EIILM UNIVERSITY
SIKKIM

AESETHETICS

CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Aesthetics introduction

Aesethetic Meaning : relating to art or beauty

Examples of AESTHETIC

1. There are practical as well as aesthetic reasons for planting trees.

2. making aesthetic improvements to the building

Aesthetics dealing with the nature of art, beauty, and taste, with the creation and appreciation of beauty. It is more scientifically defined as the study of sensory or sensori-emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment and taste.] More broadly, scholars in the field define aesthetics as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature."

More specific aesthetic theory, often with practical implications, relating to a particular branch of the arts is divided into areas of aesthetics such as art theory, literary theory, film theory and music theory. An example from art theory is aesthetic theory as a set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist or artistic movement: such as the Cubist aesthetic.

The word aesthetic is derived from the Greek αἰσθητικός (aisthetikos, meaning "esthetic, sensitive, sentient"), which in turn was derived from αἰσθάνομαι (aisthanomai, meaning "I perceive, feel, sense"). The term "aesthetics" was appropriated and coined with new meaning in the German form Æsthetik (modern spelling Ästhetik) by Alexander Baumgarten in 1735.

had the most influence on the development of aesthetics in the West. This period of Greek art saw a veneration of the human physical form and the development of corresponding skills to show musculature, poise, beauty and anatomically correct proportions. Furthermore, in many Western and Eastern cultures alike, traits such as body hair are rarely depicted in art that addresses physical beauty. Greek philosophers initially felt that aesthetically appealing objects were beautiful in and of themselves. Plato believed that for us to have a perception of beauty there must be a transcendent form for beauty in which beautiful objects partake and which causes

them to be beautiful also. He felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony, and unity among their parts. Similarly, in the Metaphysics, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry, and definiteness. An example of ancient aesthetics in Greece through poetry is Plato's quote: "For the authors of those great poems which we admire, do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art; but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, possessed by a spirit not their own.

Indian aesthetics

Indian art evolved with an emphasis on inducing special spiritual or philosophical states in the audience, or with representing them symbolically. According to Kapila Vatsyayan, "Classical Indian architecture, sculpture, painting, literature (kāvya), music, and dancing evolved their own rules conditioned by their respective media, but they shared with one another not only the underlying spiritual beliefs of the Indian religio-philosophic mind, but also the procedures by which the relationships of the symbol and the spiritual states were worked out in detail."

In the Pan Indian philosophic thought the term 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram' is another name for the concept of the Supreme. 'Sat' is the truth value, 'Shiv' is the good value & 'Sundaram' is the beauty value. Man through his 'Srabana' or education, 'Manana' or experience and conceptualization and 'Sadhana' or practice, through different stages of life (Ashramas) comes to form and realize the idea of these three values to develop a value system. This Value-system helps develop two basic ideas 1) that of 'Daksha' or the adept/expert and 2) of Mahana/Parama or the Absolute and thus to judge anything in this universe in the light of these two measures, known as 'Adarsha'. A person who has mastered great amounts of knowledge of the grammars, rules, & language of an art-form are adepts (Daksha), whereas those who have worked through the whole system and journeyed ahead of these to become a law unto themselves is called a Mahana. Individuals idea of 'Daksha' and 'Mahana' is relative to the development of the concept of 'Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram.' For example, Tagore's idea of these two concepts should be above any common man's and many perceive Tag,

The Concept of the Aesthetic

Introduced into the philosophical lexicon during the Eighteenth Century, the term "aesthetic" has come to be used to designate, among other things, a kind of object, a kind of judgment, a kind of attitude, a kind of experience, and a kind of value. For the most part, aesthetic theories have divided over questions particular to one or another of these designations: whether artworks are necessarily aesthetic objects; how to square the allegedly perceptual basis of aesthetic judgments with the fact that we give reasons in support of them; how best to capture the elusive contrast between an aesthetic attitude and a practical one; whether to define aesthetic experience according to its phenomenological or representational content; how best to understand the relation between aesthetic value and aesthetic experience. But questions of more general nature have lately arisen, and these have tended to have a skeptical cast: whether any use of "aesthetic" may be explicated without appeal to some other; whether agreement respecting any use is sufficient to ground meaningful theoretical agreement or disagreement; whether the term ultimately answers to any legitimate philosophical purpose that justifies its inclusion in the lexicon. The skepticism expressed by such general questions did not begin to take hold until the later part of the Twentieth Century, and this fact prompts the question whether (a) the concept of the aesthetic is inherently problematic and it is only recently that we have managed to see that it is, or (b) the concept is fine and it is only recently that we have become muddled enough to imagine otherwise. Adjudicating between these possibilities requires a vantage from which to take in both early and late theorizing on aesthetic matters.

1. The Concept of Taste

The concept of the aesthetic descends from the concept of taste. Why the concept of taste commanded so much philosophical attention during the Eighteenth Century is a complicated matter, but this much is clear: the eighteenth-century theory of taste emerged, in part, as a corrective to the rise of rationalism, particularly as applied to beauty, and to the rise of egoism, particularly as applied to virtue. Against rationalism about beauty, the eighteenth-century theory of taste held the judgment of beauty to be immediate; against egoism about virtue, it held the pleasure of beauty to be disinterested.

2. The Concept of the Aesthetic

Much of the history of more recent thinking about the concept of the aesthetic can be seen as the history of the development of the immediacy and disinterest theses.

2.1 Aesthetic Objects

Artistic formalism is the view that the artistically relevant properties of an artwork—the properties in virtue of which it is an artwork and in virtue of which it is a good or bad one—are formal merely, where formal properties are typically regarded as properties graspable by sight or by hearing merely. Artistic formalism has been taken to follow from both the immediacy and the disinterest theses (Binkley 1970, 266–267; Carroll 2001, 20–40). If you take the immediacy thesis to imply the artistic irrelevance of all properties whose grasping requires the use of reason, and you include representational properties in that class, then you are apt to think that the immediacy thesis implies artistic formalism. If you take the disinterest thesis to imply the artistic irrelevance of all properties capable of practical import, and you include representational properties in that class, then you are apt to think that the disinterest thesis implies artistic formalism.

2.2 Aesthetic Judgment

The eighteenth-century debate between rationalists and theorists of taste (or sentimentalists) was primarily a debate over the immediacy thesis, i.e., over whether we judge objects to be beautiful by applying principles of beauty to them. It was not primarily a debate over the existence of principles of beauty, a matter over which theorists of taste might disagree. Kant denied that there are any such principles (Kant 1790, 101), but both Hutcheson and Hume affirmed their existence: they maintained that although judgments of beauty are judgments of taste and not of reason, taste nevertheless operates according to general principles, which might be discovered through empirical investigation (Hutcheson 1725, 28–35; Hume 1757, 231–233).

2.3 The Aesthetic Attitude

The Kantian notion of disinterest has its most direct recent descendents in the aesthetic-attitude theories that flourished from the early to mid Twentieth Century. Though Kant followed the British in applying the term “disinterested” strictly to pleasures, its migration to attitudes is not

difficult to explain. For Kant the pleasure involved in a judgment of taste is disinterested because such a judgment does not issue in a motive to do anything in particular. For this reason Kant refers to the judgment of taste as contemplative rather than practical (Kant 1790, 95). But if the judgment of taste is not practical, then the attitude we bear toward its object is presumably also not practical: when we judge an object aesthetically we are unconcerned with whether and how it may further our practical aims. Hence it is natural to speak of our attitude toward the object as disinterested.

To say, however, that the migration of disinterest from pleasures to attitudes is natural is not to say that it is inconsequential. Consider the difference between Kant's aesthetic theory, the last great theory of taste, and Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, the first great aesthetic-attitude theory. Whereas for Kant disinterested pleasure is the means by which we discover things to bear aesthetic value, for Schopenhauer disinterested attention (or "will-less contemplation") is itself the locus of aesthetic value. According to Schopenhauer, we lead our ordinary, practical lives in a kind of bondage to our own desires (Schopenhauer 1819, 196). This bondage is a source not merely of pain but also of cognitive distortion in that it restricts our attention to those aspects of things relevant to the fulfilling or thwarting of our desires. Aesthetic contemplation, being will-less, is therefore both epistemically and hedonically valuable, allowing us a desire-free glimpse into the essences of things as well as a respite from desire-induced pain:

When, however, an external cause or inward disposition suddenly raises us out of the endless stream of willing, and snatches knowledge from the thralldom of the will, the attention is now no longer directed to the motives of willing, but comprehends things free from their relation to the will ... Then all at once the peace, always sought but always escaping us ... comes to us of its own accord, and all is well with us. (Schopenhauer 1819, 196)

The two most influential aesthetic-attitude theories of the Twentieth Century are those of Edward Bullough and Jerome Stolnitz. According to Stolnitz's theory, which is the more straightforward of the two, bearing an aesthetic attitude toward an object is a matter of attending to it disinterestedly and sympathetically, where to attend to it disinterestedly is to attend to it with no purpose beyond that of attending to it, and to attend to it sympathetically is to “accept it on its own terms,” allowing it, and not one's own preconceptions, to guide one's attention of it (Stolnitz

1960, 32–36). The result of such attention is a comparatively richer experience of the object, i.e., an experience taking in comparatively many of the object's features. Whereas a practical attitude limits and fragments the object of our experience, allowing us to "see only those of its features which are relevant to our purposes," the aesthetic attitude, by contrast, 'isolates' the object and focuses upon it—the 'look' of the rocks, the sound of the ocean, the colors in the painting." (Stolnitz 1960, 35).

2.4 Aesthetic Experience

Theories of aesthetic experience may be divided into two kinds according to the kind of feature appealed to in explanation of what makes experience aesthetic. Internalist theories appeal to features internal to experience, typically to phenomenological features, whereas externalist theories appeal to features external to the experience, typically to features of the object experienced. (The distinction between internalist and externalist theories of aesthetic experience is similar, though not identical, to the distinction between phenomenal and epistemic conceptions of aesthetic experience drawn by Gary Iseminger (Iseminger 2003, 100, and Iseminger 2004, 27, 36)). Though internalist theories—particularly John Dewey's (1934) and Monroe Beardsley's (1958)—predominated during the early and middle parts of the Twentieth Century, externalist theories—including Beardsley's (1982) and George Dickie's (1988)—have been in the ascendant since. Beardsley's views on aesthetic experience make a strong claim on our attention, given that Beardsley might be said to have authored the culminating internalist theory as well as the founding externalist one. Dickie's criticisms of Beardsley's internalism make an equally strong claim, since they moved Beardsley—and with him most everyone else—from internalism toward externalism.

Chapter 2

History of aesthetics

Greek speculations

Ancient Greece supplies us with the first important contributions to aesthetic theory, though these are scarcely, in quality or in quantity, what one might have expected from a people which had so high an appreciation of beauty and so strong a bent for philosophic speculation. The first Greek thinker of whose views on the subject we really know something is Socrates. We learn from Xenophon's account of him that he regarded the beautiful as coincident with the good, and both of them are resolvable into the useful. Every beautiful object is so called because it serves some rational end, whether the security or the gratification of man. Socrates appears to have attached little importance to the immediate gratification which a beautiful object affords to perception and contemplation, but to have emphasized rather its power of furthering the more necessary ends of life. The really valuable point in his doctrine is the relativity of beauty. Unlike Plato, he recognized no self-beauty (auto to kalon) existing absolutely and out of all relation to a percipient mind.

1) Plato

Of the views of Plato on the subject, it is hardly less difficult to gain a clear conception from the Dialogues, than it is in the case of ethical good. In some of these, various definitions of the beautiful are rejected as inadequate by the Platonic Socrates. At the same time we may conclude that Plato's mind leaned decidedly to the conception of an absolute beauty, which took its place in his scheme of ideas or self-existing forms. This true beauty is nothing discoverable as an

attribute in another thing, for these are only beautiful things, not the beautiful itself. Love (Eros) produces aspiration towards this pure idea. Elsewhere the soul's intuition of the self-beautiful is said to be a reminiscence of its prenatal existence. As to the precise forms in which the idea of beauty reveals itself, Plato is not very decided. His theory of an absolute beauty does not easily adjust itself to the notion of its contributing merely a variety of sensuous pleasure, to which he appears to lean in some dialogues. He tends to identify the self-beautiful with the conceptions of the true and the good, and thus there arose the Platonic formula kalokagathia. So far as his writings embody the notion of any common element in beautiful objects, it is proportion, harmony or unity among their parts. He emphasizes unity in its simplest aspect as seen in evenness of line and purity of colour. He recognizes in places the beauty of the mind, and seems to think that the highest beauty of proportion is to be found in the union of a beautiful mind with a beautiful body. He had but a poor opinion of art, regarding it as a trick of imitation (mimesis) which takes us another step farther from the luminous sphere of rational intuition into the shadowy region of the semblances of sense. Accordingly, in his scheme for an ideal republic, he provided for the most inexorable censorship of poets, etc., so as to make art as far as possible an instrument of moral and political training.

