis on the knowledge content of the work of art. Aesthetic education on this view thus comes to be seen as an activity which develops in pupils, the ability to weigh up the accuracy with which the landscape, portrait, novel etc. portrays objective features in the world, rather than in terms of a transforming and non-prosaic 'presence' such as has been argued for in the two preceeding chapters. Such a philistine view of art as aspiring to the 'objectivity' of one-to-one correspondence must inevitably make aesthetic education seem as pointless to pupils as it did to Plato when he ridiculed 'mimetic' art in The Republic. If the 'propositionalist' attempts to overcome this problem of the seeming redundancy of art, as Hirst does, by positing the knowledge content of art to be of a 'unique' kind, then, even though we don't exactly know what this 'knowledge' would be like, what we do know is that, insofar as it demanded universal agreement based on the application of conceptual rules, then it would go against Kant's caveat just as much as the 'formalist' and 'cognitivist' versions of the thesis.

However, if the 'experiential' argument is accepted - namely, that the validity of aesthetic statements is not automatically given by our grasp of a conceptual rule, nor in acts of 'everyday' perception - then the inability of pupils to see the point of such statements cannot simply rest on a failure of understanding, which is how the 'propositional' thesis would have to explain lapses in aesthetic judgment. Rather, for 'experiential' aesthetics, such failure would be attributable to one or other of two very similar sources, namely (a) what Wittgenstein has called 'aspect blindness'[35] - a blindness to a whole class of meanings whose extended use in aesthetic descriptions can only make sense if the 'emergent' aspects to which they are used to refer 'shape up' in the imagination, as when we ask the pupils (or

they ask us) to try and see the 'gracefulness' in the dance or the 'crouching lion' in the cathedral; or (b) our inability to produce appropriate mental images in response to aesthetic descriptions, as when we fail to imagine 'in our mind's eye' Blake's Tyger.

In fact, as we have seen, these two functions of the imagination are very close insofar as both involve the production of images from thoughts about something (though of course the thought itself may sometimes take time to dawn, as when we stand before a painting trying to figure it out). As Wittgenstein remarks:

> The concept of an aspect is akin to the concept of an image. In other words: the concept 'I am now seeing it as....' is akin to 'I am now having this image'.[36]

Thus we really do need to see 'in our mind's eye' Blake's 'tiger' (and not just a conventional one, either), in order to realize the concept of unleashed energy that the image embodies. Simply thinking of it as an abstract possibility will not do. In the same way, to grasp the claim that the cathedral appears as a crouching lion, we must see it for ourselves. As with Blake's poem, this must always involve more than simply grasping the plausibility of the 'empty intention' while the actual cathedral to which we turn our eyes still looks like the familiar 'everyday' cathedral that it always has done. Equally however, in order to reassure the literal-minded, such imagining always stops short of seeing the cathedral actually turning into a crouching lion, since that would more correctly be described as an hallucination! Somewhere between these two extremes lies the imaginative realization of the idea - involving a proliferation both of further thoughts, such as those of 'majesty' and 'repose', and a rush of further images arriving to 'fulfil' these thoughts such as was explored in Chapter Six when we were examining Kant's account of the 'aesthetic idea'.

The kind of 'aspect blindness' or 'image blindness' that thwarts

our ability to grasp the significance of aesthetic descriptions such as the above, is not then a 'blindness' that could be sorted out, as the 'propositional' thesis would suggest, simply by clarification of the terms involved, nor even by simply looking again at the object to see if there was anything perceptible that we might have missed. For this reason, 'aesthetic education' in the 'experiential' sense would seem to be of all the areas of the curriculum the least amenable to any arbitrary imposition 'from above', despite the sceptic's charge. However, it may also carry with it the unfortunate and undesirable effect of making pupils who find themselves unable to respond in the imaginative way that has been suggested feel like insensitive outsiders from a charmed circle. This is a consequence that aesthetic educators should be aware of and seek to avoid at all costs.

However, what of Wittgenstein's remark that it makes sense to order someone to imagine 'x' or see 'x' in 'y'[37]? This makes sense as long as we remember that there can be no element of <u>compulsion</u> in ordering anyone to imagine something - i.e. by appeal to an obvious conceptual rule or evidence that is staring us in the face. In trying to persuade the pupils to hear the sadness in the music, the teacher can no more compel his pupils to feel the sad aspects of the sounds or to produce the image of someone tragically stumbling that the music seems to suggest than he can e.g. compel his pupils to love one another out of a sense of duty. Insofar as the 'propositional' thesis, in any of its forms, <u>does</u> assume that the pupil can be compelled to hear the music as sad by an appeal to the 'rules', then it must be wrong. Let us now, therefore, turn to our third thesis.

<u>The 'Psychological Objectivity' thesis</u> - This version, as we have seen, promises to offer an account of 'aesthetic objectivity' distinct from both the sceptic's acceptance of arbitrariness and the absolutism of the 'propositionalist', in virtue of the 'special access' to works

of art that we may gain when we are in a certain frame of mind, characterized by disinterestedness and receptivity. Although there are important differences in the various versions of this thesis - most notably in the conflict between Scruton's 'analytic' demand for the third-person accountability of our aesthetic descriptions, and the more phenomenologically oriented pursuit of 'psychological objectivity' common to the writings of Hume, Kant and Sibley - nonetheless, what they all have in common is an attempt to separate the question of the rationality of our aesthetic appraisals from the question of their certainty. In this respect, Scruton speaks for them all when he says of the 'subjective' element in his own account, that:

> This does not mean that aesthetic descriptions are merely arbitrary or 'subjective', having no more validity than preferences for certain kinds of food: we must separate the concept of objectivity from that of truth.[38]

Even Kant, who presents the 'strongest' version of this thesis in his pursuit of a 'universal voice' as a 'regulative demand' of reason, nonetheless is also the author of the crucial principle that has been the leitmotif of this chapter - namely, that the 'judgment of taste' can be demonstrated neither deductively nor inductively, but that the best we can hope for is the agreement in experience of others:

> The judgment of taste itself does not postulate the agreement of everyone (for that can only be done by a logically universal judgment because it can adduce reasons); it only imputes this agreement to everyone, as a case of the rule in respect of which it expects, not confirmation by concepts, but assent from others. The universal voice is, therefore, only an idea...It may be uncertain whether or not the man who believes that he is laying down a judgment of taste is, as a matter of fact, judging in conformity with that idea...He can be quite certain of this for himself by the mere consciousness of the separating off everything belonging to the pleasant and the good from the satisfaction which is left; and this is all for which he promises himself the agreement of everyone...[39]

This passage suggests that although we clearly hope for universal assent to our aesthetic judgments, we are not defeated if this appears to be unrealizable in practice. The criterion of 'psychological objectivity' here being advanced presupposes an ideal state of disinter-

estedness which, like the extreme critical spirit presupposed by Habermas' 'ideal speech situation'[40], may be making impossible demands upon us. Since we can never, therefore, be certain that our judgments or the dissent of others are made in such a spirit, then the best that we can hope for, Kant seems to be saying, is that if we reasonably believe in our own spirit of objectivity when we make them, then they may be justifiable - and this will be further confirmed when we find that others agree in having had similar responses, although as Sibley says, such agreement may be:

> more like a concentrated scatter than convergence on a point.[41]

The obvious advantage, however, of making such 'disinterestedness', reinforced by the 'disinterested' agreement of others, a criterion for the legitimacy of our aesthetic judgments is that such legitimacy does not thereby make these judgments mandatory on others.

Before exploring this possibility further however, let us first turn to Scruton's version of the thesis which, as we have already mentioned, denies legitimacy to the kind of phenomenological reports on which the above account seems to come to rest (even though his own account seems to lean heavily on such reports). For Scruton, wearing his 'analytic' hat:

> The only facts about experience are facts about the experience of others.[42]

The special reliance that the phenomenological type of account places on the direct, first-person reporting of how the world appears to our individual consciousness is therefore ruled out on the 'analytic' grounds that whatever meaning they possess must be at the public, third-person level, since 'meaning', as we saw in Chapter Six, is not something that can be said to belong to anyone. This of course is why meaning itself is apositional, which is what distinguishes it from the positional embodiment of meaning in image, aspect and emotion. At the same time however, Scruton is also committed to the view that:

> In aesthetics you have to see for yourself precisely because what you have to 'see' is not a property: your knowledge that an aesthetic feature is 'in' the object is given by the same criteria that show that you 'see' it. To see the sadness in the music and to know that the music is sad are one and the same thing.[43]

In other words, insofar as the 'aesthetic object', as distinct from the 'everyday', first-order presence of the 'work of art', is an intentional one, our realization of the thought in image, aspect and emotion and our sensing that this thought (i.e. that 'the music is sad') is appropriate, are given in one and the same breath.