2) Aristotle

Aristotle proceeded to a more serious investigation of the aesthetic phenomena so as to develop by scientific analysis certain principles of beauty and art. In his treatises on poetry and rhetoric he gives us, along with a theory of these arts, certain general principles of beauty; and scattered among his other writings we find many valuable suggestions on the same subject. He seeks (in the Metaphysics) to distinguish the good and the beautiful by saying that the former is always in action (`en praxei) whereas the latter may exist in motionless things as well (`en akinetois.) At the same time he had as a Greek to allow that though essentially different things the good might under certain conditions be called beautiful. He further distinguished the beautiful from the fit, and in a passage of the Politics set beauty above the useful and necessary. He helped to determine another characteristic of the beautiful, the absence of all lust or desire in the pleasure it bestows. The universal elements of beauty, again, Aristotle finds (in the Metaphysics) to be order (taxis), symmetry and definiteness or determinateness (to orismenon). In the Poetics he adds another essential, namely, a certain magnitude; it being desirable for a synoptic view of the

whole that the object should not be too large, while clearness of perception requires that it should not be too small. Aristotle's views on art are an immense advance on those of Plato. He distinctly recognized (in the Politics and elsewhere) that its aim is immediate pleasure, as distinct from utility, which is the end of the mechanical arts. He took a higher view of artistic imitation than Plato, holding that so far from being an unworthy trick, it implied knowledge and discovery, that its objects not only comprised particular things which happen to exist, but contemplated what is probable and what necessarily exists. The celebrated passage in the Poetics, where he declares poetry to be more philosophical and serious a matter (spoudaiteron) than philosophy, brings out the advance of Aristotle on his predecessor. He gives us no complete classification of the fine arts, and it is doubtful how far his principles, e.g. his celebrated idea of a purification of the passions by tragedy, are to be taken as applicable to other than the poetic art.

3) Plotinus

Of the later Greek and Roman writers the Neo-Platonist Plotinus deserves to be mentioned. According to him, objective reason (nous) as self-moving, becomes the formative influence which reduces dead matter to form. Matter when thus formed becomes a notion (logos), and its form is beauty. Objects are ugly so far as they are unacted upon by reason, and therefore formless. The creative reason is absolute beauty, and is called the more than beautiful. There are three degrees or stages of manifested beauty: that of human reason, which is the highest; of the human soul, which is less perfect through its connexion with a material body; and of real objects, which is the lowest manifestation of all. As to the precise forms of beauty, he supposed, in opposition to Aristotle, that a single thing not divisible into parts might be beautiful through its unity and simplicity. He gives a high place to the beauty of colours in which material darkness is overpowered by light and warmth. In reference to artistic beauty he said that when the artist has notions as models for his creations, these may become more beautiful than natural objects. This is clearly a step away from Plato's doctrine towards our modern conception of artistic idealization.

German writers

We may pass by the few thoughts on the subject to be found among medieval writers and turn to modern theories, beginning with those of German writers as the most numerous and most elaborately set forth. The best of the Germans who attempted to develop an aesthetic theory as part of a system of philosophy was Baumgarten (Aesthetica). Adopting the Leibniz-Wolffian theory of knowledge, he sought to complete it by setting over against the clear scientific or "logical" knowledge of the understanding, the confused knowledge of the senses, to which (as we have seen) he gave the name "aesthetic". Beauty with him thus corresponds with perfect sense-knowledge. Baumgarten is clearly an intellectualist in aesthetics, reducing taste to an intellectual act and ignoring the element of feeling. The details of his aesthetics are mostly unimportant. Arguing from Leibniz's theory of the world as the best possible, Baumgarten concluded that nature is the highest embodiment of beauty, and that art must seek its supreme function in the strictest possible imitation of nature.

1) Kant

The next important treatment of aesthetics by a philosopher is that of Kant. He deals with the "Judgment of Taste" in the Critique of the Power of Judgment (J. H. Bernard's translation 1892), which treatise supplements the two better-known critiques, and by investigating the conditions of the validity of feeling mediates between their respective subjects, cognition and desire (volition). He takes an important step in denying objective existence to beauty. Aesthetic value for him is fitness to please as object of pure contemplation. This aesthetic satisfaction is more than mere agreeableness, since it must be disinterested and free — that is to say, from all concern about the real existence of the object, and about our dependence on it ludicrous. But his main service to aesthetics consists in the preliminary critical determination of its aim and its fundamental problems.

2) Schelling

Schelling is the first thinker to attempt a Philosophy of Art. He develops this as the third part of his system of transcendental idealism following theoretic and practical philosophy. (See also Schelling's Werke, Bd. v., and J. Watson, Schelling's Transcendental Idealism, ch. vii., Chicago, 1882.) According to Schelling a new philosophical significance is given to art by the doctrine

that the identity of subject and object — which is half disguised in ordinary perception and volition — is only clearly seen in artistic perception. The perfect perception of its real self by intelligence in the work of art is accompanied by a feeling of infinite satisfaction. Art in thus effecting a revelation of the absolute seems to attain a dignity not merely above that of nature but above that of philosophy itself. Schelling throws but little light on the concrete forms of beauty. His classification of the arts, based on his antithesis of object and subject, is a curiosity in intricate arrangement. He applies his conception in a suggestive way to classical tragedy.

3) Hegel

In Hegel's system of philosophy art is viewed as the first stage of the absolute spirit. (See also Werke, Bd. x., and Bosanquet's Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art.) In this stage the absolute is immediately present to sense-perception, an idea which shows the writer's complete rupture with Kant's doctrine of the "subjectivity" of beauty. The beautiful is defined as the ideal showing itself to sense or through a sensuous medium. It is said to have its life in show or semblance (Schein) and so differs from the true, which is not really sensuous, but the universal idea contained in sense for thought. The form of the beautiful is unity of the manifold. The notion (Begriff) gives necessity in mutual dependence of parts (unity), while the reality demands the semblance (Schein) of liberty in the parts. He discusses very fully the beauty of nature as immediate unity of notion and reality, and lays great emphasis on the beauty of organic life. But it is in art that, like Schelling, Hegel finds the highest revelation of the beautiful. Art makes up for the deficiencies of natural beauty by bringing the idea into clearer light, by showing the external world in its life and spiritual animation. The several species of art in the ancient and modern worlds depend on the various combinations of matter and form. He classifies the individual arts according to this same principle of the relative supremacy of form and matter, the lowest being architecture, the highest, poetry.

4) Dialectic of the Hegelians

Curious developments of the Hegelian conception are to be found in the dialectical treatment of beauty in its relation to the ugly, the sublime, etc., by Hegel's disciples, e.g. C. H. Weisse and J. K. F. Rosenkranz. The most important product of the Hegelian School is the elaborate system of

aesthetics published by F. T. Vischer (Esthetik, 3 Theile, 1846—1834). It illustrates the difficulties of the Hegelian thought and terminology; yet in dealing with art it is full of knowledge and highly suggestive.

5) Schopenhauer

The aesthetic problem is also treated by two other philosophers whose thought set out from certain tendencies in Kant's system, namely Schopenhauer and Herbart. Schopenhauer (see also The World as Will and Idea, translated by R. B. Haldane, esp. vol. i. pp. 219–346), abandoning also Kant's doctrine of the subjectivity of beauty, found in aesthetic contemplation the perfect emancipation of intellect from will. In this contemplation the mind is filled with pure intellectual forms, the "Platonic Ideas" as he calls them, which are objectifications of the will at a certain grade of completeness of representation. He exalts the state of artistic contemplation as the one in which, as pure intellect set free from will, the misery of existence is surmounted and something of blissful ecstasy attained. He holds that all things are in some degree beautiful, ugliness being viewed as merely imperfect manifestation or objectification of will. In this way the beauty of nature, somewhat slighted by Schelling and Hegel, is rehabilitated.

6) Herbart

J. F. Herbart struck out another way of escaping from Kant's idea of a purely subjective beauty (Kerbach's edition of Werke, Bd. ii. pp. 339 et seq.; Bd. iv. pp. 105 et seq., and Bd. ix. pp. 92 et seq..) He did, indeed, adopt Kant's view of the aesthetic Judgment as singular ("individual"); though he secures a certain degree of logical universality for it by emphasizing the point that the predicate (beauty) is permanently true of the same aesthetic object. At the same time, by referring the beauty of concrete objects to certain aesthetic relations, he virtually accepted the possibility of universal aesthetic judgments (compare above). Since he thus reduces beauty to abstract relations he is known as a formalist, and the founder of the formalistic school in aesthetics. He sets out with the idea that only relations please — in the Kantian sense of producing pleasure devoid of desire; and his aim is to determine the "aesthetic elementary relations", or the simplest relations which produce this pleasure. These include those of will, so that, as he admits, ethical judgments are in a manner brought under an aesthetic form. His typical

example of aesthetic relations of objects of sense-perception is that of harmony between tones. The science of thorough-bass has, he thinks, done for music what should be done also for other departments of aesthetic experience. This doctrine of elementary relations is brought into connexion with the author's psychological doctrine of presentations with their tendencies to mutual inhibition and to fusion, and of the varying feeling-tones to which these processes give rise. This mode of treating the problem of beauty and aesthetic perception has been greatly developed and worked up into a comrlete system of aesthetics by one of Herbart's disciples, Robert Zimmermann (Asthetik, 1838).

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Chapter 3

Ancient aesthetics

Greek aesthetics

Greece had the most influence on the development of aesthetics in the West. This period of Greek art saw a veneration of the human physical form and the development of corresponding skills to show musculature, poise, beauty and anatomically correct proportions. Furthermore, in many Western and Eastern cultures alike, traits such as body hair are rarely depicted in art that addresses physical beauty. Greek philosophers initially felt that aesthetically appealing objects were beautiful in and of themselves. Plato believed that for us to have a perception of beauty there must be a transcendent form for beauty in which beautiful objects partake and which causes them to be beautiful also. He felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony, and unity among their parts. Similarly, in the Metaphysics, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry, and definiteness. An example of ancient aesthetics in Greece through poetry is Plato's quote: "For the authors of those great poems which we admire, do not attain to excellence through the rules of any art; but they utter their beautiful melodies of verse in a state of inspiration, and, as it were, possessed by a spirit not their own."

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form and realize the idea of these three values to develop a value system. This Value-system helps develop two basic ideas 1) that of 'Daksha' or the adept/expert and 2) of Mahana/Parama or the Absolute and thus to judge anything in this universe in the light of these two measures, known as 'Adarsha'. A person who has mastered great amounts of knowledge of the grammars, rules, & language of an art-form are adepts (Daksha), whereas those who have worked through the whole system and journeyed ahead of these to become a law unto themselves is called a Mahana. Individuals idea of 'Daksha' and 'Mahana' is relative to the development of the concept of 'Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram.' For example, Tagore's idea of these two concepts should be above any common man's and many perceive Tagore as a 'Mahana' Artist in the realm of literature. This concept of Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram, a kind of Value Theory is the cornerstone of Indian Aesthetics.

Of particular concern to Indian drama and literature are the term 'Bhava' or the state of mind and rasa referring generally to the emotional flavors/essence crafted into the work by the writer and relished by a 'sensitive spectator' or sahṛdaya. Poets like Kālidāsa were attentive to rasa, which blossomed into a fully developed aesthetic system. Even in contemporary India the term rasa denoting "flavor" or "essence" is used colloquially to describe the aesthetic experiences in films; "māsala mix" describes popular Hindi cinema films which serve a so-called balanced emotional meal for the masses, savored as rasa by these spectators.

Chinese aesthetics

Chinese art has a long history of varied styles and emphases. Confucius emphasized the role of the arts and humanities (especially music and poetry) in broadening human nature and aiding li (etiquette, the rites) in bringing us back to what is essential about humanity. His opponent Mozi, however, argued that music and fine arts were classist and wasteful, benefiting the rich over the poor.

By the 4th century AD artists had started debating in writing over the proper goals of art as well. Gu Kaizhi has left three surviving books on the theory of painting. Several later artists or scholars both created art and wrote about the creation of it. Religious and philosophical influences on art were common (and diverse) but never universal.

African aesthetics

The Great Mosque's signature trio of minarets overlooks the central market of Djenné. Unique Malian aesthetic

African art existed in many forms and styles, and with fairly little influence from outside Africa. Most of it followed traditional forms and the aesthetic norms were handed down orally as well as written. Sculpture and performance art are prominent, and abstract and partially abstracted forms are valued, and were valued long before influence from the Western tradition began in earnest. The Nok culture is testimony to this. The mosque of Timbuktu shows that specific areas of Africa developed unique aesthetics.

Arab aesthetics

Arab art for the last 1400 years has taken place under the context of Islam and is sometimes referred to as Islamic art, although many Arab artists throughout time have not been Muslim. The term "Islamic" refers not only to the religion, but to any form of art created by people in an Islamic culture or in an Islamic context, whether the artist is Islamic or not. Not all Muslims are in agreement on the use of art in religious observance, the proper place of art in society, or the relation between secular art and the demands placed on the secular world to conform to religious precepts. Islamic art frequently adopts secular elements and elements that are frowned upon, if not forbidden, by some Islamic theologians. Although the often cited opposition in Islam to the depiction of human and animal forms holds true for religious art and architecture, in the secular sphere, such representations have flourished in nearly all Islamic cultures.

The Islamic resistance to the representation of living beings ultimately stems from the belief that the creation of living forms is unique to God, and it is for this reason that the role of images and image makers has been controversial. The strongest statements on the subject of figural depiction are made in the Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet), where painters are challenged to "breathe life" into their creations and threatened with punishment on the Day of Judgment. The Qur'an is less specific but condemns idolatry and uses the Arabic term musawwir ("maker of forms," or artist) as an epithet for God. Partially as a result of this religious sentiment, figures in painting were often stylized and, in some cases, the destruction of figurative artworks occurred. Iconoclasm was previously known in the Byzantine period and aniconicism was a feature of the Judaic world, thus placing the Islamic objection to figurative representations within a larger context. As ornament, however, figures were largely devoid of any larger significance and perhaps therefore posed less challenge.

This tendency affected the narrowing field of artistic possibility to such forms of art as Arabesque, mosaic, Islamic calligraphy, and Islamic architecture, as well as any form of abstraction that can claim the status of non-representational art.

Limited possibilities have been explored by artists as an outlet to artistic expression, and has been cultivated to become a positive style and tradition, emphasizing the decorative function of art, or its religious functions via non-representational forms such as Geometric patterns, floral patterns, and arabesques.

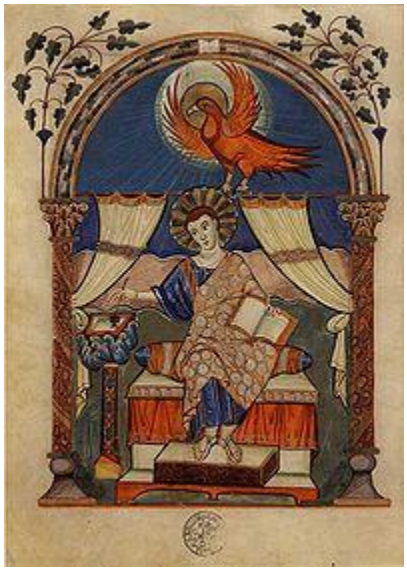
Human portrayals can be found in early Islamic cultures with varying degrees of acceptance by religious authorities. Human representation for the purpose of worship is uniformly considered idolatry as forbidden in Sharia law.

The calligraphic arts grew out of an effort to devote oneself to the study of the Quran. By patiently transcribing each word of the text, the writer was made to contemplate the meaning of it. As time passed, these calligraphic works began to be prized as works of art, growing increasingly elaborate in the illumination and stylizing of the text. These illuminations were applied to other works besides the Quran, and it became a respected art form in and of itself.

Arabic is written from right to left, like other Semitic scripts, and consists of 17 characters, which, with the addition of dots placed above or below certain of them, provide the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet. Short vowels are not included in the alphabet, being indicated by signs placed above or below the consonant or long vowel that they follow. Certain characters may be joined to their neighbors, others to the preceding one only, and others to the succeeding one only. The written letters undergo a slight external change according to their position within a word. When they stand alone or occur at the end of a word, they ordinarily terminate in a bold stroke; when they appear in the middle of a word, they are ordinarily joined to the letter following by a small, upward curved stroke. With the exception of six letters, which can be joined only to the preceding ones, the initial and medial letters are much abbreviated, while the final form consists of the initial form with a triumphant flourish. The essential part of the characters, however, remains unchanged.

Chapter 4

Western medieval aesthetics



Lorsch Gospels 778–820. Charlemagne's Court School.

Surviving medieval art is primarily religious in focus and funded largely by the State, Roman Catholic or Orthodox church, powerful ecclesiastical individuals, or wealthy secular patrons. These art pieces often served a liturgical function, whether as chalices or even as church buildings themselves. Objects of fine art from this period were frequently made from rare and valuable materials, such as gold and lapis, the cost of which commonly exceeded the wages of the artist.

Medieval aesthetics in the realm of philosophy built upon Classical thought, continuing the practice of Plotinus by employing theological terminology in its explications. St. Bonaventure's "Retracing the Arts to Theology", a primary example of this method, discusses the skills of the artisan as gifts given by God for the purpose of disclosing God to mankind, which purpose is achieved through four lights: the light of skill in mechanical arts which discloses the world of artifacts; which light is guided by the light of sense perception which discloses the world of

natural forms; which light, consequently, is guided by the light of philosophy which discloses the world of intellectual truth; finally, this light is guided by the light of divine wisdom which discloses the world of saving truth.

Saint Thomas Aquinas's aesthetic is probably the most famous and influential theory among medieval authors, having been the subject of much scrutiny in the wake of the neo-Scholastic revival of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and even having received the approbation of the celebrated Modernist writer, James Joyce. Thomas, like many other medievals, never gives a systematic account of beauty itself, but several scholars have conventionally arranged his thought—though not always with uniform conclusions—using relevant observations spanning the entire corpus of his work. While Aquinas's theory follows generally the model of Aristotle, he develops a singular aesthetics which incorporates elements unique to his thought. Umberto Eco's The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas identifies the three main characteristics of beauty in mode of expression.

Modern aesthetics

Cubist painting by Georges Braque, Violin and Candlestick (1910)

From the late 17th to the early 20th century Western aesthetics underwent a slow revolution into what is often called modernism. German and British thinkers emphasised beauty as the key

component of art and of the aesthetic experience, and saw art as necessarily aiming at absolute beauty.

For Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten aesthetics is the science of the sense experiences, a younger sister of logic, and beauty is thus the most perfect kind of knowledge that sense experience can have. For Immanuel Kant the aesthetic experience of beauty is a judgment of a subjective but similar human truth, since all people should agree that "this rose is beautiful" if it in fact is. However, beauty cannot be reduced to any more basic set of features. For Friedrich Schiller aesthetic appreciation of beauty is the most perfect reconciliation of the sensual and rational parts of human nature.

For Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, the philosophy of art is the "organon" of philosophy concerning the relation between man and nature. So aesthetics began now to be the name for the philosophy of art. Friedrich von Schlegel, August Wilhelm Schlegel, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel have also given lectures on aesthetics as philosophy of art after 1800.

For Hegel all culture is a matter of "absolute spirit" coming to be manifest to itself, stage by stage, changing to a perfection that only philosophy can approach. Art is the first stage in which the absolute spirit is manifest immediately to sense-perception, and is thus an objective rather than subjective revelation of beauty.

For Arthur Schopenhauer aesthetic contemplation of beauty is the most free that the pure intellect can be from the dictates of will; here we contemplate perfection of form without any kind of worldly agenda, and thus any intrusion of utility or politics would ruin the point of the beauty. It is thus for Schopenhauer one way to fight the suffering.

The British were largely divided into intuitionist and analytic camps. The intuitionists believed that aesthetic experience was disclosed by a single mental faculty of some kind. For Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury this was identical to the moral sense, beauty just is the sensory version of moral goodness. For Ludwig Wittgenstein aesthetics consisted in the description of a whole culture which is a linguistic impossibility. That which constitutes aesthetics lies out side the realm of the language game.

For Oscar Wilde the contemplation of beauty for beauty's sake, augmented by John Ruskin's search for moral grounding, was not only the foundation for much of his literary career but was quoted as saying "Aestheticism is a search after the signs of the beautiful. It is the science of the beautiful through which men seek the correlation of the arts. It is, to speak more exactly, the search after the secret of life.".

Wilde famously toured the United States in 1882. He travelled across the United States spreading the idea of Aesthetics in a speech called "The English Renaissance." In his speech he proposed that Beauty and Aesthetics was "not languid but energetic. By beautifying the outward aspects of life, one would beautify the inner ones." The English Renaissance was, he said, "like the Italian Renaissance before it, a sort of rebirth of the spirit of man".

William Hogarth, self-portrait, 1745

For Francis Hutcheson beauty is disclosed by an inner mental sense, but is a subjective fact rather than an objective one. Analytic theorists like Henry Home, Lord Kames, William Hogarth, and Edmund Burke hoped to reduce beauty to some list of attributes. Hogarth, for example, thinks that beauty consists of fitness of the parts to some design; variety in as many ways as possible; uniformity, regularity or symmetry, which is only beautiful when it helps to preserve the character of fitness; simplicity or distinctness, which gives pleasure not in itself, but through

its enabling the eye to enjoy variety with ease; intricacy, which provides employment for our active energies, leading the eye on "a wanton kind of chase"; and quantity or magnitude, which draws our attention and produces admiration and awe. Later analytic aestheticians strove to link beauty to some scientific theory of psychology (such as James Mill) or biology (such as Herbert Spencer).

Post-modern aesthetics and psychoanalysis

Early-twentieth-century artists, poets and composers challenged existing notions of beauty, broadening the scope of art and aesthetics. In 1941, Eli Siegel, American philosopher and poet, founded Aesthetic Realism, the philosophy that reality itself is aesthetic, and that "The world, art, and self explain each other: each is the aesthetic oneness of opposites."

Various attempts have been made to define Post-modern aesthetics. The challenge to the assumption that beauty was central to art and aesthetics, thought to be original, is actually continuous with older aesthetic theory; Aristotle was the first in the Western tradition to classify "beauty" into types as in his theory of drama, and Kant made a distinction between beauty and the sublime. What was new was a refusal to credit the higher status of certain types, where the taxonomy implied a preference for tragedy and the sublime to comedy and the Rococo.

Croce suggested that "expression" is central in the way that beauty was once thought to be central. George Dickie suggested that the sociological institutions of the art world were the glue

binding art and sensibility into unities. Marshall McLuhan suggested that art always functions as a "counter-environment" designed to make visible what is usually invisible about a society. Theodor Adorno felt that aesthetics could not proceed without confronting the role of the culture industry in the commodification of art and aesthetic experience. Hal Foster attempted to portray the reaction against beauty and Modernist art in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture. Arthur Danto has described this reaction as "kalliphobia" (after the Greek word for beauty, κάλλος kallos). André Malraux explains that the notion of beauty was connected to a particular conception of art that arose with the Renaissance and was still dominant in the eighteenth century (but was supplanted later). The discipline of aesthetics, which originated in the eighteenth century, mistook this transient state of affairs for a revelation of the permanent nature of art. Brian Massumi suggests to reconsider beauty following the aesthetical thought in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari.

The field of experimental aesthetics was founded by Gustav Theodor Fechner in the 19th century. Experimental aesthetics is characterized by a subject-based, inductive approach. The analysis of individual experience and behavior based on experimental methods is a central part of experimental aesthetics. In particular, the perception of works of art, music, or modern items such websites or other IT products is studied. Experimental aesthetics is strongly oriented towards the natural sciences. Modern approaches mostly come from the fields of cognitive psychology or neuroscience (neuroaesthetics).

Pneumaist aestheticism is a theory of art and a highly experimental approach to art negating historical preconceptions of the aesthetic.

Jean-François Lyotard re-invokes the Kantian distinction between taste and the sublime. Sublime painting, unlike kitsch realism, "... will enable us to see only by making it impossible to see; it will please only by causing pain.

Sigmund Freud inaugurated aesthetical thinking in Psychoanalysis mainly via the "Uncanny" as aesthetical affect. Following Freud and Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Lacan theorized aesthetics in terms of sublimation and the Thing]

Guy Sircello pioneered efforts in analytic philosophy to develop a rigorous theory of aesthetics, focusing on the concepts of beauty, love and sublimity. In contrast to romantic theorists Sircello argued for the objectivity of beauty and formulated a theory of love on that basis.

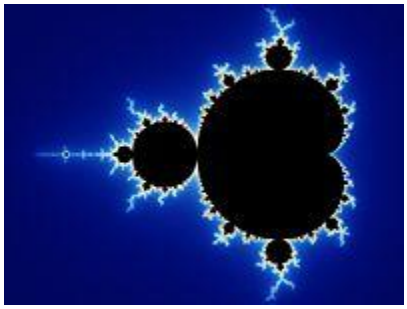
British philosopher and theorist of conceptual art aesthetics, Peter Osborne, makes the point that that post-conceptual art aesthetic does not concern a particular type of contemporary art so much as the historical-ontological condition for the production of contemporary art in general .." Osborne first noted that contemporary art is 'post-conceptual in a public lecture delivered at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Villa Sucota in Como on July 9, 2010. It is a claim made at the level of the ontology of the work of art (rather than say at the descriptive level of style or movement).

Chapter 5

Evolutionary aesthetics

Evolutionary aesthetics refers to evolutionary psychology theories in which the basic aesthetic preferences of Homo sapiens are argued to have evolved in order to enhance survival and reproductive success. One example being that humans are argued to find beautiful and prefer landscapes which were good habitats in the ancestral environment. Another example is that body symmetry is an important aspect of physical attractiveness which may be due to this indicating good health during body growth. Evolutionary explanations for aesthetical preferences are important parts of evolutionary musicology, Darwinian literary studies, and the study of the evolution of emotion.

Aesthetics and information



Initial image of a Mandelbrot set zoom sequence with continuously colored environment

In the 1970s, Abraham Moles and Frieder Nake were among the first to analyze links between aesthetics, information processing, and information theory.

In the 1990s, Jürgen Schmidhuber described an algorithmic theory of beauty which takes the subjectivity of the observer into account and postulates: among several observations classified as comparable by a given subjective observer, the aesthetically most pleasing one is the one with the shortest description, given the observer's previous knowledge and his particular method for encoding the data. This is closely related to the principles of algorithmic information theory and minimum description length. One of his examples: mathematicians enjoy simple proofs with a short description in their formal language. Another very concrete example describes an aesthetically pleasing human face whose proportions can be described by very few bits of

information, drawing inspiration from less detailed 15th century proportion studies by Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer. Schmidhuber's theory explicitly distinguishes between what's beautiful and what's interesting, stating that interestingness corresponds to the first derivative of subjectively perceived beauty. Here the premise is that any observer continually tries to improve the predictability and compressibility of the observations by discovering regularities such as repetitions and symmetries and fractal self-similarity. Whenever the observer's learning process (which may be a predictive neural network; see also Neuroesthetics) leads to improved data compression such that the observation sequence can be described by fewer bits than before, the temporary interestingness of the data corresponds to the number of saved bits. This compression progress is proportional to the observer's internal reward, also called curiosity reward. A reinforcement learning algorithm is used to maximize future expected reward by learning to execute action sequences that cause additional interesting input data with yet unknown but learnable predictability or regularity. The principles can be implemented on artificial agents which then exhibit a form of artificial curiosity.