As we saw in Chapter Two, Scruton's attempt to harmonize these two conflicting demands led him to postulate a 'weak' acceptance condition based on the argument from 'paronymy'. This attempted (a) to satisfy the demand for third-person accountability by retaining the normal intensional construction of the words that we use in aesthetic descriptions, such as 'sad' in 'the music is sad', on the 'analytic' grounds that:

> The only clear explanation of what the terms mean in their aesthetic use is to be given by referring back to their ordinary use.[44]

(b) to ensure a key role for subjective response by making the acceptance condition depend on the subjective dawning of an extra-linguistic experience such as gives rise to the novel extensional application of the terms involved, in particular cases. The music strikes me as 'sad' (quite a different response from merely identifying it as sad in virtue of established conventions) just as the cathedral strikes me as having the 'presence' of a lion. In neither case, however, will a grasp of the normal meanings of 'sad' or 'lion' alone be of much help to a third person who is trying to see the point of their application in these instances; nor are they obviously given by their primary objects, i.e. the sound of the music or the sight of the large stone building over there. An act of imagination is, therefore, required wherein the music dawns as 'sad', or the cathedral dawns 'as a lion'-

although we must not forget that, as Wittgenstein says of 'aspect perception' in general:

> Here it is <u>difficult</u> to see what is at issue is the fixing of concepts. A <u>concept</u> forces itself on one. (This is what you must not forget.)[45]

Even when the experience does dawn however, the <u>meaning</u> of 'sad' and 'lion', as we saw in Chapter Six, remains the same after as before - thereby enabling Scruton to meet the 'analytic' demand. Now however, what was hitherto only intelligible but obscure (i.e. the abstract and therefore obscure thought that the cathedral is like a lion) comes to be realized in image, aspect and emotion and hence its appropriateness agreed to - although as Scruton says of such aesthetic claims, they:

> need not have truth conditions in the strong sense, and to justify them may be to justify an experience and not a belief.[46]

The central problem now, however, is this - how can we speak of 'justifying an experience'? As we saw in Chapter Two, the main justificatory load in Scruton's account is born, not by the public meaning of 'sad' or 'lion', but rather by their novel, extensional application arising from the experience. But how can we get beyond this to a public claim? This is the problem that dogs Scruton's account of the imagination throughout, as surely as it also dogged the aesthetic theories of Hume and Kant. In Scruton's case, the problem arises because, as it stands, our decision to apply the public meaning in a novel way seems to have an air of incorrigibility about it which may override any appeal to public norms. As he himself admits:

> a man can be reasoned out of a critical interpretation in a way that he cannot as a rule be reasoned out of the perception of an aspect, and in a way that he can never be reasoned out of the perception of a secondary quality.[47]

So how can we intelligibly speak of a 'justified experience'? It cannot be objected against me that such an appraisal fails to tally with the 'objective' character of the object, because that is just what is at issue. How can anyone challenge the fact that the music

strikes me as sad? It might of course be objected in a very untypical case, e.g. in a multi-cultural classroom, that a pupil does not understand 'sad' in the sense that we mean it; or perhaps in the case of more 'opaque' terms like disagreement over whether a Bruckner symphony is 'monumental' or not[48] it might be shown that I had dwelt only on some aspects of the term, such as its architectural implications, to the exclusion of others, such as its implications of weightiness and solidity. It might also be objected, which is more often the case, that I do not appreciate the musical conventions that typically relate to the expression of 'sadness' - as when I find that a cheerful Indian 'raga' strikes me as mournful, owing to my cultural limitations[49]. However, providing that I can show that I do have the requisite linguistic and cultural background, and that I can demonstrate e.g. that I am not in the middle of a personal crisis where I see everything as sad, then according to Scruton's argument from paronymy, my word must be law[50] because, as we have seen, it is the extensional construction that gives it its point, rather than the publicly agreed intensional construction. I can hear the sadness in the music, and although I may produce supporting arguments, my ultimate trump card will always be the ad hominem appeal - you just have to hear it this way, and if you can't, you must be 'blind'! In this respect, even to begin to justify one's own experiences would be as pointless as the claim to know that one is in pain, discussed by Wittgenstein in a celebrated passage in The Philosophical Investigations[51]. So can legitimacy of any kind enter into such appraisals, or are we still stuck ultimately at the incorrigible but aesthetically uninformative level of the 'judgment of personal preference', thereby ruling out the possibility of aesthetic education?

What I think has to be recognized first is that the communicability of all aesthetic appraisals, contra Hirst, must start off in

life on an ad hominem basis, the only basis on which an 'experiential' aesthetic can found itself. But granting this, there is no obvious reason why, contra Scruton, the phenomenological reports which form the basis of our ad hominem appeals should be illegitimate, if such appeals turn out to be successful - especially where a third person has arrived at the same or a similar conclusion to ourselves, independently. My experiential discovery that the music is sad means something to me, and if someone else says "Yes, that's just how I feel too", then how can it be meaningless? In actual fact Scruton seems almost to be saying just this himself in his account of the 'asymptotic' way that our 'paronymous' usages gain public recognition.

At this point, the sceptic may still object that the other person's experience may be different from mine. Now insofar as it is unlikely that my positional synthesis of images and aspects could ever be identical with anyone else's, then he is probably right because mental events in the 'positional' sense do belong to the individual, by contrast with the impersonal, public meaning. But the concept of 'agreement in experience' need not depend for its legitimacy upon e.g. you having exactly the same mental image of Blake's tiger as mine (for that would be impossible), as long as our two reports continue to cohere as we explore them further - e.g. we may both agree in having very 'bright' images of the tiger, although my tiger may be leaping, whereas yours may just have landed or be prowling about. All these variations may be quite acceptable however, as long as they cohere with our general impression of pent-up energy struggling to release itself.

Once having established the possibility of agreement in experience however, there is still the question as to whether the appraisal is appropriate to the work of art or not, since as we have seen, an inter-subjectively agreed judgment, as much as a subjective one, may

be just as prone to arbitrariness, even though, as Scruton points out:

> When I react to a work of art I also think of it as an appropriate object of my reaction.[52]

At this point therefore, we have to look at the kinds of reasons advanced for or against the appraisal for although, as we have seen, there can be no ready-to-hand norm to which we can refer, nonetheless, not just anything can count as an appropriate image, aspect or emotion as Best would be the first to point out. For example there may be many ways that we can imagine Blake's tiger, but we certainly couldn't imagine him, as perhaps very young children might on hearing the poem, as a cuddly little pet, without destroying the idea of demonic energy that seems so central to the poem. The same would apply to the example of seeing the cathedral as a crouching frog, discussed on page 197 of this chapter.

Where we are concerned with cases of appropriateness that are internal to the work of art, i.e. such as the artist, composer or author himself has to consider and which are central to any account of aesthetic pleasure - e.g. the 'fittingness' of the cor anglais' timbre for the Swan of Tuonela - again, while there is room for disagreement, not just anything would do as an alternative - e.g. a flute might have worked as well, but not a baritone saxophone. Furthermore, some such disagreements may well be insoluble without resorting to total arbitrariness. For example, someone habituated to the vivid and expressive colouring of Picasso's paintings in the 1920s may fail to see the appropriateness of the monochrome colouring in Guernica. He may think it too distanced and stylized where vivid colours might better have displayed the anguish. A protagonist of the painting on the other hand, might point to the shades of black and grey as supremely expressive of anguish, perhaps seeing in it also an ironic echo of the 'black and white' photographic reporting of war. But the possibility of two such competing views co-existing, far from destroying the

rationality of aesthetic discourse, may rather underline its vitality.

It is true, of course, that David Best makes a similar point:

> Both a conviction that it is possible <u>in principle</u> to resolve problems and conflicts, and the persistence <u>in practice</u> of problems and conflicts, are essential for the continued progress and even existence of any area of enquiry.[53]

However, whereas Best always presupposes in principle that there is only one correct view without which even the very notion of 'disagreement' would be incoherent, I would argue that such a presupposition is neither necessary nor desirable in order to establish the rationality of aesthetic discourse. Surprisingly, Scruton at one point comes close to agreeing with Best, when he argues against the notion of 'emergent' aesthetic properties on the grounds that:

> different emergent 'properties' can depend on precisely the <u>same</u> set of first-order properties[54]

leading to what he sees as the impossible situation of:

> <u>incompatible</u> critical judgments...entirely based on the same set of first-order features of the work of art.[55]

However in some cases, perhaps more often than we realize, a work of art may seem to alternate between two incompatible aspects, as when we see a Renoir now rich and glowing, now vulgar and 'chocolate box', or a Sibelius symphony now mysterious and powerful, now like film background music to a Western - yet none of these responses seems arbitrary, although of course <u>qua</u> positional experience, we couldn't hold both aspects at the same time. As Dr. Johnson points out with characteristic common-sense:

> We have less reasons to be surprised or offended when we find others differ from us in opinion, because we very often differ from ourselves.[56]

More importantly, however, while we must undoubtedly help pupils to understand the public traditions on which the intelligibility of the particular work of art depends, we also have another obligation to

encourage them honestly and carefully to report their personal responses, for in the end it is upon these that the 'judgment of taste' depends, once all the problems of interpretation have been run through. As Sibley points out in discussing this very issue:

> In any case, at first-order level so to speak, it will still be the critic's duty firmly to give his own honest and careful opinion, for only thus can a genuine concensus emerge or fail to.[57]

Can we hope for any more than this on which to base the 'objectivity' of aesthetic education? Certainly it must be a precondition of any 'objective' claim that our attention be directed towards the 'aesthetic object' and not to any extraneous object such as an arbitrary association or personal interest that we may mistake for it, as in Hume's example of disliking a work of art because we are envious of its author. The problem for this more flexible version of 'objectivity', however, is that in a sense, there is no aesthetic object - at least not in the same sense as there is a primary object of paint on canvas or sounds in the key of C major. This is because, as we have seen, insofar as it is an 'emergent' object which arises out of the primary material, it therefore depends on our own powers of perception, imagination and emotion for its realization. As Sartre says of our aesthetic perception of the natural world (reflecting the vast metaphysical gulf that exists between him and Kant):

> It is we who set up a relationship between this tree and that bit of sky. Thanks to us, that star which has been dead for millenia, that quarter moon, and that dark river are disclosed in the unity of a landscape.[58]

It would be better then to describe the object of our aesthetic attention, as we have done in Chapters Five and Six, as an 'intentional object', intending not the 'objective' world of science (which, anyway, is an abstraction from experience) but rather how the world or the work of art appears to us from a position of aesthetic disinterestedness and receptivity, as a consequence of which we find ourselves

hearing the sadness in the music, seeing the lion in the cathedral, or feeling the transience of human happiness expressed in Watteau's painting. However, whereas normally we can see the primary features of an object regardless of the state of mind that we are in (e.g. we rarely have any difficulty seeing the large grey building as a cathedral - and even if we do, the matter is easily settled), it would seem, on the contrary, that the intentional aesthetic object normally only appears in its fulness when our mind is in a state of openness and receptivity. I say 'normally' because there are times when a work of art forces itself upon us even though we may have deliberately closed our minds to it - as when a philistine pupil, despite his resistance to what he regards dismissively as 'high-culture', is nonetheless moved by some lines of Shakespeare. In such cases, it is as if the work of art itself has forced the pupil to take up a position of 'psychological objectivity' towards its presence - as when, even in sad times, some music can still rouse us.

Insofar, therefore, as we are describing what freely appears to us in this state of 'psychological objectivity', then pace Best, does it really matter whether or not the sadness is actually in the music or the lion-aspect in the cathedral, so long as others with whom we share a similar 'public' background also find themselves coming to have the same or similar personal responses?