Applied aesthetics

As well as being applied to art, aesthetics can also be applied to cultural objects such as crucifix or tools. Aesthetic coupling between art-objects and medical topics was made by speakers working for the US Information Agency This coupling was made to reinforce the learning paradigm when English-language speakers used translators to address audiences in their own country. These audiences were generally not fluent in the English language. It can also be used in topics as diverse as mathematics, gastronomy, fashion and website design.

Aesthetic ethics

Aesthetic ethics refers to the idea that human conduct and behaviour ought to be governed by that which is beautiful and attractive. John Dewey has pointed out that the unity of aesthetics and ethics is in fact reflected in our understanding of behaviour being "fair" — the word having a double meaning of attractive and morally acceptable. More recently, James Page has suggested that aesthetic ethics might be taken to form a philosophical rationale for peace education.

Aristotle, Beauty and Goodness

Aristotle was passionate about goodness in men as he valued "taking [its] virtues to be central to a well-lived life." In Politics, he writes, "Again, men in general desire the good, and not merely what their fathers had." To thoroughly comprehend goodness, Aristotle also studied Beauty. As noted in the Encyclopædia Britannica (1902), moreover, Aristotle, "ignores all conceptions of an absolute Beauty, and at the same time seeks to distinguish the Beautiful from the Good." Aristotle explains that men "will be better able to achieve [their] good if [they] develop a fuller understanding of what it is to flourish."

Truth as beauty, mathematics, analytic philosophy, and physics

Mathematical considerations, such as symmetry and complexity, are used for analysis in theoretical aesthetics. This is different from the aesthetic considerations of applied aesthetics used in the study of mathematical beauty. Aesthetic considerations such as symmetry and simplicity are used in areas of philosophy, such as ethics and theoretical physics and cosmology to define truth, outside of empirical considerations. Beauty and Truth have been argued to be nearly synonymous**,** as reflected in the statement "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" in the poem Ode on a Grecian Urn by John Keats, or by the Hindu motto "Satyam Shivam Sundaram" (Satya (Truth) is Shiva (God), and Shiva is Sundaram (Beautiful)). The fact that judgments of beauty and judgments of truth both are influenced by processing fluency, which is the ease with which information can be processed, has been presented as an explanation for why beauty is sometimes equated with truth.Indeed, recent research found that people use beauty as an indication for truth in mathematical pattern tasks**.**

Computational inference of aesthetics

Since about 2005, computer scientists have attempted to develop automated methods to infer aesthetic quality of images**.** Typically, these approaches follow a machine learning approach, where large numbers of manually rated photographs are used to "teach" a computer about what visual properties are of relevance to aesthetic quality. The Acquine engine, developed at Penn State University, rates natural photographs uploaded by users.

Notable in this area is Michael Leyton, professor of psychology at Rutgers University. Leyton is the president of the International Society for Mathematical and Computational Aesthetics and the International Society for Group Theory in Cognitive Science and has developed a generative theory of shape.

There have also been relatively successful attempts with regard to chess and musicA relation between Max Bense's mathematical formulation of aesthetics in terms of "redundancy" and "complexity" and theories of musical anticipation was offered using the notion of Information Rate.

Aesthetic judgment

Judgments of aesthetic value rely on our ability to discriminate at a sensory level. Aesthetics examines our affective domain response to an object or phenomenon. Immanuel Kant, writing in 1790, observes of a man "If he says that canary wine is agreeable he is quite content if someone else corrects his terms and reminds him to say instead: It is agreeable to me," because "Everyone has his own (sense of) taste". The case of "beauty" is different from mere "agreeableness" because, "If he proclaims something to be beautiful, then he requires the same liking from others; he then judges not just for himself but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things."

Aesthetic judgments usually go beyond sensory discrimination. For David Hume, delicacy of taste is not merely "the ability to detect all the ingredients in a composition", but also our sensitivity "to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind." (Essays Moral Political and Literary. Indiana polis, Literary Classics 5, 1987.) Thus, the sensory discrimination is linked to capacity for pleasure. For Kant "enjoyment" is the result when pleasure arises from sensation, but judging something to be "beautiful" has a third requirement: sensation must give rise to pleasure by engaging our capacities of reflective contemplation. Judgments of beauty are sensory, emotional and intellectual all at once.

Viewer interpretations of beauty possess two concepts of value: aesthetics and taste. Aesthetics is the philosophical notion of beauty. Taste is a result of an education process and awareness of elite cultural values learned through exposure to mass culture. Bourdieu examined how the elite in society define the aesthetic values like taste and how varying levels of exposure to these values can result in variations by class, cultural background, and education. According to Kant, beauty is subjective and universal; thus certain things are beautiful to everyone. The contemporary view of beauty is not based on innate qualities, but rather on cultural specifics and individual interpretations.

Factors involved in aesthetic judgment

Rainbows often have aesthetic appeal.

Judgments of aesthetical values seem often to involve many other kinds of issues as well. Responses such as disgust show that sensory detection is linked in instinctual ways to facial expressions, and even behaviors like the gag reflex. Yet disgust can often be a learned or cultural issue too; as Darwin pointed out, seeing a stripe of soup in a man's beard is disgusting even though neither soup nor beards are themselves disgusting. Aesthetic judgments may be linked to emotions or, like emotions, partially embodied in our physical reactions. Seeing a sublime view of a landscape may give us a reaction of awe, which might manifest physically as an increased heart rate or widened eyes. These unconscious reactions may even be partly constitutive of what makes our judgment a judgment that the landscape is sublime.

Likewise, aesthetic judgments may be culturally conditioned to some extent. Victorians in Britain often saw African sculpture as ugly, but just a few decades later, Edwardian audiences saw the same sculptures as being beautiful. Evaluations of beauty may well be linked to desirability, perhaps even to sexual desirability. Thus, judgments of aesthetic value can become linked to judgments of economic, political, or moral value. In a current context, one might judge a Lamborghini to be beautiful partly because it is desirable as a status symbol, or we might judge it to be repulsive partly because it signifies for us over-consumption and offends our political or moral values.

Aesthetic judgments can often be very fine-grained and internally contradictory. Likewise aesthetic judgments seem often to be at least partly intellectual and interpretative. It is what a thing means or symbolizes for us that is often what we are judging. Modern aestheticians have asserted that will and desire were almost dormant in aesthetic experience, yet preference and choice have seemed important aesthetics to some 20th-century thinkers. The point is already made by Hume, but see Mary Mothersill, "Beauty and the Critic's Judgment", in The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics, 2004. Thus aesthetic judgments might be seen to be based on the senses, emotions, intellectual opinions, will, desires, culture, preferences, values, subconscious behavior, conscious decision, training, instinct, sociological institutions, or some complex combination of these, depending on exactly which theory one employs.

Are different art forms beautiful, disgusting, or boring in the same way?

A third major topic in the study of aesthetic judgments is how they are unified across art forms. We can call a person, a house, a symphony, a fragrance, and a mathematical proof beautiful. What characteristics do they share which give them that status? What possible feature could a proof and a fragrance both share in virtue of which they both count as beautiful? What makes a painting beautiful is quite different from what makes music beautiful, which suggests that each art form has its own language for the judgement of aesthetics.

At the same time, there is seemingly quite a lack of words to express oneself accurately when making an aesthetic judgment. An aesthetic judgment cannot be an empirical judgement. Therefore, due to impossibility for precision, there is confusion about what interpretations can be culturally negotiated. Due to imprecision in the standard English language, two completely different feelings experienced by two different people can be represented by an identical verbal expression. Wittgenstein stated this in his lectures on aesthetics and language games.

A collective identification of beauty, with willing participants in a given social spectrum, may be a socially negotiated phenomenon, discussed in a culture or context. Is there some underlying unity to aesthetic judgment and is there some way to articulate the similarities of a beautiful house, beautiful proof, and beautiful sunset? Defining it requires a description of the entire phenomenon, as Wittgenstein argued in his lectures on aesthetics. Likewise there has been long debate on how perception of beauty in the natural world, especially perception of the human form as beautiful, is supposed to relate to perceiving beauty in art or artefacts. This goes back at least to Kant, with some echoes even in St. Bonaventure.[

Chapter 6

Aesthetics and the philosophy of art

Aesthetics is for the artist as Ornithology is for the birds.

— Barnett Newman

For some, aesthetics is considered a synonym for the philosophy of art since Hegel, while others insist that there is a significant distinction between these closely related fields. In practice aesthetic judgement refers to the sensory contemplation or appreciation of an object (not necessarily an art object), while artistic judgement refers to the recognition, appreciation or criticism of art or an art work.

Philosophical aesthetics has not only to speak about art and to produce judgments about art works, but has also to give a definition of what art is. Art is an autonomous entity for philosophy, because art deals with the senses (i. e. the etymology of aesthetics) and art is as such free of any moral or political purpose. Hence, there are two different conceptions of art in aesthetics : art as knowledge or art as action, but aesthetics is neither epistemology nor ethics.

What is "art"?

Harmony of colors

How best to define the term "art" is a subject of constant contention; many books and journal articles have been published arguing over even the basics of what we mean by the term "art". Theodor Adorno claimed in 1969 "It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident." Artists, philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists and programmers all use the notion of art in

their respective fields, and give it operational definitions that vary considerably. Furthermore, it is clear that even the basic meaning of the term "art" has changed several times over the centuries, and has continued to evolve during the 20th century as well.

The main recent sense of the word "art" is roughly as an abbreviation for creative art or "fine art." Here we mean that skill is being used to express the artist's creativity, or to engage the audience's aesthetic sensibilities, or to draw the audience towards consideration of the "finer" things. Often, if the skill is being used in a functional object, people will consider it a craft instead of art, a suggestion which is highly disputed by many Contemporary Craft thinkers. Likewise, if the skill is being used in a commercial or industrial way it may be considered design instead of art, or contrariwise these may be defended as art forms, perhaps called applied art. Some thinkers, for instance, have argued that the difference between fine art and applied art has more to do with the actual function of the object than any clear definitional difference.] Art usually implies no function other than to convey or communicate an idea.

Even as late as 1912 it was normal in the West to assume that all art aims at beauty, and thus that anything that wasn't trying to be beautiful couldn't count as art. The cubists, dadaists, Stravinsky, and many later art movements struggled against this conception that beauty was central to the definition of art, with such success that, according to Danto, "Beauty had disappeared not only from the advanced art of the 1960's but from the advanced philosophy of art of that decade as well." Perhaps some notion like "expression" (in Croce's theories) or "counter-environment" (in McLuhan's theory) can replace the previous role of beauty. Brian Massumi brought back "beauty" into consideration together with "expression". Another view, as important to the philosophy of art as "beauty," is that of the "sublime," elaborated upon in the twentieth century by the postmodern philosopher Jean-François Lyotard. A further approach, elaborated by André Malraux in works such as The Voices of Silence, is that art is fundamentally a response to a metaphysical question ('Art', he writes, 'is an 'anti-destiny'). Malraux argues that, while art has sometimes been oriented towards beauty and the sublime (principally in post-Renaissance European art) these qualities, as the wider history of art demonstrates, are by no means essential to it.

Perhaps (as in Kennick's theory) no definition of art is possible anymore. Perhaps art should be thought of as a cluster of related concepts in a Wittgensteinian fashion (as in Weitz or Beuys). Another approach is to say that "art" is basically a sociological category, that whatever art schools and museums and artists define as art is considered art regardless of formal definitions. This "institutional definition of art" (see also Institutional Critique) has been championed by George Dickie. Most people did not consider the depiction of a Brillo Box or a store-bought urinal to be art until Andy Warhol and Marcel Duchamp (respectively) placed them in the context of art (i.e., the art gallery), which then provided the association of these objects with the associations that define art.

Proceduralists often suggest that it is the process by which a work of art is created or viewed that makes it art, not any inherent feature of an object, or how well received it is by the institutions of the art world after its introduction to society at large. If a poet writes down several lines, intending them as a poem, the very procedure by which it is written makes it a poem. Whereas if a journalist writes exactly the same set of words, intending them as shorthand notes to help him write a longer article later, these would not be a poem. Leo Tolstoy, on the other hand, claims that what decides whether or not something is art is how it is experienced by its audience, not by the intention of its creator. Functionalists like Monroe Beardsley argue that whether or not a piece counts as art depends on what function it plays in a particular context; the same Greek vase may play a non-artistic function in one context (carrying wine), and an artistic function in another context (helping us to appreciate the beauty of the human figure). '

What should we judge when we judge art?

Nature provides aesthetic ideals.

Art can be difficult at the metaphysical and ontological levels as well as at the value theory level. When we see a performance of Hamlet, how many works of art are we experiencing, and which should we judge? Perhaps there is only one relevant work of art, the whole performance, which many different people have contributed to, and which will exist briefly and then disappear. Perhaps the manuscript by Shakespeare is a distinct work of art from the play by the troupe, which is also distinct from the performance of the play by this troupe on this night, and all three can be judged, but are to be judged by different standards.

Perhaps every person involved should be judged separately on his or her own merits, and each costume or line is its own work of art (with perhaps the director having the job of unifying them all). Similar problems arise for music, film, dance, and even painting. Is one to judge the painting itself, the work of the painter, or perhaps the painting in its context of presentation by the museum workers?

These problems have been made even more difficult by the rise of conceptual art since the 1960s. Warhol's famous Brillo Boxes are nearly indistinguishable from actual Brillo boxes at the time. It would be a mistake to praise Warhol for the design of his boxes (which were designed by Steve Harvey), yet the conceptual move of exhibiting these boxes as art in a museum together with other kinds of paintings is Warhol's. Are we judging Warhol's concept? His execution of the concept in the medium? The curator's insight in letting Warhol display the boxes? The overall result? Our experience or interpretation of the result? Ontologically, how are we to think of the work of art? Is it a physical object? Several objects? A class of objects? A mental object? A fictional object? An abstract object? An event? Or simply an Act?

What should art be like?

Many goals have been argued for art, and aestheticians often argue that some goal or another is superior in some way. Clement Greenberg, for instance, argued in 1960 that each artistic medium should seek that which makes it unique among the possible mediums and then purify itself of

anything other than expression of its own uniqueness as a form.[78] The Dadaist Tristan Tzara on the other hand saw the function of art in 1918 as the destruction of a mad social order. "We must sweep and clean. Affirm the cleanliness of the individual after the state of madness, aggressive complete madness of a world abandoned to the hands of bandits."[79] Formal goals, creative goals, self-expression, political goals, spiritual goals, philosophical goals, and even more perceptual or aesthetic goals have all been popular pictures of what art should be like.

The value of art

Tolstoy defined art as the following: "Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them." However, this definition is merely a starting point for his theory of art's value. To some extent, the value of art, for Tolstoy, is one with the value of empathy. However, sometimes empathy is not of value. In chapter fifteen of What Is Art?, Tolstoy says that some feelings are good, but others are bad, and so art is only valuable when it generates empathy or shared feeling for good feelings. For example, Tolstoy asserts that empathy for decadent members of the ruling class makes society worse, rather than better. In chapter sixteen, he asserts that the best art is "universal art" that expresses simple and accessible positive feeling.

Other possible views are these: Art can act as a means to some special kind of knowledge. Art may give insight into the human condition. Art relates to science and religion. Art serves as a tool of education, or indoctrination, or enculturation. Art makes us more moral. It uplifts us spiritually. Art is politics by other means. Art has the value of allowing catharsis. In any case, the value of art may determine the suitability of an art form. Do they differ significantly in their values, or (if not) in their ability to achieve the unitary value of art?

But to approach the question of the value of art systematically, one ought to ask: for whom? For the artist? For the audience? For society at large, and/or for individuals beyond the audience? Is the "value" of art different in each of these different contexts?

Working on the intended value of art tends to help define the relations between art and other acts. Art clearly does have spiritual goals in many contexts, but what exactly is the difference between

religious art and religion per se? The truth is complex; art is both useless in a functional sense, and also the most important human activity.

An argument for the value of art, used in the fictional work The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, proceeds that, if some external force presenting imminent destruction of Earth asked humanity what its value was—what should humanity's response be? The argument continues that the only justification humanity could give for its continued existence would be the past creation and continued creation of things like a Shakespeare play, a Rembrandt painting or a Bach concerto. The suggestion is that these are the things of value which define humanity. Whatever one might think of this claim — and it does seem to undervalue the many other achievements of which human beings have shown themselves capable, both individually and collectively — it is true that art appears to possess a special capacity to endure ("live on") beyond the moment of its birth, in many cases for centuries or millennia. This capacity of art to endure over time — what precisely it is and how it operates — has been widely neglected in modern aesthetics.

Chapter 7

Aesthetic universals

The philosopher Denis Dutton identified six universal signatures in human aesthetics:

1. Expertise or virtuosity. Humans cultivate, recognize, and admire technical artistic skills.

2. Nonutilitarian pleasure. People enjoy art for art's sake, and don't demand that it keep them warm or put food on the table.

3. Style. Artistic objects and performances satisfy rules of composition that place them in a recognizable style.

4. Criticism. People make a point of judging, appreciating, and interpreting works of art.

5. Imitation. With a few important exceptions like abstract painting, works of art simulate experiences of the world.

6. Special focus. Art is set aside from ordinary life and made a dramatic focus of experience.

It might be objected, however, that there are rather too many exceptions to Dutton's categories. For example, the installations of the contemporary artist Thomas Hirschhorn deliberately eschew technical virtuosity. People can appreciate a Renaissance Madonna for aesthetic reasons, but such objects often had (and sometimes still have) specific devotional functions. "Rules of composition" that might be read into Duchamp's Fountain or John Cage's 4′33″ do not locate the works in a recognizable style (or certainly not a style recognizable at the time of the works' realisation). Moreover, some of Dutton's categories seem too broad: a physicist might entertain hypothetical worlds in his/her imagination in the course of formulating a theory. Another problem is that Dutton's categories seek to universalise traditional European notions of aesthetics and art forgetting that, as André Malraux and others have pointed out, there have been large numbers of cultures in which such ideas (including the idea "art" itself) were non-existent.

Criticism

The philosophy of aesthetics as a practice has been criticized by some sociologists and writers of art and society. Raymond Williams argues that there is no unique and or individual aesthetic object which can be extrapolated from the art world, but that there is a continuum of cultural forms and experience of which ordinary speech and experiences may signal as art. By "art" we may frame several artistic "works" or "creations" as so though this reference remains within the institution or special event which creates it and this leaves some works or other possible "art" outside of the frame work, or other interpretations such as other phenomenon which may not be considered as "art". Pierre Bourdieu disagrees with Kant's idea of the "aesthetic". He argues that Kant's "aesthetic" merely represents an experience that is the product of an elevated class habitus and scholarly leisure as opposed to other possible and equally valid "aesthetic" experiences which lay outside Kant's narrow definition.

New Aesthetic

Jump to: navigation, search

Not to be confused with The New Aesthetics.

The New Aesthetic is a term, coined by James Bridle, used to refer to the increasing appearance of the visual language of digital technology and the Internet in the physical world, and the blending of virtual and physical. The phenomenon has been around for a long time but James Bridle articulated the notion through a series of talks and observations. The term gained wider attention following a panel at the SXSW conference in 2012.

History

Developing from a series of collections of digital objects that have become located in the physical the movement circulates around a blog named "The New Aesthetic" and which has defined the broad contours of the movement without a manifesto. The New Aesthetic as a concept was introduced at South By South West (SXSW) on March 12, 2012, at a panel

organised by James Bridle and included Aaron Cope, Ben Terrett, Joanne McNeil and Russell Davies.

An article by Bruce Sterling in Wired Magazine propelled the ideas around the New Aesthetic into critical and public consciousness. Sterling's article described the concept's main outlines but also proposed some key critical areas for development. The subsequent response from across the web was rapid and engaged with a number of significant contemporaneous contributions.

The author Bruce Sterling has said of the New Aesthetic:

The "New Aesthetic" is a native product of modern network culture. It's from London, but it was born digital, on the Internet. The New Aesthetic is a "theory object" and a "shareable concept."

The New Aesthetic is "collectively intelligent." It's diffuse, crowdsourcey, and made of many small pieces loosely joined. It is rhizomatic, as the people at Rhizome would likely tell you. It's open-sourced, and triumph-of-amateurs. It's like its logo, a bright cluster of balloons tied to some huge, dark and lethal weight.

Matthew Battles, a contributor to Metalab, a project of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, gives a definition that makes reference to purported paradigm examples:

New Aesthetic is a collaborative attempt to draw a circle around several species of aesthetic activity—including but not limited to drone photography, ubiquitous surveillance, glitch imagery, Streetview photography, 8-bit net nostalgia. Central to the New Aesthetic is a sense that we're learning to "wave at machines"—and that perhaps in their glitchy, buzzy, algorithmic ways, they're beginning to wave back in earnest.

One of the more substantive contributions to the notion of the New Aesthetic has been through a development of, and linking to, the way in which the digital and the everyday are increasingly interpenetrating each other. Here, the notion of the unrepresentability of computation, as both an infrastructure and an ecology, are significant in understanding the common New Aesthetic tendency towards pixelated graphics and a retro 8-bit form. This is related to the idea of an

episteme (or ontotheology) identified with relation to computation and computational ways of seeing and doing: computationality.

Michael Betancourt has discussed the New Aesthetic in relation to digital automation. The ‘new aesthetic’ provides a reference point for the examination of Karl Marx's discussion of machines in ‘The Fragment on Machines.’

The 'new aesthetic' documents is the shift from earlier considerations of machine labor as an amplifier and extension of human action -- as an augmentation of human labor -- to its replacement by models where the machine does not augment but supplant, in the process apparently removing the human intermediary that is the labor that historically lies between the work of human designer-engineers and fabrication following their plans.

According to Betancourt, the New Aesthetic documents a shift in production that is different than that described by Marx. Where the machines Marx described were dependent on human control, those identified with the New Aesthetic work to supplant the human element, replacing it with digital automation, effectively removing living labor from the production process.

One movement that draws parallels to "New Aesthetic" is "Seapunk".

Europe

Aristocratic and artistic cool

Mona Lisa, or La Gioconda (La Joconde), by Leonardo da Vinci expresses sprezzatura, an "aristocratic cool".

"Aristocratic cool", known as sprezzatura, has existed in Europe for centuries, particularly when relating to frank amorality and love or illicit pleasures behind closed doors; Raphael's "Portrait of Baldassare Castiglione" and Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" are classic examples of sprezzatura. The sprezzatura of the Mona Lisa is seen in both her smile and the positioning of her hands. Both the smile and hands are intended to convey her grandeur, self-confidence and societal position. Sprezzatura means, literally, disdain and detachment. It is the art of refraining from the appearance of trying to present oneself in a particular way. In reality, of course, tremendous exertion went into pretending not to bother or care.

English poet and playwright William Shakespeare used cool in several of his works to describe composure and absence of emotion. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, written sometime in the

late-16th century, he contrasts the shaping fantasies of lovers and madmen with "cool reason," in Hamlet he wrote "O gentle son, upon the heat and flame of thy distemper, sprinkle cool patience," and the antagonist Iago in Othello is musing about "reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts."

The cool "Anatolian smile" of Turkey is used to mask emotions. A similar "mask" of coolness is worn in both times of stress and pleasure in American and African communities.

European inter-war cool

The key themes of modern European cool were forged by avant-garde artists who achieved prominence in the aftermath of the First World War, most notably Dadaists, such as key Dada figures Arthur Cravan and Marcel Duchamp, and the left-wing milieu of the Weimar Republic. The program of such groups was often self-consciously revolutionary, a determination to scandalize the bourgeoisie by mocking their culture, sexuality and political moderation.

Berthold Brecht, both a committed Communist and a philandering cynic, stands as the archetype of this inter-war cool. Brecht projected his cool attitude to life onto his most famous character Macheath or "Mackie Messer" (Mack the knife), in The Threepenny Opera. Mackie, the nonchalant, smooth-talking gangster, expert with the switchblade, personifies the bitter-sweet strain of cool; Puritanism and sentimentality are both anathema to the cool character.

During the turbulent inter-war years, cool was a privilege reserved for bohemian milieus like Brecht's. Cool irony and hedonism remained the province of cabaret artistes, ostentatious gangsters and rich socialites, those decadents depicted in Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited and Christopher Isherwood's Goodbye to Berlin, tracing the outlines of a new cool. Peter Stearns, professor of history at George Mason University, suggests that in effect the seeds of a cool outlook had been sown among this inter-war generation.

Postwar cool

The Second World War brought the populations of Britain, Germany and France into intimate contact with Americans and American culture. The war brought hundreds of thousands of GIs

whose relaxed, easy-going manner was seen by young people of the time as the very embodiment of liberation; and with them came Lucky Strikes, nylons, swing and jazz—the American Cool.

To be cool or hip meant hanging out, pursuing sexual liaisons, displaying the appropriate attitude of narcissistic self-absorption, and expressing a desire to escape the mental straitjacket of all ideological causes. From the late 1940s onward, this popular culture influenced young people all over the world, to the great dismay of the paternalistic elites who still ruled the official culture. The French intelligentsia were outraged, while the British educated classes displayed a haughty indifference that smacked of an older aristocratic cool.

The Polish cool

The new attitude found a special resonance behind the Iron Curtain, where it offered relief from the earnestness of socialist propaganda and socialist realism in art. In the Polish industrial city Łódź, jazz, "the forbidden music", served Polish youth of the 1950s much as it had served its African-American creators, both as personal diversion and subterranean resistance to what they saw as a stultifying official culture. Some clubs featured live jazz performances, and their smoky, sexually charged atmosphere carried a message for which the puritanical values and monumental art of Marxist officialdom were an ideal foil.

Arriving in Poland via France, America and England, Polish cool stimulated the film talents of a generation of artists, including Andrzej Wajda, Roman Polanski, and other graduates of the National Film School in Łódź, as well as the novelist Jerzy Kosinski, in whose clinical prose cool tends towards the sadistic.