Let us therefore now turn to the underlying conditions that may facilitate this kind of 'objectivity'. These may, for convenience, be divided up into two main kinds - namely, those to do with the 'psychological objectivity' of our state of mind, and those which relate to our background competence:

(a) Psychological objectivity

(i) I am genuinely describing an experience that I have had.

(ii) I genuinely believe that what I am now experiencing arises

from my paying a disinterested attention to some object, rather than that the object simply mirrors my arbitrary preferences and preoccupations. It is this condition that helps to provide a guarantee against Ruby Meager's charge that:

> Imagination will work on any ideas that float into our minds, however remote from actuality they may be; and left to itself will develop them almost inevitably on lines congenial to wish-fulfilment and fear-fulfilment.[59]

(b) Background competence

(i) I share a linguistic and cultural background of which both the work of art and the pupils with whom I am discussing it form a part. This condition might seem to raise particular problems for aesthetic education in a multi-cultural classroom - although we should also remember that many of the richest developments in art (contra Sue Braden's dogmatic assumption as to the 'discrete' nature of 'cultures' discussed earlier in this chapter) have come about through interaction between different cultural traditions, such as the influence of Japanese prints on 19th Century European art, or that of African art on 20th Century painting and music. (I note that David Best has also made this very important point.[60]) It would seem therefore that a cultural tradition, like linguistic usage, can rarely isolate itself from outside influence, as Wagner's Meistersingers eloquently demonstrates.

(ii) I have cultivated sensitivity through sustained and varied experiences of works of art. This, in turn, depends: (a) on my ability to put myself into a frame of mind of openness and receptivity as a consequence of my 'disinterestedness' - although it is a 'disinterestedness' that also requires that I be imaginatively susceptible and emotionally responsive (a point that is often misunderstood by those commentators who equate Kantian 'disinterestedness' with 'detachment', despite Kant's own insistence that the determining ground of the 'judgment of taste' lies in 'the feeling of the subject'[61]); (b) on

our faculties being in good working order and there being optimum physical conditions for aesthetic perception, such as that the concert hall has good acoustics, or the painting, adequate light. While it is clearly not possible to specify such optimum conditions for aesthetic perception as it is for normal, everyday perception, there may nonetheless be an analogical relation. As Hume says:

> In each creature there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment...in like manner as the appearance of objects in daylight, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour...[62]

This is refined in the writings of Kant and Hamlyn[63] in the view that all forms of objectivity must be rooted in forms of human sensibility operating under normal conditions.

Now what stands out from this set of criteria is that the cultivation of phenomenological reporting, disinterestedness, and the acquisition of a linguistic and cultural background, are all educable, as Hume and Sibley argue at length in their respective and similar accounts of an aesthetically educated public. The questionable area, however, is that of aesthetic sensitivity, described by Hume as:

> that <u>delicacy</u> of imagination which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions.[64]

<u>Can</u> it be educated, or not?

> Education in art appreciation assumes the former; history may suggest the latter[65]

says Sibley enigmatically. Clearly the possibility that it <u>can</u> be educated, at least in the vast majority of pupils, must be a <u>sine qua non</u> for aesthetic education. However, before aesthetic educators rush out to verify such a claim with some large-scale research project on pupils' responses, I would suggest that they would do even better to concentrate their main attention on the role of the good arts teacher, rather than on the limitations of the pupils.

Since this will be the theme of my next chapter, I shall put the

question temporarily to one side except as regards one crucial point which is this - insofar as the concept of aesthetic 'sensitivity' or 'taste' is essentially related to the concept of 'aesthetic judgment' (in which I include the 'judgment of taste'), it may be seen as part of the wider question as to how judgments of <u>any</u> kind can be taught. Certainly, no <u>capacity</u> for making judgments can be 'taught' in the sense of providing pupils with a 'rule book' for going about it, since the very ability to follow a rule adequately already presupposes an act of judgment that one is carrying on in the 'same' way, as Wittgenstein went to such lengths to point out[66]. If the acquisition of a capacity for judgment is like anything, then it would seem to be more like getting a 'nose' for something:

> Ask yourself: How does a man get a nose for something? And how can this nose be used?[67]

As such, it may well have its origins in the unlearned, natural responses of early infancy, as was discussed in Chapter One. It would be misleading, however, to think as the early Empiricists did that aesthetic judgment amounts to no more than a simple <u>feeling</u> for something, that human beings just happen to have, for on this view, as Scruton points out, 'taste' becomes:

> an isolated and inexplicable segment of human psychology, and it is simply a curious but philosophically uninteresting fact, that human beings enjoy some things (such as tragedies, strawberries and fine weather) and recoil from others.[68]

The point of Wittgenstein's argument, as we saw in Chapter One, is that although we must presuppose such unlearned starting points in order to explain how <u>any</u> learning can get off the ground, nonetheless, the arrival of language and with it rationality and the aesthetic form of life, suggests that such responses may be considerably educated and therefore extended. This is because our powers of aesthetic judgment do not just consist in a passive, 'mechanical' response, as the early Empiricists thought, but rather in an <u>activity</u> which may

be developed and refined. As Wittgenstein says:

> The origin and the primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this can the more complicated forms grow. Language - I want to say - is a refinement; 'in the beginning was the deed'.[69]

In this respect, it would be better to call 'aesthetic judgment' not just a 'feeling' but rather an 'educated feeling' in the way that it combines natural with learned responses. As David Best says in his recent book:

> It is important to recognize (a) that the natural responses and ways of behaving are the roots of the arts, language and rationality, (b) but also that the arts, language and rationality give an enormous range of extended possibilities of feeling, responding and behaving.[70]

How then, is a capacity for making such judgments to be passed on to pupils? Not, as we have seen, by teaching them a set of 'rules', because it is the act of judgment itself that gives any rules their application - but rather, as Wittgenstein suggests, by being in the company of a good teacher with wide experience of the aesthetic 'form of life', and thereby picking up his 'educated feel' for it:

> Can one learn this knowledge? Yes: some can. Not, however by taking a course in it, but through 'experience'. - Can someone else be a man's teacher in this? Certainly. From time to time he gives him the right tip. - This is what 'learning' and 'teaching' are like here. - What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments. There are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating-rules.[71]

In the light of Wittgenstein's account, it is therefore essential, as we have seen throughout this thesis, to distinguish the fully realized judgment that e.g. 'The music is sad', from the two following types of response: (a) Mechanically following a rule - As we have seen in the case of the tone-deaf pupil who can still, within limits, correctly identify even quite complex aesthetic categories of music, it is quite possible to follow a rule correctly without 'seeing its point'. As Sibley points out:

> A man who failed to realize the nature of aesthetic concepts... might by assiduous application and shrewd observation provide

> himself with rules and generalizations; and by inductive procedures and intelligent guessing, he might frequently say the right things.[72]

One wonders how much of what passes for 'aesthetic education' in our schools is along these lines. Here, the pointlessness of such an exercise may be underlined by the reductio ad absurdum that the teacher could even make up a quite absurd rule, such as 'All music in the key of C major is tragic', and the luckless pupil would still follow it to the letter without knowing any better; (b) Habitual judgments - which would include all those involved in our unreflective, 'everyday' perception, 'stock' emotional responses and all 'automatic' judgments of approval and disapproval. In fact all such responses are only by courtesy called 'judgments' insofar as their 'force' derives not from an 'educated feeling', but from the force of habit. No act of 'realization' can therefore be involved, although it must have been there at one time in our early stages of learning about the world before the habit was fully formed.

However, before trespassing further into the terrain that I hope to be exploring in the next chapter, let us now return to those conditions for 'psychological objectivity' outlined above. I would argue that if these conditions can be satisfied, then we will achieve about as much objectivity as we need in order to defend the richness of aesthetic activities from the sceptic's charge that it is all quite arbitrary. Despite Kant's suggestion at one stage in the Critique[73] that we make the attempt to create a universal aesthetic community in the absence of an existing sensus communis, I do not think that we can really ask for much more than what Sibley has described in the following terms:

> A realm of objectivity might be made possible by some limited (not widespread) actual agreement including some settled and virtually indisputable cases, together with a perhaps elaborate and hard to describe procedure that offers the possibility by envisageable ways of attaining wider agreement.[74]

This state of affairs seems close in fact to the one that already exists within the aesthetic realm, so perhaps we should rest content with it and concentrate our energies instead on the more valuable area of personal response - especially since to ask for any more than what Sibley outlines might land us back in the 'objectivity' of the 'propositionalist' thesis.

Addendum

One problem now remains. Although it has been argued that the aesthetic form of life can tolerate much divergence of value and interpretation without losing its underlying rationality, what of major disagreements about the nature of art itself? This too may be amenable to Sibley's account of 'aesthetic objectivity' outlined above. Thus Kant's insistence, in paragraph 49 of the Critique, that any work of art worthy of the name must possess geist might seem to be about as near to an indisputable prescription as one can get. On the other hand, what of the disputed relevance to the concept of 'art' of the beliefs and personal associations that we bring with us?

I have myself argued earlier[75] that there are occasions on which our beliefs may have aesthetic relevance - as in the case discussed of the two people looking at the National Westminster tower block where (a) a neutral, belief-free perspective seemed to be out of the question, and (b) the aesthetic perceptions of those concerned seemed to be inescapably modified by the beliefs that they held. I have also argued for the aesthetic relevance of our beliefs in Chapter Seven, on the grounds that to exclude them totally would make it impossible to take the concept of 'art' seriously, and also on the grounds that the whole concept of the 'aesthetic' is systematically ambiguous anyway. None of these arguments, however, provide anything like a conclusive refutation of the 'formalist' position that they deny.