In Prague, the capital of Bohemia, cool flourished in the faded Art Deco splendor of the Cafe Slavia. Significantly, following the crushing of the Prague Spring by Soviet tanks in 1968, part of the dissident underground called itself the "Jazz Section".

Chapter 8

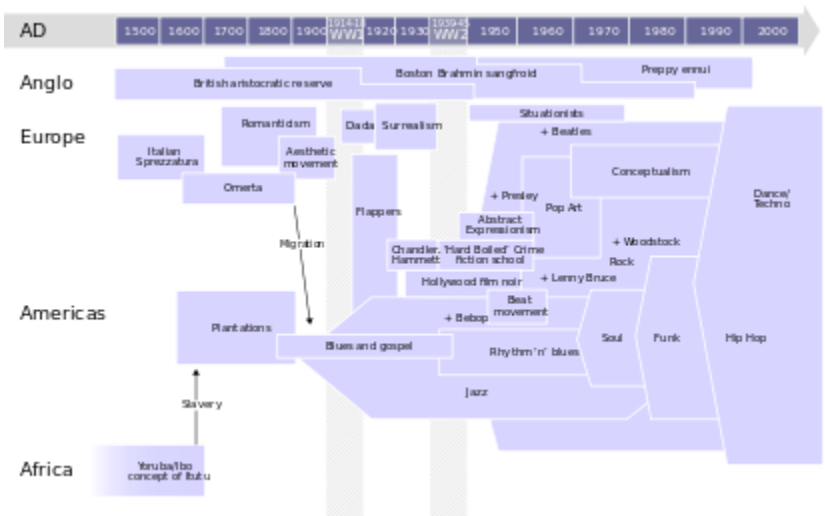
Cool (aesthetic)

"Uncool" redirects here. For the Bumblefoot album, see Uncool (album).

"Coolness" redirects here. For the reciprocal of temperature, see thermodynamic beta.

Coolness is an admired aesthetic of attitude, behavior, comportment, appearance and style, influenced by and a product of the Zeitgeist. Because of the varied and changing connotations of cool, as well its subjective nature, the word has no single meaning. It has associations of composure and self-control (cf. the OED definition) and often is used as an expression of admiration or approval. Although commonly regarded as slang, it is widely used among disparate social groups, and has endured in usage for generations.

Overview



A timeline of cool, adapted from Dick Pountain and David Robins, Cool Rules: Anatomy of an Attitude

There is no single concept of cool. One of the essential characteristics of cool is its mutability—what is considered cool changes over time and varies among cultures and generations.

Nick Southgate writes that, although some notions of cool can be traced back to Aristotle, whose notion of cool is to be found in his ethical writings, most particularly the Nicomachean Ethics, it is not confined to one particular ethnic group or gender.

Although there is no single concept of cool, its definitions fall into a few broad categories.

Cool as a behavioral characteristic

The sum and substance of cool is a self-conscious aplomb in overall behavior, which entails a set of specific behavioral characteristics that is firmly anchored in symbology, a set of discernible bodily movements, postures, facial expressions and voice modulations that are acquired and take on strategic social value within the peer context.

Cool was once an attitude fostered by rebels and underdogs, such as slaves, prisoners, bikers and political dissidents, etc., for whom open rebellion invited punishment, so it hid defiance behind a wall of ironic detachment, distancing itself from the source of authority rather than directly confronting it.

Cool as a state of being

Cool has been used to describe a general state of well-being, a transcendent, internal peace and serenity. It can also refer to an absence of conflict, a state of harmony and balance as in, "The land is cool," or as in a "cool [spiritual] heart." Such meanings, according to Thompson, are African in origin. Cool is related in this sense to both social control and transcendental balance.

Cool can similarly be used to describe composure and absence of excitement in a person—especially in times of stress—as expressed in the idiom to keep your cool.

In a related way, the word can be used to express agreement or assent, as in the phrase "I'm cool with that".

Cool as aesthetic appeal

Cool is also an attitude widely adopted by artists and intellectuals, who thereby aided its infiltration into popular culture. Sought by product marketing firms, idealized by teenagers, a shield against racial oppression or political persecution and source of constant cultural innovation, cool has become a global phenomenon that has spread to every corner of the earth. According to Dick Pountain and David Robins, concepts of cool have existed for centuries in several cultures.

Cool as an epithet

While slang terms are usually short-lived coinages and figures of speech, cool is an especially ubiquitous slang word, most notably among young people.

Regions Africa and the African diaspora

Yoruba bronze head sculpture from the city of Ife, Nigeria c. 12th century A.D

Author Robert Farris Thompson, professor of art history at Yale University, suggests that Itutu, which he translates as 'mystic coolness,' is one of three pillars of a religious philosophy created in the 15th century by Yoruba and Igbo civilizations of West Africa. Cool, or Itutu, contained meanings of conciliation and gentleness of character, of generosity and grace, and the ability to

defuse fights and disputes. It also was associated with physical beauty. In Yoruba culture, Itutu is connected to water, because to the Yoruba the concept of coolness retained its physical connotation of temperature. He cites a definition of cool from the Gola people of Liberia, who define it as the ability to be mentally calm or detached, in an other-worldly fashion, from one's circumstances, to be nonchalant in situations where emotionalism or eagerness would be natural and expected. Joseph M. Murphy writes that "cool" is also closely associated with the deity Òsun of the Yoruba religion.

Although Thompson acknowledges similarities between African and European cool in shared notions of self-control and imperturbability, he finds the cultural value of cool in Africa which influenced the African diaspora to be different from that held by Europeans, who use the term primarily as the ability to remain calm under stress. According to Thompson, there is significant weight, meaning and spirituality attached to cool in traditional African cultures, something which, Thompson argues, is absent from the idea in a Western context.

"Control, stability, and composure under the African rubric of the cool seem to constitute elements of an all-embracing aesthetic attitude." African cool, writes Thompson, is "more complicated and more variously expressed than Western notions of sang-froid (literally, "cold blood"), cooling off, or even icy determination." (Thompson, African Arts)

The telling point is that the "mask" of coolness is worn not only in time of stress, but also of pleasure, in fields of expressive performance and the dance. Struck by the re-occurrence of this vital notion elsewhere in tropical Africa and in the Black Americas, I have come to term the attitude "an aesthetic of the cool" in the sense of a deeply and completely motivated, consciously artistic, interweaving of elements serious and pleasurable, of responsibility and play.

African Americans

Ronald Perry writes that many words and expressions have passed from African-American Vernacular English into Standard English slang including the contemporary meaning of the word "cool." The definition, as something fashionable, is said to have been popularized in jazz circles by tenor saxophonist Lester Young. This predominantly black jazz scene in the U.S. and among expatriate musicians in Paris helped popularize notions of cool in the U.S. in the 1940s, giving

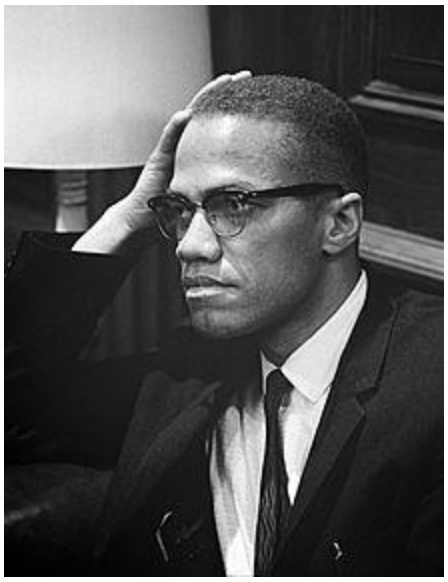
birth to "Bohemian", or beatnik, culture. Shortly thereafter, a style of jazz called cool jazz appeared on the music scene, emphasizing a restrained, laid-back solo style. Notions of cool as an expression of centeredness in a Taoist sense, equilibrium and self-possession, of an absence of conflict are commonly understood in both African and African-American contexts well. Expressions such as, "Don't let it blow your cool," later, chill out, and the use of chill as a characterization of inner contentment or restful repose all have their origins in African-American Vernacular English.

When the air in the smoke-filled nightclubs of that era became unbreathable, windows and doors were opened to allow some "cool air" in from the outside to help clear away the suffocating air. By analogy, the slow and smooth jazz style that was typical for that late-night scene came to be called "cool".

Marlene Kim Connor connects cool and the post-war African-American experience in her book What is Cool?: Understanding Black Manhood in America. Connor writes that cool is the silent and knowing rejection of racist oppression, a self-dignified expression of masculinity developed by black men denied mainstream expressions of manhood. She writes that mainstream perception of cool is narrow and distorted, with cool often perceived merely as style or arrogance, rather than a way to achieve respect.

Designer Christian Lacroix has said that "...the history of cool in America is the history of African-American culture".

Cool pose



Malcolm X "embodied essential elements of cool".

'Cool', though an amorphous quality—more mystique than material—is a pervasive element in urban black male culture. Majors and Billson address what they term "cool pose" in their study and argue that it helps Black men counter stress caused by social oppression, rejection and racism. They also contend that it furnishes the black male with a sense of control, strength, confidence and stability and helps him deal with the closed doors and negative messages of the "generalized other." They also believe that attaining black manhood is filled with pitfalls of discrimination, negative self-image, guilt, shame and fear.

"Cool pose" may be a factor in discrimination in education contributing to the achievement gaps in test scores. In a 2004 study, researchers found that teachers perceived students with African-American culture-related movement styles, referred to as the "cool pose," as lower in achievement, higher in aggression, and more likely to need special education services than students with standard movement styles, irrespective of race or other academic indicators. The issue of stereotyping and discrimination with respect to "cool pose" raises complex questions of assimilation and accommodation of different cultural values. Jason W. Osborne identifies "cool pose" as one of the factors in black underachievement. Robin D. G. Kelley criticizes calls for assimilation and sublimation of black culture, including "cool pose." He argues that media and

academics have unfairly demonized these aspects of black culture while, at the same time, through their sustained fascination with blacks as exotic others, appropriated aspects of "cool pose" into the broader popular culture.

George Elliott Clarke writes that Malcolm X, like Miles Davis, embodies essential elements of cool. As an icon, Malcolm X inspires a complex mixture of both fear and fascination in broader American culture, much like "cool pose" itself.

Theories of cool

1 Cool as social distinction

According to this theory, cool is a zero sum game, in which cool exists only in comparison with things considered less cool; for example, in the book The Rebel Sell, cool is created out of a need for status and distinction. This creates a situation analogous to an arms race, in which cool is perpetuated by a collective action problem in society.

2 Cool as an elusive essence

According to this theory, cool is a real, but unknowable property. Cool, like "Good", is a property that exists, but can only be sought after. In the New Yorker article, "The Coolhunt",

cool is given three characteristics:

- "The act of discovering what's cool is what causes cool to move on"
- "Cool cannot be manufactured, only observed"
- "[Cool] can only be observed by those who are themselves cool".

3 Cool as a marketing device

“ [Cool is] a heavily manipulative corporate ethos. ”

—Kalle Lasn

According to this theory, cool can be exploited as a manufactured and empty idea imposed on the culture at large through a top-down process by the "Merchants of Cool". An artificial cycle of "cooling" and "uncooling" creates false needs in consumers, and stimulates the economy. "Cool has become the central ideology of consumer capitalism". Supporters of this theory avoid the pursuit of cool.

The concept of cool was used in this way to market menthol cigarettes to African Americans in the 1960s. In 2004 over 70% of African American smokers preferred menthol cigarettes, compared with 30% of white smokers. This unique social phenomenon was principally occasioned by the tobacco industry's manipulation of the burgeoning black, urban, segregated, consumer market in cities at that time. According to Fast Company some large companies have started 'outsourcing cool.' They are paying other "smaller, more-limber, closer-to-the-ground outsider" companies to help them keep up with customers' rapidly changing tastes and demands.

Cool defined

- "Cool is a knowledge, a way of life." – Lewis MacAdams

- "Cool is an age-specific phenomenon, defined as the central behavioural trait of teenagerhood."

- "Coolness is the proper way you represent yourself to a human being." – Robert Farris Thompson

- In the novel Spook Country by William Gibson one character equates cool with a sense of exclusivity: "Secrets," said the Bigend beside her, "are the very root of cool."

- In the novel Lords and Ladies by Terry Pratchett the Monks of Cool are mentioned. In their passing-out test a novice must select the coolest garment from a room full of clothes. The correct answer is "Hey, whatever I select", suggesting that cool is primarily an attitude of self-assurance.

Chapter 9

Philosophy of Aesthetics

Aesthetics owes its name to Alexander Baumgarten who derived it from the Greek aisthanomai, which means perception by means of the senses.

The word aesthetic can be used as a noun meaning "that which appeals to the senses." Someone's aesthetic has a lot to do with their artistic judgement. For example, an individual who wears flowered clothing, drives a flowered car, and paints their home with flowers has a particular aesthetic.

Since actions or behavior can be said to have beauty beyond sensory appeal, aesthetics and ethics often overlap to the degree that his impression is embodied in a moral code or ethical code. Schopenhauer's aesthetics is one developed variation on this theme; Schopenhauer contrasted the contemplation of beauty against the evil world of the Will. The theory of surrealist automatism is extra-aesthetic in that it is supposed to be practiced without (conscious) moral or aesthetic self-censorship.

The writer Ayn Rand assumed a hierarchical nature of philosophy that builds in complexity & dependence from metaphysics through epistemology, ethics & politics to aesthetics ("Philosophy, Who Needs It?", 1974). Aesthetic arguments usually proceed from one of several possible perspectives, i.e.: art is defined by the intention of the artist (as Dewey); art is in the response/emotion of the viewer (as Tolstoy); art is a character of the item itself; art is a function of an object's context (as Danto); or art is imitation (as Plato).

Aesthetic Concepts

Caspar David Friedrich, Monk by the Sea, which evokes some calm sensations and melancholic feelings in most people who contemplate it. Those feelings are actually sensations that emerge in us – the beholder of the painting – rather than intrinsic properties in the figure of the monk, the person seen in the painting.

In his paper ‘Aesthetic Concepts’, Sibley distinguished ‘aesthetic concepts’ from ‘non-aesthetic concepts’.

Aesthetic concepts invovles terms such as "balanced, powerful, dynamic, elegant, melancholy" whereas non aesthetic concepts involves terms such as "red, noisy, square, intelligent, sad". Some may claim that aesthetic concepts and non aesthetic concepts properties are simply both the set of all descriptibe terms, and the difference is illusory. However, Sibley believes the following claims are obvious:

- Use of aesthetic concepts requires "taste, perceptiveness and sensitivity" whereas non aesthetic concepts requires only "normaly eyes, ears and intelligence".

- A features depend upon their existence on non aesthetic concepts features

- He denies that the presence of non aesthetic concepts features can logically imply the presence of an aesthetic feature

- Judgements upon the existence of aesthetic concepts features can only be perceived (what Sibley calls perceptual proof), believing they are there on good authority is not enough.

To see if Sibley's claims are consistent we need to look at metaphysics. The issue is whether or not aesthetic thought and experience is 'realist', in the sense that we represent aesthetic properties and states of affairs in such thoughts and experiences. If so, 'common-sense' or 'folk aesthetics' has metaphysically dirty hands, though whether or not this common-sense metaphysics is true is another matter. In contrast with realists, there are 'non-realists', who deny that ordinary aesthetic thought and experience have such metaphysical commitments.

Realism

Substantiating the orthodox approach (realism) requires answers to at least the following three questions:

What is an Aesthetic-property?

Aesthetic properties are ‘ways of appearing phenomenally’. They are ‘certain looks or feels or impressions or appearances that emerge out of lower-order perceptual properties’ . They are ‘dispositions to afford such impressions’, or rather ‘supervenient on such dispositions’ . There are some non aesthetic properties (which do not form a bounded set) which cause a distinctive look, feel, impression or appearance. Whatever this is, is the aesthetic property.

We can now interpret the sentence "the dancer is graceful" to see what we mean by "properties". Option 1: We could say that there is a phenomenal property (grace) that is caused by the non-aesthetic of the dancer. However, some A terms such as feelings are mental states, not properties of objects. Under this interpretation, the aesthetic property "melancholy" would be ambigious with the non-aesthetic term "sadness". Option 2: We could say that one of the non-aesthetic properties causes observers to have some experience that we call grace. However, this interpretation would mean that grace is an experience, and so we could not perceive grace in other objects such as paintings as we cannot perceive experiences.

What is the relation between non aesthetic-properties and aesthetic-properties?

The orthodox interpretation (realism) is some variety of the following. Aesthetic properties are caused by non-aesthetic properties Aesthetic properties supervene on non-aesthetic properties.

What is the content of the claim ‘This picture is unified?’

The picture possesses a property, named unity. However then it is unclear why we need to perceive the picture in order to grasp this content, which would go against realism.

Social Account

This attack on the orthodox (realist) interpretation of aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties points out the the set of non-aesthetic properties cannot be defined. Size and colour are common examples of non-aesthetic properties, but one could consder redness an aesthetic property of Rothko's paintings or loudness an aesthetic property of Mahler's symphonies. Also, two objects with identical non-aesthetic properties could be considered to have different A properties depending upon things such as geographical location or those looking at them. Meulder Eaton claims that 'A is an aesthetic property of O (an object or event) if and only if A is an intrinsic property of O and A is culturally identified as a property worthy of attention (i.e., of perception or reflection'). An intrinsic property is defined epistemologically: 'F is an intrinsic property of O if and only if direct inspection of O is a necessary condition for verifying the claim that O is F.'

What is an aesthetic-property?

Mahler considers aesthetic-properties to be just non-aesthetic-properties to which others direct our attention. This works well with examples such as the loudness of a piece of music, but less well with concepts such as grace which Meulder says are simply experienced, simliar to the view of the orthodox realist position.

What is the relation between non-aesthetic properties and aesthetic-properties?

Under this view aesthetic properties are simply non aesthetic properties this problem disappears, however it depends upon this equality beng correct.

What is the content of the claim 'This picture is unified?'

Intrinsic properties are perceived by the observer. However, it clearly is possible to to be aware of an objects intrinsic properties without perceiving it ourselves. For example, Sibley claims "to know that a poem is written in iambic pentameter one must read or hear it for oneself" when in fact I could read about the poem in a secondary source.

The "non-realist" solution

Kant, and Sibley among others, would say that aesthetic properties are caused by aesthetic experiences from our senses, such as hearing a "loud" piece of music. Sibley denies that aesthetic

properties exist, though aesthetic concepts and features do. He also argues that as psychological laws are so complex that nocombination of non-aesthetic experiences can guarantee an aesthetic experience. However, some aesthetic experiences require certain non-aesthetic features, for example "powerfulnes" may require "noisy". Aesthetic features are depend upon their existence and nature on non-aesthetic features.

Intentionalism

We could say that for all these questions, the answer is determined by the intentions of the creator. Intentionalism entails that the boundaries and the category of a work are fixed for all time at the moment of the works creation. This seems false, as it appears that the meaning of a work changes across time and across cultures. We could say what would maximise the aesthetic value of the work (which would, however, entirely depend upon the person). We could answer this by denying the meaning does change, or by separating meaning and significance. Also, if an acceptable interpretation of the work is to be determined by the authors intentions (which we find out by asking them) then every work would be interpreted as no more or less than their answers.

Actual intentionalism

The question to ask is ‘What was going on in the mind of the actual person who wrote this?’ (That is, the meaning of the work is determined by the actual intentions of the flesh and blood author.)

Hypothetical intentionalism

The question to ask is ‘What was going on the mind of the person who wrote this, whoever they might be?’ That is, we construct the meaning of the work by constructing the mind of the hypothetical author.

The Expression Theory

An appealing solution is to take the words to be referring to the mental state of the artist. The artist feels an emotion that he transmits to the audience by way of the work. This position,

generally known as ‘the expression theory’ found a vigorous exponent in Tolstoy: ‘Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them’ (Tolstoy 1898: 123).

There are two separate claims that are part of this position:

- At the time of creation, the artist was in mental state F.
- In virtue of possessing the property P, the work expresses F.

The nature of this ‘possession’ is wholly unclear.

The connection is logical.

‘Precisely in virtue of their artistic acts and of the similarity they bear to common kinds of expressions, works of art may serve as expressions of those feelings, emotions, attitudes, moods and/or personal characteristics of their creators which are designated by the anthropomorphic predicates applicable to the art works themselves’. (Sircello 1972: 412; reprinted in Margolis (ed) Philosophy Looks at the Arts). Sircello’s view is that the manifestations of emotion are logically connected to the inner state that caused it. To see a smile is not to see an appearance and infer a happy state of mind, but to see the happy state of mind in the face itself. The ‘act’ and the ‘thing’ are inseparable.

The Arousal Theory

A passage of music expresses an emotion E iff it arouses E in its listeners.

Objections

- The connection is not reasonable (response; the judgement lies in the mental state the judgement causes)
- As there is no propositional content, there cannot be an emotion (response; there is feeling, which doesnt requite propositional content)

- Nobody would willingly subject themselves to negative emotions
- Arousal is not necessary
- Arousal is not sufficient
- Phenomenology is wrong
- There is no normativity, hence no possibility of truth or falsity
- The ‘syringe objection’ to all causal theories

Aaron Ridley

In essence, music is expressive if its melismatic properties arouse an 'empathetic feeling' (melisma is broader than resemblance, in that it includes timbre). What is the nature of the experience? 'It is an experience having perceptual qualities that are qualities not of melisma, or of the perception of it, but of the expressiveness that melisma enables one to experience' (Ridley 1995 p. 121). Here is Ridley's characterisation of mental state: 'A sympathetic response — of sadness say — is related to the music that occasions it as a mode of apprehension of certain qualities in the music, as the character of a melismatic gesture is grasped partly in the sadness that it arouses; and because there is clearly a conceptual relation between the apprehension of something and the thing apprehended, the experience of the former, the sympathetic response, is not an experience of which is separable from the experience of the latter, the musical melisma' (ibid. p. 134-5).

Jerrold Levinson

Levinson defines expression thus: ‘a passage of music P is expressive of an emotion or other psychic condition E iff P, in context, is readily and aptly heard by an appropriately back grounded listener as the expression of E, in a sui generis, “musical”, manner, by an indefinite agent, the music's persona’ .

Kendall Walton

This is another account that seems to have potential. The crucial passage, from Walton, is from his paper 'What is abstract about the art of music?': ‘We mentioned the possibility that music is expressive by virtue of imitating behavioral expressions of feeling. Sometimes this is so, and sometimes a passage imitates or portrays vocal expressions of feelings. When it does, listeners probably imagine (not necessarily consciously, and certainly not deliberately) themselves hearing someone's vocal expressions. But in other cases they may, instead, imagine themselves introspecting, being aware of their own feelings. Hearing sounds may differ too much from introspecting for us comfortably to imagine of our hearing the music that it is an experience of being aware of our states of mind. My suggestion is that we imagine this of our actual introspective awareness of auditory sensations.’

Expressive works, says Walton, 'do not actually arouse feelings but they do induce the appreciator to imagine himself experiencing them'. The music induces the listener to imagine himself feeling emotion; the connection is causal and not rational. To that extent, Walton is an arousal theorist.

Chapter 10

Aesthetics of music

In the pre-modern tradition, the aesthetics of music or musical aesthetics explored the mathematical and cosmological dimensions of rhythmic and harmonic organization. In the eighteenth century, focus shifted to the experience of hearing music, and thus to questions about its beauty and human enjoyment (plaisir and jouissance) of music. The origin of this philosophic shift is sometimes attributed to Baumgarten in the 18th century, followed by Kant. Through their writing, the ancient term 'aesthetics', meaning sensory perception, received its present day connotation. In recent decades philosophers have tended to emphasize issues besides beauty and enjoyment. For example, music's capacity to express emotion has been a central issue.

Aesthetics is a sub-discipline of philosophy. In the 20th century, important contributions were made by Peter Kivy, Jerrold Levinson, Roger Scruton, and Stephen Davies. However, many musicians, music critics, and other non-philosophers have contributed to the aesthetics of music. In the 19th century, a significant debate arose between Eduard Hanslick, a music critic and musicologist, and composer Richard Wagner. Harry Partch and some other musicologists, such as Kyle Gann, have studied and tried to popularize microtonal music and the usage of alternate musical scales. Also many modern composers like Lamonte Young, Rhys Chatham and Glenn Branca paid much attention to a scale called just intonation.

It is often thought that music has the ability to affect our emotions, intellect, and psychology; it can assuage our loneliness or incite our passions. The philosopher Plato suggests in the Republic that music has a direct effect on the soul. Therefore, he proposes that in the ideal regime music would be closely regulated by the state. (Book VII)

There has been a strong tendency in the aesthetics of music to emphasize the paramount importance of compositional structure; however, other issues concerning the aesthetics of music include lyricism, harmony, hypnotism, emotiveness, temporal dynamics, resonance, playfulness, and color (see also musical development).

History: Aesthetics and European classical music

18th century

In the 18th century, music was considered to be so far outside the realm of aesthetic theory (then conceived of in visual terms) that music was barely mentioned in William Hogarth's treatise, The Analysis of Beauty. He considered dance beautiful (closing the treatise with a discussion of the minuet), but treated music important only insofar as it could provide the proper accompaniment for the dancers. However, by the end of the century, the topic of music and its own beauty came to be distinguished from cases in which music is part of a mixed media, as it is in opera and dance. Immanuel Kant, whose Critique of Judgment is generally considered the most important and influential work on aesthetics in the 18th century, argued that instrumental music is beautiful but ultimately trivial - compared to the other fine arts, it does not engage the understanding sufficiently, and it lacks moral purpose. In order to display the combination of genius and taste that combines ideas and beauty, respectively, music must be combined with words, as in song and opera.

19th century

In the 19th century, the era of romanticism in music, some composers and critics argued that music should and could express ideas, images, emotions, or even a whole literary plot. Challenging Kant's reservations about instrumental music, in 1813 E. T. A. Hoffman argued that music was fundamentally the art of instrumental composition. Five years later, Arthur Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation argued that instrumental music is the greatest art, because it is uniquely capable of representing the metaphysical organization of reality. Although the Romantic movement accepted the thesis that instrumental music has representational capacities, most did not support Schopenhauer's linking of music and metaphysics. The mainstream consensus endorsed music's capacity to represent particular emotions and situations. In 1832, composer Robert Schumann stated that his piano work Papillons was "intended as a musical representation" of the final scene of a novel by Jean Paul, Flegeljahre. The thesis that the value of music is related to its representational function was vigorously countered by the formalism of Eduard Hanslick, setting off the "War of the

Romantics." This fight divided the aesthetics into two competing groups: On one side are formalists (e.g., Hanslick), who emphasize that the rewards of music are found in appreciation of musical form or design, while on the other side are the anti-formalists, such as Richard Wagner, who regarded musical form as a means to other artistic ends.