In the same way, I have followed Kant in his account of 'aesth-

etic ideas', and also Sartre, in arguing for the possible relevance of personal associations - a particularly important area for the pedagogy of aesthetic education insofar as one of the most effective ways of engaging pupils in works of art is by encouraging them to respond with their own personal history, as we saw in the example of the teacher's approach to Wordsworth's Lucy in Chapter Five[76]. The proviso, of course, is that such responses must depend for their legitimacy on the fact that they arise as a result of our openness to the work of art. Thus, if in such a state, I look, for example, at a Turner seascape and find certain memories of seaside holidays as a child welling up, then this may be aesthetically relevant if it helps me to grasp what is being aesthetically expressed in the painting. On such occasions, what we may take to be a totally idiosyncratic response may be less idiosyncratic than we think. In general, it might be argued that my own experience of 'x' is aesthetically relevant if it helps me to see the 'x' that is embodied in the work of art. As Proust says:

> In reality, every reader is, while he is reading, the reader of his own self...The recognition by the reader in his own self of what the book says, is the proof of its veracity[77]

- a view that is flatly contradicted by Bell's 'formalist' credo that:

> To appreciate a work of art we need bring nothing with us from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions.[78]

While my own thesis has argued for a much wider and more piecemeal interpretation of aesthetic relevance, I think that once again, as with disagreement over individual works of art, we may also have to accommodate differing views as to where we place the horizon around the work of art. In this respect, the only two posited 'horizons' that must be excluded are: (a) the sceptical one, on the grounds that the arbitrary horizons of personal preference actually exclude the work of art, thereby making nonsense of any attempt to educate aesthetically; (b) the propositional horizon, which is drawn so tightly

around the primary significances of the object that it makes it impossible for its 'emergent' identity to appear, thereby making education in an <u>aesthetic</u> sense impossible - insofar as by 'aesthetic' we mean something that must necessarily involve a 'personal response' in the sense in which Kant and Scruton understand it.

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CHAPTER NINE: How is the experience of art to be communicated? On the teaching of arts subjects.

If works of art functioned simply to bring about the realization of untranslatable 'embodied thoughts', then, once the works had been placed before the pupils, the classrooms in which aesthetic appreciation took place would be characterized chiefly by one outstanding feature: silence - undisturbed, contemplative silence on the part of both pupil and teacher alike as the perceptual, mental and affective parts of each person's imagination set about their synthesizing task. As Sartre says of literature:

> The literary object, though realized through language is never given in language. On the contrary, it is by nature a silence and an opponent of the word.[1]

For all that some works may seem to yield their 'emergent' qualities directly to us in this 'silent' manner however, it is nonetheless clear that much aesthetic appreciation is devoted to highly verbal, analytic inquiry into what works of art mean. 'Is the poem about love - or death?' the teacher asks provocatively, in order to alert the pupil to possible ambiguities and ironies in the text. At the same time, essential background knowledge is filled in as the teacher explores how far the work of art is a reflection of its times or a dissenting comment upon them. Aesthetic and other culture-related conventions are identified and related to the preoccupations of the communities in which they arose - as, for example, the Japanese haiku is related, among other things, to the art of calligraphy and a religious concern with the 'timeless moment'. Moral, psychological, ideological and other kinds of 'lessons' are drawn from the work, in an attempt to show its continuing relevance to the present day - as when Hamlet is interpreted as a Marxist fable signifying the decline of feudalism, or when Leavis sets out to show how novels within the 'great tradition':

> are distinguished by a vital capacity for experience, a kind of

reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity.[2]

In short, all such talk is directed towards the varying ways in which the work has an exemplificatory role in relation both to aesthetic conventions and to the world at large. But what, then, of the pupils' experience of the work of art, with which this chapter commenced - that first-person adventure into the 'world' of the work which, though it may add nothing to its meaning as discussed above, may nonetheless be regarded as necessary to 'bring home' the meaning to the pupil in image, aspect and emotion? How is the teacher to alert pupils to this aspect of the work when nothing significant, strictly speaking, can be said about it beyond the ritual aesthetic common-place that each pupil must 'see it for himself'? In trying to answer this question, the danger to be avoided (as we saw in relation to the 'antinomy of taste' in Chapter One) is taking an over-fragmented view of the work of art as artificially divided up into translatable, interpretable statement and untranslatable 'generator of experiences'. we may see such a division at work, for example, in the following uneasy formulation advanced by the poet-aesthetician, Paul Valery:

> Transmettre un fait - produire une emotion. La poesie est un compromis, ou une certaine proportion de ces deux fonctions.[3]

It is but a short step from this type of dualistic view to an acceptance of the fragmentation between aesthetic judgment and personal response such as was discussed in Chapter One - a fragmentation that in turn paves the way both for the doctrinaire 'objectivist' view of aesthetic education and its equally doctrinaire 'radical subjectivist' counterpart.

For an 'experientialist' like Scruton however, aesthetic education can only take place insofar as at least a modicum of unity holds between the pupils' grasp of the third-person meaning of the work and his personal realization of that meaning as the work comes to

'envelop' him. In this view of the aesthetic language-game, neither the personal response nor the bare meaning of the work (i.e. its 'empty intention') can survive on their own since (a) any personal realization of the work without a grasp of the underlying thought that identifies it would be a logical impossibility, while equally, (b) the thought on its own, without the realization, would be aesthetically null and void, whatever else it might be - for without such realization, as Scruton has argued, the pupil could not be said to have really 'seen its point' in relation to the aesthetic object.

Thus, on the one hand, Scruton would certainly have as much contempt as Best for the teacher who dwells only on what he takes to be the untranslatable 'presence' of the work at the expense of even attempting to articulate anything of the underlying thought - as in Best's example of the dance teacher who proclaims that:

> 'Dance is such a subjective matter that there is nothing that can or should be said about it.'[4]

Such a teacher not only courts the inconceivable Sartrean 'illusion of immanence', but in its wake, mystifies the aesthetic form of life for the pupils - that is, if they don't ridicule it, as the students of the above dance teacher did, according to Best, when:

> as their dance performance, (they) sat on the floor eating crisps.[5]

Books on 'child-centred' education are notoriously full of such mystifying aphorisms as:

> (the poetic) function is not to say but to be.[6]

Seen thus, the works of art's apparently private and esoteric character will not only invite random and self-indulgent responses, but far worse, will seem to confirm the unfortunate philistine pupil's conception of himself as an insensitive outsider to a charmed circle.

On the other hand, however, the teacher who dwells only on 'reading off' or decoding the significances of the work to the

exclusion of drawing attention to its 'emergent' identity, not only runs the obvious risk of over-intellectualizing it at the expense of imaginative and affective responses, but will also tend to reduce the 'text' in the pupils' eyes to the level of an expendable text-book - and often an unnecessarily obscure one at that, when set beside the teacher's explanations. 'Well, if <u>that</u>'s all the author's trying to say,' the pupils think, 'why didn't he say so in the first place!'

Of course it is <u>part</u> of the teacher's job to 'fill in' the work's background for his pupils in as interesting a way as possible - as outlined at the beginning of this chapter. The real problem which confronts him, however, is that of how he is to combine this kind of interpretative talk with alerting his pupils to the unfamiliar and 'emergent' presence that he himself experiences in the work - for in the end, it is upon the possibility that such experience <u>can</u> be intimated or communicated and then gain the 'experiential' assent of the pupils, that the case for 'psychological objectivity' rests (as was discussed in the last chapter). How, then, does the arts teacher who is sensitive to these issues go about his task? Let us commence an answer to this question by turning first to the earliest stages of childhood, for it is here that we are most likely to find the source of that 'feeling' which for Scruton, in common with most other aesthetic theorists, is the <u>sine qua non</u> for the attribution of aesthetic descriptions.

If the Wittgensteinian argument outlined in Chapter One is correct - namely, that the learned responses of the aesthetic form of life (i.e. our 'educated feelings') must presuppose an unlearned starting-point in the reactions of early childhood, a view strongly endorsed by Sibley[7] and Best[8] - then clearly the parents and teachers of very young children must endeavour to judge correctly what seem to be the child's <u>own</u> proto-aesthetic responses, for these must be the

locus for any aesthetic education. In this respect, the instinct of the 'child-centred' approach is right. What, then, does the parent or teacher look for? As was suggested in Chapter One, he looks for any seemingly pleasurable and, where appropriate, imitative responses to such stimuli as rhythmic clapping, singing, expressive gestures, bright and gaudy colours etc. along with the child's own attempts to produce proto-aesthetic objects such as when he scribbles patterns in the sand that fascinate him, plays endlessly with the sounds of words and, later, discovers his own ability to make dance-like movements and invent simple but vivid and original stories. As Sibley says:

> It is at these times, taking advantage of these natural interests and admirations, that we first teach the simpler aesthetic words.[9]

By recognizing, encouraging and extending such responses (which, of course, presupposes that the parents themselves have some familiarity with the aesthetic form of life), 'aesthetic education' will tend to develop naturally as a matter of course, like learning to talk. However, it is in the failure to <u>extend</u> such responses that the rigid 'child-centred' teacher frustrates the course of aesthetic education, for while the child's early reactions provide the natural and only possible starting-point, nonetheless, as Best is one of many to point out:

> The arts, language and rationality give an enormous range of extended possibilities of feeling, responding and behaving.[10]

Equally however, the parent or teacher who attempts to extend the child's aesthetic horizon without regard to what he naturally responds to and enjoys, can only create confusion and self-doubt in the child's mind and sow the seeds of subsequent adolescent alienation from the arts.

In fact, teachers of <u>any</u> age-range need to take the above factors into account, especially if it is the case that the language-game of aesthetics never completely replaces such natural responses even

though it vastly extends their scope, as Malcolm reports Wittgenstein as saying:

> Not merely is much of the first language of a child grafted onto instinctive behaviour - but the whole of the developed, complex employment of language by adult speakers embodies something resembling instinct.[11]

If this is indeed the case, which seems likely in view of the 'feeling' side that underlies all acts of judgment, then part of the answer to the teacher's problem of communicating the 'embodied thought' may well lie within the pupils themselves, analogously, for example, to their latent logical or mathematical competences. This would suggest that one powerful way of helping pupils to 'see the point' of aesthetic judgments and descriptions would be the teacher's employment of 'Socratic' methods to 'draw them out' - as when, in looking at Hokusai's The Hollow of the Deep Sea Wave, the teacher draws their attention to the presence of Mount Fuji, and certain waves in the foreground of the print, but leaves it up to them to notice the aesthetically surprising way that the mountain's shape is echoed in one of the waves, making the mountain appear like a frozen wave and the wave like a moving mountain, or even the more startling denial of our normal conceptions of 'movement' and 'stillness' that such an impression intimates. However, the pupil's natural capacity to feel and recognize such aesthetic aspects can only take him so far, and certainly some familiarity with Japanese culture will extend the possibilities of what can appropriately be seen in the print - for behind its more obvious aesthetic aspects lie rich 'embodied thoughts' relating to a Zen Buddhist view of the opposition between motion and stillness, storm and calm, reconciled by the underlying idea of flowing with natural forces as embodied in the fisherman's boat running with the tide.

Now here, the ineffective or dull teacher would simply itemize all these points in much the same way as a laboured tourist's guide,

or the dreary French Que Sais-je? guides to literature that dutifully chronicle the artist's life, the works, the style, the influences, without a hint of the 'magic'. 'Notice how the triangular shape of the mountain resembles the triangular shape of the wave,' he might intone. 'This exemplifies the traditional concern of Japanese art with motion and rest.' 'So what,' think the pupils. 'What's so special about that? Of course waves move and mountains don't.' Spotting the similarities in shape would then have little more interest for them than those puzzle pictures to be found in some children's comics where one has to spot the animals hidden away in the drawing - an occupation more suited to e.g. relieving the tedium of childhood illness that to any enterprise that could be called 'educative'. In the hands of such a teacher, the work of art remains an inert object.

How, then, does the teacher who is 'on form' differ from the dull teacher or the teacher who is simply having an 'off' day? Clearly he must, at some point, realize, or have realized the work for himself - although this could not be a sufficient condition for effective teaching, for it may be equally true of some dull teachers. What he does display, rather, is the ability to reproduce in his pupils something of the living experience that he himself has had of the work - sometimes as a result of reproducing it again in himself but not necessarily, for he may rely simply on his memory of an earlier experience. Sometimes, though far more rarely, he may actually come to realize the work for the first time during the lesson, which can be a most startling experience. Throughout the performance, however, his talk, in Sibley's words:

> often serves to support his judgments in a special way: it helps us to see what he has seen[12]

- although here, it is important to distinguish (a) Sibley's minimal account of personal response as discussed in Chapter One[13], from (b)

the act of imaginative 'realization' outlined in Chapter Six wherein the pupil, like the teacher, brings the work to life for himself in the form of a synthetic 'imaginary object' (i.e. the intentional object of the response) that gradually brings together many partial viewpoints (i.e. in the shape of images, aspects and emotions). Although, as we have seen, such viewpoints cannot add anything to the meaning of the teacher's aesthetic description but rather 'fill it out' and 'bring it home' to the pupil, nevertheless, during this process, as Kant points out in his consideration of the 'aesthetic idea'[14], further thoughts will also be generated, leading in their turn to further 'fulfilments' in image, aspect and emotion.

Such viewpoints may also be seen to fall into two more general categories: namely, (a) those that arise when the teacher endeavours to take pupils 'inside' the work, enveloping them in it, as when, for example, he attempts to get them to see Hamlet from Ophelia's point of view, or to participate in the movement of the lovers towards the boat in Watteau's Embarkation to Cytherea; (b) the more 'distanced' kind of viewpoint that the teacher may endeavour to evoke, especially when he is seeking to get the pupils to come to an artistic verdict on the work, when he encourages them to stand back from the living object that they have brought into being and to survey it, at a distance, as a synoptic whole. Thus, in looking at Turner's The Fighting Temeraire, for example, the teacher may attempt to envelop his pupils in the 'world' of the work not, initially, be getting them to feel, as an 'educated' art lover might, its over-all 'threatening' atmosphere, but rather by inviting them to 'hear' the lapping of the waves and to 'feel' the sea breeze indicated by the fluttering flag. then, more ambitiously, he might try to help them to imagine from start to finish the slow, sad progress of this once proud ship on its final journey to the breaker's yard - all of which, it could be argued, is intimated by

the painting, even though all that can literally be seen is a 'frozen' visual image of boats on a river. As Philostratus, writing in the third century A.D., says of such an imaginative realization:

> When you entertain a notion of Zeus you must, I suppose, envisage him along with heaven and the seasons and stars as Phidias in his day endeavoured to do, and if you would fashion an image of Athene you must imagine in your mind armies and cunning and handicrafts and how she leapt out of Zeus himself.[15]

- all of which would, in various ways, be intimated in a 'successful' portrait of the goddess. Similarly, as we saw in Chapter Six, a music teacher may encourage the pupils to try to hear all the variations that are echoed in a final theme, as in Bach's Goldberg Variations, even though all that is audible at any one moment is just a snatch of the theme itself.

From such imagining, the 'formal' aesthetic aspects of the work may also dawn - sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly - as when the vastness of the sky and the great plane of the sea in Turner's painting 'shape up' into an awesome configuration framing the ghostly presence of the Temeraire and the 'Satanic' tug. To see this for himself, however, the pupil will most certainly need to stand back from his earlier envelopment in the work, for only in this way can such as over-all 'emergent' configuration arise.

However, it is not only with the proliferation of further appropriate images, aspects and emotions that such a teacher is concerned but also, as we have see, with the proliferation of further appropriate thoughts. Thus The Fighting Temeraire, in its dramatic rendition of the shift from sail-power to steam, evokes many further thoughts (along with their 'fulfilling' images) - some of them more public, like thoughts about the advent of the Industrial Revolution and its conflict with romanticism; others more personal, like the associations that may be awakened within the pupil with his own acquaintance with ships and rivers. As we saw in Chapters Seven and

Eight, there can be no specifiable 'horizon' to such responses beyond a general demand that they be, in some way, germane to what is intimated by the work, and this specification will depend in turn upon some agreement being reached with others who are familiar with the painting and its background. More than this we cannot and should not expect, not only because of the unavoidable presence of culturally-related and more personal perspectives, but also because of the often pointed out inexhaustibility of such works.

Apart from getting the pupils to think about the work's meaning, however, such a teacher's main concern is to try to get the pupils to experience what, as a result of his long experience, knowledge and love of art, he has himself experienced (or is experiencing) as an 'educated' response to the work - as we saw, for example, in the case of the poetry lesson on St. Agnes' Eve in Chapter Seven[16]. It is not that he will necessarily feel entirely defeated if they don't come to see it this way, for as we saw in the discussion on 'psychological objectivity' in the previous chapter, our belief in the legitimacy of our own judgments does not thereby make them mandatory upon others. Nonetheless, if pupils never came to share his experience of art, this would have to imply a failure of some sort, either in his teaching or in his own aesthetic development.

Insofar, then, as such a teacher's descriptions seek to convey something more than can ever be wholly captured by the 'everyday' rule-governed operations of language, the power of such 'descriptions' to achieve this end may be seen to lie both in their rhetorical features and the expressiveness with which such descriptions are conveyed. It is this aspect of the teacher's talk that underlies Scruton's seemingly obscure remark (discussed in Chapter Two) to the effect that:

> certain aesthetic descriptions are non-descriptive in that they express not beliefs but rather 'aesthetic experiences'.[17]

Sometimes, such 'aesthetic experiences' may even be conveyed by an expressive gesture alone, as when a great work of art fills us with awe and we find that e.g. a grave nod is the best that we can manage in the circumstances, as in Wittgenstein's example:

> I should like to say - "These notes say something glorious, but I do not know what." These notes are a powerful gesture, but I cannot put anything side by side with it that will serve as an explanation. A grave nod.[18]

As regards the teacher's actual talk it is often characteristic of the aesthetic language game, in the absence of ready-to-hand rules, that it is phrased in a <u>persuasive</u> way, as Wittgenstein points out:

> Here it occurs to me that in conversation on aesthetic matters we use the words: "You have to see it like <u>this</u>, this is how it is meant"; "when you see it like <u>this</u>, you see where it goes wrong."[19]

Sometimes, such persuasiveness may involve (and here, I draw on Sibley's very useful synopsis of different persuasive approaches[20]) the teacher's own use of poetic imagery for its evocative power. I remember, for example, having a most vivid experience of Arnold's <u>Scholar Gypsy</u> as a result of a teacher describing it to me as 'one of the great <u>green</u> poems of the English language'[21] - almost singing the word 'green' as he said it. At other times, the teacher may draw on contrasts, comparisons and personal associations which may be related to the pupils' own background knowledge and experiences, as in the case of the lesson on Wordsworth's <u>Lucy</u> described in Chapter Five[22]. Again, there is no reason why a 'first-order' exegesis alerting pupils to details that they might otherwise have missed should not pass over in their minds into a vivid awareness of the work's emergent identity. Thus, a teacher may aim to intimate the 'tragic feel' of <u>Julius Caesar</u> through detailed discussion of the different motives of the conspirators, the moral ambiguities of their arguments, Caesar's combination of ruthlessness and naivety etc., and then, at some point, the poignancy of the drama as a whole strikes the pupils and they are moved -

but moved in a way that would not have been possible without the teacher's prior discussion. At other times, as Sibley points out in a way which is reminiscent of Scruton's argument from 'paronymy':

> The use of the aesthetic term itself may do the trick; we say what the quality or character is, and people who had not seen it before see it.[23]

More often, we draw the pupils' attention to 'first-order' features of the work like the use of flattened thirds and sevenths in jazz, and relate these directly to the emergent aesthetic feature, in this case, the 'blues'. All these approaches, and more, are available to the teacher in his attempts to communicate the desired acquaintance with the 'embodied thought'.

It is not only with words, however, that the teacher may succeed in this enterprise. As Scruton powerfully argues, echoing Wittgenstein's remarks on 'expression' in The Investigations, a teacher or pupil or anyone else who attempts to communicate a genuine aesthetic experience will naturally tend to do so in a manner which is in itself expressive of the experience - i.e. as regards, gesture, tone of voice, facial expressions etc.:

> The subject will describe the object of his feeling in terms that can themselves be construed as an expression of feeling. It is significant that he describes the painting in a certain tone of voice.[24]

In the same way, we 'betray' our anger as much by our angry tone of voice as by what we say. Furthermore:

> When one expresses one's feelings one does not only do something because of the feeling, one also puts feeling into what one does.[25]

For example, in trying to convey the lyrical freshness of The Scholar Gypsy, the teacher almost 'sings' what he has to say. Or again, in trying to convey the 'tragically stumbling' aspect of the opening triplets in Schubert's last piano sonata, the very posture of the teacher's body will tend to adopt, however minimally, those very features.

The effect of such expressiveness upon the pupils, as Plato was perhaps the first to point out, is essentially a mimetic one - i.e. the gestures and expressions are followed empathically in the audience's own behaviour, and so the positional realization is brought about:

> I think you know that the very best of us, when we hear Homer... imitating one of the heroes who is is grief, and...delivering a long tirade in his lamentations or chanting and beating his breast, feel pleasure, and abandon ourselves and accompany the representation with sympathy and eagerness.[26]

The ever-present danger however, as Plato goes on to point out, is too much loss of distance - as, for example, when a teacher's presentation of a work becomes too histrionic. When this happens, the pupils may not be so much enveloped by the work as swamped by it, as they might by a real life state of affairs - that is, when they are not merely embarrassed by such an approach.

In general, then, the kind of 'understanding' that the pupil gains from 'entering into' the work, needs to be counterbalanced by an equal capacity for withdrawal from such engagement in order that he may make the attempt to survey the work as a whole. The teacher's encouragement of this latter enterprise may also be seen to be necessary insofar as it is an aim of aesthetic education to encourage pupils to form reliable aesthetic verdicts on the quality of the work which, in turn, must be set against a background of comparison with other works within the genre. From this 'detached' perspective the work must necessarily take on the character of an object of judgment as well as the subject of a range of experiences to be 'lived through'. However, this aspect of aesthetic education has not been a main concern of this thesis. Moreover, at every stage, the possibility of reaching such 'ranking' verdicts must presuppose the pupils' possession of a subjective understanding of the work.

In all those cases where the teacher fails to communicate, at the

very least, a foretaste of acquaintance with the emergent 'embodied thought', then one or other of two equally undesirable consequences will tend to follow. Either the pupils become alienated from the aesthetic form of life, rejecting it because they don't believe that it exists; or else the more faint-hearted may attempt to simulate appropriate responses - much as one forces a laugh at a joke one does not understand. Insofar as such simulated responses are linked with powerful but aesthetically irrelevant motives like a desire to come up to the required standard (i.e. to be <u>good</u> at the subject), it may be hard at times for the pupil himself to tell whether his own response is genuine or not - as when he forces his imagination to accommodate what he sees to the teacher's description - perhaps convincing himself that he really sees what, in fact, does not emerge for him at all.

To deal with such problems, which are variously related to lack of imagination, poorly developed perceptual powers and an inability to feel, the effective arts teacher needs all the powers of judgment that he can muster in order to be able to detect those subtle and often indescribable differences in behaviour that may indicate whether a pupil's response is genuine or not - powers that may be closely allied to his ability to discern the genuineness of expressions of feeling in works of art themselves. Here, once again, we must refer back to Wittgenstein's remark, already quoted in the previous chapter:

> Is there such a thing as 'expert judgment' about the genuineness of expressions of feeling?...Correcter prognoses will generally issue from the judgments of those with better knowledge of mankind.
>
> Can one learn this knowledge? Yes; some can. Not, however, by taking a course in it, but through <u>experience</u>...What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments.[27]

The experienced teacher will know, for example, whether the 'silent' response mentioned at the beginning of this chapter denotes rapt attention or merely an adoption of a <u>pose</u> of thoughtfulness in order to mask the absence of aesthetic response. In the same way, the lover

learns, by the subtlest of hints, to discriminate between the responses of love and flattery or pity. Without such powers, it is difficult to see how anyone could make an effective arts teacher.

It must be said, however, that the teacher's ability to discern such simulated responses is rarely a simple matter. Such behaviour comes in a variety of forms, ranging from that which suggests <u>some</u> degree of realization on the pupil's part which he either exaggerates or plays down, to that which masks a complete absence of <u>any</u> aesthetic realization whatsoever, even though he may be able to give a verbal account of the underlying 'empty intention'. As Ishiguro says, in underlining this essentially asymmetrical relationship between the 'empty' and the 'realized' thought:

> Although the identity of an image is determined by our thoughts ...having the thoughts verbally does not necessarily enable us to picture the object...Similarly, understanding a description of the aspect of an object another person sees does not necessarily enable us to see the aspect...at times I find myself unable to picture an object however hard I try although I have various thoughts about the object.[28]

Let us now attempt to summarize the picture of the good arts teacher that has started to emerge. Clearly he must love his subject, for without this, there could be none of the 'loving talk' of which Clive Bell speaks, and which is indispensable for warming pupils to the arts. Furthermore, he must be strong on both analytic and synthetic approaches - able to provide the much-needed exegesis and, at the same time, to intimate expressively the unifying and emergent 'embodied thought' that holds it all together. In fact a good arts lesson, in which the teacher manages to evoke the 'embodied thought' for his pupils through the expressiveness, style and <u>geist</u> of his own teaching performance, may even be seen as <u>itself</u> something like a work of art, and to be enjoyed in much the same kind of way. It should also be, and usually is, enjoyed by the teacher himself, for when he is in full flow, improvising his teaching in the manner of an inspired

jazz musician or Bach at the organ, he is surely experiencing a peak as a teacher - not that one could keep this up all the time, of course.

Finally, such a teacher should be sensitive to the variety of ways in which realization of the 'embodied thought' may come about - for it is in this area that aesthetic dogmatism has done some of its worst damage. This variety may be seen to range from: (a) states of 'Apollonian' contemplation at one end of the scale, such as may arise from our perception of very tranquil landscapes, 'lingering' melodies like that in Ravel's Pavane for a Dead Infanta and much highly abstract art, such as Rothko's huge purple paintings in the Tate Gallery; to (b) states of extreme 'Dionysian' excitement at the other end of the scale, such as may be evoked by the 'heroic' finales of many symphonies like Dvorak's Eighth or Janacek's Sinfonietta, 'hot' jazz, dramatic paintings like Breugel's The Triumph of Death and the literary presentation of emotions in extremity, as when Prince Muishkin meets Rogozin on the darkened stairs in The Idiot, or when Mrs. Verloc learns of the death of Stevie at the end of The Secret Agent.

Just as even the most exciting work of art must also have an intellectual content, however, for without this there could be no 'embodied thought', so equally, even the quietest and most contemplative work must be seen to contain its own kind of geist or it could not be made to live in our imaginations. Sometimes, of course, as has been argued by Aristotle for tragedy, and by T. S. Eliot for the poetry of Donne, Marvell and their contemporaries[29], contemplation and excitement may be induced in equal measure, creating a harmonious balance of thought and feeling that writers like Eliot, perhaps over-dogmatically, have taken to constitute an aesthetic ideal.

Account also needs to be taken by the teacher of the varied ways

in which aesthetic realization may dawn. At times, for example, it may come as an effortless epiphany, often striking the pupil when he least expects it, and by contrast, eluding him as soon as he makes a conscious effort of the will to retain it. This is particularly true of works of art where 'atmosphere' has an important role to play. By contrast, especially with very obscure, or in other ways demanding works of art, the realization of the embodied thought may appear only after a long and hard struggle and even then, perhaps, only partially. Sometimes, a conscious effort of concentration is needed here to bring about the response, as when one tries to 'hold together' all the leit-motifs of a piece of music in one synoptic whole, as was discussed earlier. As Sartre says of the reader of literature:

> The work exists only at the exact level of his capacities; while he reads and creates he knows that he can always go further in his reading, can always create more profoundly, and thus the work seems to him as inexhaustible and opaque as things.[30]

Nonetheless, as has just been pointed out, such effort may at other times be quite counter-productive - i.e. in those cases where an effortless surrender to the work is more appropriate. Paradoxically, it may be as hard for some pupils to cultivate this type of effort-lessness of response as it is for others to make the mental effort to which Sartre refers. It is essential, therefore, that over a period of time the arts teacher alerts the pupils to this variety of forms of 'realization', along with the rewards that all of them may yield.

Unfortunately, however, the presence of this very variety of re-sponse has itself given rise to a number of dogmatic and distorting aesthetic theories, characterized by their elevation of one mode or another to a place of supreme importance along with a dismissal of other modes. Scruton's own theory, for example, as we have seen, is limited in this respect in that it rejects all 'excitement' in aesth-etic response in favour of high-level intellectual engagement. Equally however, some teachers, perhaps with an eye to the competition

from commercialized 'popular culture', attempt to put across a view of aesthetic experience to their pupils as paradigmatically exciting. As a result, the kind of calm, contemplative state that one needs to be in in order to read a poem like Wordsworth's Daffodils (or to reach a just aesthetic verdict on any work) is lost upon them and the poem is dismissed out of hand as 'boring'. Rarely does one find an aesthetic theory, with the possible exception of Nietzsche's Dionysian/Apollonian account of Greek tragedy[31], that does anything like justice to the full range of possible types of aesthetic experience - so that it is no wonder that pupils often come to distrust their own responses and grow confused about exactly what it is that arts subjects have to offer.

Whether an appropriate realization of the work of art is effortless or hard-won, contemplative or excited, however, underlying all such experiences, as has been emphasized throughout this thesis, is an involuntary element over which, necessarily, neither the pupil nor still less the teacher, can ever have full control. This is something which all lovers of art simply have to live with, for as Ishiguro says:

> In the case of seeing images or aspects there is an added element of something beyond our control, of being an experience probably governed by causal forces we do not understand.[32]

We may speculate about these 'causal forces' of course, for example from a psycho-analytic point of view, and there is no doubt that such involuntariness has its origin, at least in part, in the involuntariness that lies at the root of all emotional experience. Nonetheless, for present purposes, such explanations may be 'bracketed off' insofar as what we do know 'from experience' is that despite this involuntary element, a capacity for aesthetic realization may still be brought about indirectly by the right kind of teaching, employing some of the means to which I have referred in this chapter. As Ishiguro goes on

to say:

> At the same time aspect seeing or image seeing seems to involve a skill that can be acquired by effort or practice...It is a knack that I can acquire by effort - although I cannot explain how I acquired the knack.[33]

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CHAPTER TEN: The aesthetic curriculum and the unity of the arts.

In an article The Unity of Aesthetic Education, Sparshott argues that:

> Grouping the arts together for educational purposes is justified, however many respects there may be in which they differ, provided that there are some common problems which they all pose for teaching and learning.[1]

In my previous chapter, and indeed throughout this thesis, I have tended to take it for granted that the common educational problems posed by the various art forms do indeed outweigh the manifest differences that divide them. Yet nowhere is the division between aesthetic theory and the practice of aesthetic education more marked than in the contrast that we typically find between their perspectives on the unity of the arts. Thus, on the one hand, there is a natural tendency for aesthetic theory to approach the arts as a relatively distinct and unified area of human experience. This is reflected in the common concern of many aestheticians to ensure that no one major art form is favoured as a paradigm of the aesthetic form of life at the expense of any other - while at the same time, of course, being sensitive to the differences between music, painting, literature, dance etc. In fact most existing aesthetic theories, including Scruton's seem to take this principle as read, as we may see in the common practice of supporting aesthetic arguments with illustrations drawn indiscriminately from all the major art forms - a practice that I have endeavoured myself to follow, during the course of this thesis.

The one notable and influential exception to this practice, of course, is that of the 'formalist' aesthetics advanced by writers like Bell and Fry (at least in their earlier works), wherein an aesthetically dismissive view of literature is taken from a position that favours the 'fine arts'. 'Formalism' apart, however, even Paul Hirst, the most influential of curriculum theorists, treats literature, music and the 'fine arts' as a unified area, without a thought to justify

such treatment[2].

On the other hand, it is only too clear that in schools and universities, there is a long-standing division on the curriculum between the 'fine arts', music and literature - the first two tending to stand apart, respectively, in 'creative arts' and 'performing arts' faculties (along with drama), while the last is nowadays most commonly to be found annexed to the 'humanities', alongside subjects like history, sociology and languages, enjoying a relationship with the 'fine arts' and music analogous to the currently very uncertain one that exists between the social and natural sciences. Such a division is also reflected in the popular conception of 'art', where the word 'art' itself has become virtually synonymous with 'painting' - a view powerfully echoed at the theoretical level, as has just been pointed out, by 'formalist' aestheticians.

There are, of course, many good reasons, particularly of a practical nature, why this state of affairs should be so in aesthetic education. The technical skills and knowledge required by the creative and performing side of the arts, such as learning to handle paint, playing a musical instrument, mastering the physical skills of dancing and the linguistic skills of writing poetry and prose are all demanding of much time, patience and hard-won inspiration, not to mention the lengthy apprenticeship in appreciation of the chosen art form that must accompany all such activities. Often as a result of such engagement, both teachers and pupils will tend to feel far more 'at home' within one of the art forms, to the extent that they may take little interest in what is going on in the rest of the arts - a situation clearly parallelled by current specialization in the sciences.

Over and above such practical reasons for the division of aesthetic education, however, there are also the prevailing ideologies of

the time. Most teachers of literature, for example, nowadays have an overriding concern for the moral, sociological, psychological and other non-aesthetic associations of their subject - an aspect that I myself have been concerned to emphasize in this thesis, especially in the argument for the 'ambiguity of the aesthetic' in Chapter Seven. Teachers of music and the 'fine arts', on the other hand, are characteristically far more concerned with the 'inner logic' of aesthetic form - a view that, as we saw in Chapter One, gains much support from the highly influential 'objectivist' aesthetics of writers like Osborne, whose main concern, in the tradition of Bell and Fry, is with the perceptual arts.

Despite the above considerations, I nonetheless wish to question, in this closing chapter, the educational wisdom of such divisions - particularly as regards (a) the too-ready assumption that literature, because of its obviously far greater articulation of intellectual content, should therefore be taught as a separate area away from 'aesthetic education' proper; and (b) the blind-spot which tends to exist in the teaching of <u>every</u> art form, for its possible affinities with other art forms. With regard to (a), as has been argued throughout this thesis, especially in relation to what I take to be the ambiguous nature of the 'aesthetic', works of art in <u>all</u> the major forms have both an intellectual content and a perceptual/imaginative/affective one. Although the proportional importance of both these aspects may, of course, vary dramatically among individual works of art - e.g. as between a slight love lyric and a 'novel of ideas', a still-life of a bowl of fruit and painting like Raphael's <u>School of Athens</u> - the important point is that such diversity cuts across all art forms, rather than marking off literature as being in a special class of its own. With regard to (b), I shall argue in due course that because of such aesthetic insularities as we find in our schools and univers-

ities, a rich field of aesthetic 'aspect-perception' tends to be ignored to the educational loss of all concerned.

The reluctance of arts teachers, as contrasted with aestheticians, to give this aesthetic common-ground the attention that it deserves has created, I would argue, an unfortunate imbalance between approaches to the teaching of the 'fine arts' and music on the one hand, and the teaching of literary studies on the other. This, in turn, has led to a fragmented rationale of the different art forms which inevitably undermines collective justification of aesthetic education as a whole when it is under attack - as it now is with the present government's shift of emphasis in our schools towards technology and the sciences.

Such fragmentation, furthermore, may be seen to be reflected not only in (a) the manifest ascendancy of analytic, 'cognitive' approaches within the teaching of literature and 'formalist' approaches within the teaching of painting and music, but also (b) in the mutual suspicion and mistrust that arise among adherents to these respective approaches. Thus, not only are many teachers of literature seemingly in ignorance of those general aesthetic issues that relate their subject to the mainstream of art, but they are also deeply suspicious of what they see as 'aestheticism' in literary response. Leavis, for example, whose influence upon the teaching of literature at all levels in this country has been profound, at times seems to regard any 'aesthetic' preoccupation in literary works as a clear indication of superficiality of content (see footnote). Of Madame Bovary, for example, he says:

> It was James who put his finger on the weakness in Madame Bovary: the discrepancy between the...'aesthetic' intensity, with the

Footnote: See the discussion of this issue in my article, 'The Aesthete and the Philistine', British Journal of Aesthetics Vol. 19 (Autumn 1979), especially p. 334.

> implied attribution of interest to the subject, and the actual moral and human paucity of this subject on any mature valuation.[3]

What we see here, in contrast to Bell's contempt for content, is a like-minded contempt for aesthetic form. Thus we arrive at one law for literature and another, antithetical one for the 'fine arts'. This is not to deny, of course, that on particular occasions, the literary critic may be justified in drawing our attention to the way that a 'fine style' masks an inner emptiness of thought and feeling, so long as this is not an instance of prejudice masquerading as a principle.

Such prejudice, however, is by no means confined to the teacher of literature, as has been pointed out. Among teachers of painting and music there is to be found a similar lack of awareness concerning those broader issues of aesthetics that arise from the non-aesthetic significances of their art forms such as have been discussed throughout this thesis. This, in turn, is commonly found to be coupled with a deep-rooted distrust of the cognitive analysis of content, which is seen inevitably to detract from what they take to be the aesthetic purity of unadulterated perceptual awareness, whether visual or aural. Thus, for Osborne, in common with such teachers:

> (A work of art's) semantic information invites attention away from the properties of the work itself towards that which it depicts, specifies or symbolizes.[4]

Here, once again, we see the distorting influence of an artificial dichotomy that too readily divides the arts into perceptual and intellectual categories, with the 'fine arts' and music subsumed under the former, and literature under the latter - an assumption that it has been one of the aims of this thesis to question.

For writers like Clive Bell, for example, as we saw in Chapter Seven, content in painting is no more than a peg on which to hang the garment of 'significant form' - and as such, whether the peg is Guernica or a bowl of fruit is really of no great consequence. Like-

wise, in the realm of musical theory, we find only too often a similar and narrow intent to confine musical education to a consideration of the purely formal structures of sound and rhythm. Phenix, for example, in an influential book on curriculum theory, Realms of Meaning, confidently asserts that:

> The meanings of musical composition rest principally on its musical ideas, a term referring to those tonal or rhythmic patterns that provide the points of departure for the composition ...Such meanings derive from the cultivation of self-forgetful delight in the direct contemplation of the patterns of musical statement, contrast, accent, progression, repetition and variation that critical analysis describes.[5]

A similar view is expressed by the composer Webern, in The Path to the New Music, in which he sets out to provide an apologia for the 'new music' akin to that which writers like Bell[6] and Osborne[7] have sought to provide for 'modern' painting. Thus, for Webern, the entire history of Western music from earliest times to the advent of the 'twelve-tone' system is seen purely in terms of a formal progression, following the 'natural laws' of sound:

> So, a note is, as you have heard, complex - a complex of fundamental and overtones. Now, there has been a gradual process in which music has gone on to exploit each successive stage of this complex material. This is the one path.[8]

Now clearly there is, of course, a complex and evolutionary 'inner logic' of musical sound that the composer rightly takes for his own - but what, for example, of the ancient Greek equation between the various 'modes' and their emotional significances as discussed by Plato in The Republic[9], or Bach's religious preoccupations as expressed, for example, in his linking of certain augmented intervals with the crucifixion? What does Webern say to this?

> We know of the Greek modes, then the church modes of bygone ages. How did these scales come about? They are really a manifestation of the overtone series. As you know, the octave comes first, then the fifth, then in the next octave the third.[10]

If this were all there was to the content of music, however, then how could an account like that of Webern's begin to explain how Western

music (not to mention the music of other cultures) has evolved over the years a vast and infinitely subtle range of expressiveness that link it not only to such themes as the religious one mentioned above, and, in the case of 'tone poems', to the evocation of landscapes, regional identities, the seasons etc., but also to the emotions in general as embodied, for example, in the ancient Greek understanding of the different 'modes' or, more recently, in the directives that preface many musical scores, such as largo ('slow and majestic'), con fuoco ('with fire'), giocoso ('like a joke') etc.? Although such terms may have a primary 'musical' function to indicate the tempo, there is hardly one which does not carry with it secondary, affective significances. This aspect is underlined by Wittgenstein in Culture and Value, when he points out that:

> Tender expression in music...isn't to be characterized in terms of degrees of loudness or tempo. Any more than a tender facial expression can be described in terms of the distribution of matter in space.[11]

If, therefore, Scruton's argument about our 'paronymous' usage of such terms is accepted, then it is exceedingly difficult to see how they can have no significance other than the purely musical one to which Phenix and Webern refer.

Too often, in fact, pupils are put off music precisely because of such experiences as having to learn these expressions, parrot-fashion, as a kind of autonomous sign-system - for example, in order to pass Grade V Theory examinations - without any attempt on the part of the teacher to relate the musical expressiveness that they imply to the non-aesthetic significances that they have which relate music so interestingly to the world at large. After all, how does a pupil come to understand the musical direction that requires him to play the closing movement of a piece con fuoco ('with fire')? No set of rules, as we have seen, will be sufficient to convey the 'embodied thought' that is intended by this directive, but only a 'paronymous' grasp of

'fiery' as extended to include the kind of musical expressiveness that the 'educated' music lover feels to be appropriate to such an aspect. As Wittgenstein points out in Culture and Value:

> I can imagine an exciting scene in a film accompanied by Beethoven's or Schubert's music and might gain some sort of understanding of the music (my emphasis) from the film.[12]

However, for Webern, the 'musical idea' (the musical equivalent to Bell's 'significant form') is everything, and all non-musical significance, an intrusion[13]. Not only does such a view of music seem to render all such 'aspect-perception' as is implied by terms like con fuoco unintelligible, but also, insofar as musical form is here conceived of exclusively along quasi-mathematical lines deriving from the acoustic properties of sound, then at best we are left with a type of aesthetic 'naturalism' that would certainly prove inadequate to justify Webern's own description of his account as 'the one path.'

The notion that music may signify in any wider sense than a purely musical one, is dismissed by Webern in two ways: (a) it is dismissed patronizingly, as if all that such a view entailed were a naive mimetic perspective:

> So how do people listen to music? How do the broad masses listen to it? Apparently they have to be able to cling to pictures and 'moods' of some kind. If they can't imagine a green field, a blue sky or something of the sort, then they are out of their depth.[14]

b) Significances such as Wagnerian leitmotifs are treated as simply belonging to another art form, in this case drama, and therefore as having no musical interest - just as Bell apportions out the 'anecdotal' element in painting to the 'literary' sphere:

> Wagner's leit motifs are perhaps another matter. For example, if the Siegfried motif crops up many times because the drama calls for it, there is unity, but only of a dramatic kind, not musical, thematic.[15]

Up to a point, of course, the first of these dismissals may be explained as a justifiable reaction to the elevation of the 'tone

poem' as the supreme form of musical expression by an earlier generation of composers. From an educational point of view, one thinks of the great disservice done to the cause of music here by all those teachers who, because they felt that music ought to mean something in the above, literal sense, have attempted to introduce generations of children to the pleasures of music via such hackneyed 'representational' pieces as Carnival of the Animals, Peter and the Wolf and Fingal's Cave - usually, with little success. Nonetheless, to ignore the ways that music, even of the most 'abstract' kind, may expressively evoke (rather than 'represent') ideas, images and emotions, is to disregard that feature of musical 'aspect-perception' which, as was argued in Chapter Seven[16], is what enables many pupils to take an art form like music seriously, as offering some kind of 'comment upon life', while at the same time enjoying it as a powerful source of aesthetic pleasure.

Webern's second argument, concerning the separating-out of musical and dramatic elements, is not only insensitive to Wagner's own brave conception of a 'total' art form, but also leaves us with the unsatisfactory concept of such music as something merely tagged on to the drama. It is certainly not my aim here, however, to argue for a dissolving of the obvious differences between the arts of music, drama, visual spectacle etc. Rather, what I would like to argue for is an aesthetic education that encouraged the development of a type of aesthetic 'aspect-perception' that was sensitive to the affinities between such forms, wherever such affinities are seen by the catholic art-lover to exist. the ability to recognize such affinities - similar to the correspondances that Baudelaire found in nature between:

> les parfums, les couleurs et les sons[17]

- may be seen as yet another and very important instance of Scruton's

account of the 'paronymous' way in which our descriptions of works of art enter the aesthetic language game. Thus, for example, pupils who have been fortunate enough to have had the kind of aesthetic education wherein they are given acquaintance with a range of art forms, may come to recognize many such affinities between the different art forms of a stylistic epoch - e.g. as when the description, 'exuberant and whirling', dawns as a common aspect to both the fugues of Bach and the architecture of the Baroque period, or when the dream-like quality of Ravel's music is perceived to echo the poetry of Mallarmé and the later paintings of Monet, i.e. when the aspect of 'Impressionism' dawns as a common aspect. Without the presence of such affinities, it is, of course, obvious that 'mixed' art forms like singing, opera and dance would be impossible. Their presence may also be seen in the cinema's matching of the music of a period to its art and architecture, when these elements seem to quicken each other in a most remarkable way - as, for example, in the matching of jazz scores to the modern urban environment (providing that this does not degenerate into a cinematic cliché).

At the same time, however, such a concept of aesthetic education must heed Sparshott's fear that:

> teachers and theorists will overstress the common aspects at the expense of the unique aspects of the various arts, with a resulting vapidity and excessive generality.[18]

Furthermore, unless the relative autonomy of each art form is preserved within the posited 'emergent' common sensibility, considerable confusion may also arise in the pupils' minds. Poetry, for example, is only in a borrowed sense 'musical' and could not literally be governed by the same structural considerations that, according to writers like Webern, dictate the general course of music. Here, it is instructive to look at some of the ways in which we do in fact borrow aesthetic terms from one form in order to apply them to another in so

far as, following Scruton's argument, all such 'paronymous' uses can only be properly said to enter public language on condition that they have a natural home in some primary use of the term. For example, if the pupils are to be able to see the point of describing a piece of music as 'colourful' or 'full of light and shade' then this must presuppose a grasp, not only of the musical extension of such terms (i.e. through the pupils' capacity for 'aspect-perception'), but also of their primary use which, in this case, lies within the province of painting. Similar considerations would apply as when we speak, for example, of the 'rhythms' created by the flying buttresses of a cathedral or by Mondrian's Broadway Boogie-Woogie, or the 'discordant' quality of Jacobean poetry. As long as the 'paronymous' relationship is preserved, then so is the relative autonomy of each art form, while, at the same time, allowing the pupils to recognize the powerful 'emergent' affinities between them.

What follows from this, then, is that teachers of literature and teachers of the 'fine arts' and music have much to learn from each other - not least of which is the kind of cross-referencing outlined above. However, it must be stressed at this point, that in arguing for a united 'arts faculty' that incorporates all the art forms, I am not arguing for an 'aestheticizing' of literature such as does Margaret McDonald, in her article, The Language of Fiction[19]. Thus, while I welcome her suggestion that:

> Characters, e.g., might for a change (my emphasis), be compared with musical 'themes' rather than with human flesh and blood[20]

I would be unwilling, for the reasons given above, to underwrite her theory-laden remark that a work of fiction:

> is more like a picture or a symphony than a theory or report.[21]

Rather, in line with the general argument advanced in this thesis for the fundamental ambiguity of the aesthetic language game, pointing Janus-like both outwardly towards the world at large and inwardly

towards its own unique, irreplaceable 'world', I am suggesting, firstly, that the many 'formalist' teachers of music and the 'fine arts' would greatly benefit from the literature teacher's concern with moral, psychological, historical and other kinds of 'relevance'. In this respect, they might even come to see that the evolution of aesthetic form itself may be determined by non-aesthetic considerations, as in the following speculative suggestion made by the art historian, Wylie Sypher, that:

> The techniques of an abstract art always appear whenever man feels himself alien from the natural world; on the contrary, when man is at home in nature,the artist uses a naturalistic technique.[22]

Secondly, I am suggesting that contact with teachers of music and painting would lead the teacher of literature and his pupils to a far greater awareness of the aesthetic aspect of their subject - that 'poetic' state of which Valery speaks, wherein our sensitivity to language approaches our sensitivity to music. As Nietzsche points out, in commenting upon the limitations of Aristotle's 'psychologizing' of Greek tragedy:

> In order to understand the difficult phenomenon of Dionysiac art directly, we must now attend to the supreme importance of musical dissonance. The delight created by tragic myth has the same origin as the delight dissonance in music creates. That primal Dionysiac delight, experienced even in the presence of pain, is the source common to both music and tragic myth.[23]

Clearly, a considerable grounding in both music and literature, such as Nietzsche himself had, would have to be presupposed before such an aspect could dawn for the pupil - yet how much he will miss, without it!

As was pointed out at the start, there are formidable practical problems to be overcome in the mounting of such a curriculum. Quite apart from the sheer amount of time that it takes to come to terms with even one art form in any depth, there is the problem that insofar as all pupils of arts subjects would be required to reflect upon the

non-aesthetic significances of works of art, then they would also need an education in such relevant subject areas as history, the social sciences, politics and psychology. Certainly teachers of all the major art forms would need to have followed a general course in aesthetics if the currently prevailing insularity of outlook is to be broken down. Unfortunately, a detailed consideration of such practical considerations must lie beyond the scope of this thesis.

Nonetheless, for the reasons given, I would argue firstly that no curriculum planner of aesthetic education can afford to ignore the rich possibilities of extending aesthetic aspect-perception that arise from looking at the arts side-by-side and how this may further the pupils' understanding of individual art forms - a point that Wittgenstein reiterates on many occasions in Culture and Value, as when he says, of music, that:

> teaching (the pupil) to understand poetry or painting may contribute to teaching him what is involved in understanding music.[24]

Secondly, I would argue that neither can the curriculum planner ignore those central issues which, as I hope this thesis has shown, are the common property of all art forms - the most notable being the issue of how the pupil may come to realize the 'embodied thought' of the work, whether it be in music, literature, painting, etc., wherein the pursuit of aesthetic form and the pursuit of meaning come together in an emergent, affective unity. The curriculum integration of literature with music and the 'fine arts' in a way that was both cohesive and preserved the distinctive characteristics of each art form might then result in a new flowering of aesthetic education in our schools.

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