20th century

A group of modernist writers in the early 20th century (including the poet Ezra Pound) believed that music was essentially pure because it didn't represent anything, or make reference to anything beyond itself. In a sense, they wanted to bring poetry closer to Hanslick's ideas about the autonomous, self-sufficient character of music. (Bucknell 2002) Dissenters from this view notably included Albert Schweitzer, who argued against the alleged 'purity' of music in a classic work on Bach. Far from being a new debate, this disagreement between modernists and their critics was a direct continuation of the 19th-century debate about the autonomy of music.

Among 20th-century composers, Igor Stravinsky is the most prominent composer to defend the modernist idea of musical autonomy. When a composer creates music, Stravinsky claims, the only relevant thing "is his apprehension of the contour of the form, for the form is everything. He can say nothing whatever about meanings." (Stravinsky 1962, p. 115) Although listeners often look for meanings in music, Stravinsky warned that these are distractions from the musical experience.

The most distinctive development in the aesthetics of music in the 20th century was that attention was directed at the distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' music, now understood to align with the distinction between art music and popular music, respectively. Theodor Adorno suggested that culture industries churn out a debased mass of unsophisticated, sentimental products which have replaced the more 'difficult' and critical art forms which might lead people to actually question social life. False needs are cultivated in people by the culture industries. These are needs which can be both created and satisfied by the capitalist system, and which replace people's 'true' needs - freedom, full expression of human potential and creativity, genuine creative happiness. Thus, those who are trapped in the false notions of beauty according to a capitalist mode of thinking, are only capable of hearing beauty in dishonest terms.

Beginning with Peter Kivy's work in the 1970s, analytic philosophy has contributed extensively to the aesthetics of music. Analytic philosophy pays very little attention to the topic of musical beauty. Instead, Kivy inspired extensive debate about the nature of emotional expressiveness in music. He also contributed to the debate over the nature of authentic performances of older music arguing that much of the debate was incoherent because it failed to distinguish among four distinct standards of authentic performance of music (1995).

Popular music

Bad music

Simon Frith argues that, "'bad music' is a necessary concept for musical pleasure, for musical aesthetics." He distinguishes two common kinds of bad music: the Worst Records Ever Made type, which include "Tracks which are clearly incompetent musically; made by singers who can't sing, players who can't play, producers who can't produce," and "Tracks involving genre confusion. The most common examples are actors or TV stars recording in the latest style." Another type of "bad music" is "rock critical lists," such as *"Tracks that feature sound gimmicks that have outlived their charm or novelty" and "Tracks that depend on false sentiment , that feature an excess of feeling molded into a radio-friendly pop song."

Frith gives three common qualities attributed to bad music: inauthentic, [in] bad taste (see also: kitsch), and stupid. He argues that "The marking off of some tracks and genres and artists as 'bad' is a necessary part of popular music pleasure; it is a way we establish our place in various music worlds. And 'bad' is a key word here because it suggests that aesthetic and ethical judgements are tied together here: not to like a record is not just a matter of taste; it is also a matter of argument, and argument that matters."

Frith's analysis of popular music is based in sociology.

Philosophical aesthetics of popular music

Theodor Adorno was a prominent philosopher who wrote on the aesthetics of popular music. A Marxist, Adorno was extremely hostile to popular music. His theory was largely formulated in

response to the growing popularity of American music in Europe between World War I and World War II. As a result, Adorno often uses "jazz" as his example of what he believed was wrong with popular music; however, for Adorno this term included everyone from Louis Armstrong to Bing Crosby. He attacked popular music claiming that it is simplistic and repetitive, and encourages a fascist mindset. However good or bad it sounds to its audience, he believed that music is genuinely good only if it challenges society through its role as an inaccessible Other. This function is advanced by musical structure, rather than lyrics. In his opinion, although many popular musicians seem to superficially oppose the political status quo, the use of familiar song forms and the artist's involvement in capitalism results in music that ultimately encourages the audience to accept things as they are - only radically experimental music can encourage audiences to become critical of prevailing society. However, the mass media cannot handle the confrontational nature of good music, and offers instead a steady diet of recycled, simplified and politically ineffective music.

Besides Adorno, Theodore Gracyk provides the most extensive philosophical analysis of popular music. He argues that conceptual categories and distinctions developed in response to art music are systematically misleading when applied to popular music (1996). At the same time, the social and political dimensions of popular music do not deprive it of aesthetic value (2007).

In 2007 musicologist and journalist Craig Schuftan published his book The Culture Club, in which he draws links between modernism art movements and popular music of today and that of past decades and even centuries. His story involves drawing lines between art, or high culture, and pop, or low culture. A more scholarly study of the same topic, Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde, was published five years earlier by philosopher Bernard Gendron.

In Germany, the musicologist Ralf von Appen (2007) has published a book on the aesthetics of popular music that focuses on everyday judgments of popular records. He analyzes the structures and aesthetic categories behind judgments found on amazon.com concerning records by musicians such as Bob Dylan, Eminem, Queens of the Stone Age etc. In a second step, von Appen interprets these findings on the basis of current theoretical positions in the field of philosophical aesthetics.

Chapter 11

The Aesthetic Attitude

Aesthetics is the subject matter concerning, as a paradigm, fine art, but also the special, art-like status sometimes given to applied arts like architecture or industrial design or to objects in nature. It is hard to say precisely what is shared among this motley crew of objects (often referred to as aesthetic objects), but the aesthetic attitude is supposed to go some way toward solving this problem. It is, at the very least, the special point of view we take toward an object that results in our having an aesthetic experience (an experience of, for example, beauty, sublimity, or even ugliness). Many aesthetic theories, however, have taken it to play a central role in defining the boundary between aesthetic and non-aesthetic objects. These theories, usually called aesthetic attitude theories, argue that when we take the aesthetic attitude toward an object, we thereby make it an aesthetic object.

These theories originate in the notion of disinterest that was investigated by eighteenth-century aesthetic thinkers. While important to these thinkers, the idea of disinterest becomes even more crucial in the aesthetic theories of Kant and Schopenhauer. In these two philosophers, especially the latter, we begin to find aesthetic attitude theories. In the twentieth century, some major thinkers adopted the aesthetic attitude as a fundamental notion, but did not do so without facing serious criticism. Indeed, aesthetic attitude theories are not as popular as they once were, due to this criticism and to a more general shift of focus.

1. The Aesthetic Attitude

There are two parts to the aesthetic attitude: the aesthetic part, and the attitude part. Here, an attitude is a certain state of mind. In particular, it is a way of approaching experiences or orienting oneself toward the world. It may help to think of someone with an optimistic attitude. He has a tendency to see things in a positive light. With the aesthetic attitude, the thought is not that there are certain people who generally see things, so to speak, in an aesthetic light, but more aligned with what is meant by the request that someone “have a more optimistic attitude” or “take a more positive attitude” about a given circumstance. We are asked, in such situations, to

make ourselves attend in a certain way. In adopting an optimistic attitude, we focus on features of the situation that we can spin positively – we may realize the bad things are not really so bad and look instead for a silver lining. In adopting the aesthetic attitude, we focus on features of the situation that we think are relevant aesthetically – we may stop thinking about where we are parked and instead begin following the plot and the character development of the play being performed before us.

As these examples suggest, the aesthetic attitude is supposed to be a frame of mind that we can adopt more or less when we choose to. Of course, difficulties can arise for lots of reasons. A cell phone that rings during a symphony is reviled because it inevitably grabs our attention, and problems may arise adopting the aesthetic attitude, too, if we are distracted by hunger or unable to resist work-related worries. Thus, the analogy to optimism may be apt in a further way. It seems much easier for some people to adopt an optimistic attitude than it is for others, and many philosophers have thought that some people have a knack for taking the aesthetic attitude where others find it harder.

a. Introductory Clarifications

There are paradigm cases where we adopt the aesthetic attitude, for example, in a museum or as a spectator at the theater. It is, however, important to realize that the aesthetic attitude is not simply an attitude we take in museums, but one that we can take toward nature, too. Finding the colors of a sunset or the complexity of a nautilus beautiful means directing an aesthetic attitude toward the sunset or the nautilus and thinking about it aesthetically. Indeed, many have argued that we can take the aesthetic attitude toward anything at all, and in doing so, make it an aesthetic object. A street scene, though we would not describe it as art or nature, could thus be approached aesthetically. Since there are things that we can take the aesthetic attitude toward that are not art, the aesthetic attitude is not just an artistic attitude. It is much broader than that.

Not only can we take the aesthetic attitude toward things that are not art, but we can also take it toward things that are not beautiful. Some art is ugly, and certain artworks even flaunt their ugliness for artistic effect. In fact, calling something ugly is giving it an aesthetic evaluation, which in turn requires taking the aesthetic attitude toward it. So, in adopting the aesthetic

attitude, say, toward a sunset, you start to look at the aesthetic features of the sunset. For example, you might pay attention to the visual composition of the landscape and view, or perhaps to the soft color gradations. Upon inspecting these elements, you might actually come to find them unsatisfactory. You might notice a traffic jam, a patch of large, barren trees, or a few unappealing vapor trails left by planes. You might reasonably conclude that it was, upon further inspection, kind of an ugly sunset. This conclusion could only be reached by looking at the scene aesthetically, that is, adopting the aesthetic attitude toward the scene. This makes it clear that we adopt the aesthetic attitude not only toward beautiful things, but also toward ugly things. Indeed, we must adopt the aesthetic attitude if any conclusion about a thing's beauty or ugliness, in other words its aesthetic standing, is to be reached.

While these remarks make it clear that taking the aesthetic attitude toward something is not the same as finding it beautiful, it is a matter of debate whether the aesthetic attitude involves some kind of pleasure. We have seen that it does not necessarily involve straightforward aesthetic enjoyment or positive aesthetic evaluation, but it might still involve some broader kind of enjoyment, pleasure, or satisfaction. Whether it does and what kind exactly is something to be spelled out by the particular aesthetic attitude theory.

As mentioned above, many reserve the term 'aesthetic attitude theory' for a theory according to which aesthetic objects are properly distinguished from non-aesthetic objects by our ability to take the aesthetic attitude toward them. Not everyone agrees on this classification of aesthetic attitude theories, but there is sufficient consensus for us to assume it here. Given that, it may be helpful at the outset to point out that aesthetic attitude theories have experienced waning popularity in the past few decades. This may be due to criticism of the theory or to other theories that offer alternative accounts of the relevant distinction, both of which will be canvassed below.

Before continuing, a word of caution may be helpful. The term 'aesthetic' is applied to many things: we have already seen aesthetic attitude, aesthetic objects, and aesthetic experience, but philosophers also talk about aesthetic evaluations and aesthetic judgments (for example, judging that something is beautiful), aesthetic features (for example, symmetry), aesthetic contemplation, aesthetic emotions, and so on. Many of these will come up here, but the important thing to keep in mind is that this is just how philosophers refer to the special class of experiences, judgments,

emotions, and so forth. that pertains to the art-like realm discussed above. Different theorists take different views of how these notions relate to each other and which is the most basic, but all take as an aim the discussion of the special sphere of the aesthetic.

b. Disinterest

There are two ways of thinking about the aesthetic attitude that have been most prevalent. First, it has been thought of as a special kind of disinterested attitude. The person who adopts the aesthetic attitude does not view (hear, taste, and so forth) objects with some kind of personal interest, that is, with a view to what that object can do for her, broadly speaking. A collector may view an expensive painting she owns and praise herself for owning such a rare and pricey piece. We might say that, in such a case, she takes an economic attitude toward the painting, but she without a doubt fails to think about it aesthetically. If she were instead viewing the painting contemplatively, thinking about its composition, meaning, and so on, then she would be thinking about it aesthetically, and that seems to be due to her disinterested attitude toward it. Similarly, a music student taking a music theory test might listen for certain particular keys or chord progressions, but he seems to listen to the music with the goal of getting a good grade on his test, rather than listen to the music simply to enjoy it, or for the experience of listening to it.

For many, disinterest is only a necessary condition of the aesthetic attitude, so that an attitude's being disinterested does not guarantee that it is an aesthetic attitude. Something else may have to be present. A court judge will approach a trial with disinterest in this sense. He will try to be impartial and not let any personal feelings or goals cloud his judgment, but he does not thereby approach the trial aesthetically. Something else about his attitude would have to be present.

Furthermore, having this kind of disinterested attitude toward something by no means precludes finding it interesting. If the collector, in her more contemplative state, finds the interactions among a certain cluster of figures especially meaningful, then we can describe her as interested in those figures. This does not mean, however, that she is interested in them for some external purpose. Disinterestedness, then, does not indicate complete lack of interest (finding something uninteresting), but a lack of personal investment or goal-directed interest.

c. Appreciation for Its Own Sake

Suppose now that the music student above were instead listening to the music simply to enjoy it or just for the experience of listening to it. We might say that he was listening to the music for its own sake. This suggests the second traditional way of characterizing the aesthetic attitude. According to this way of thinking about it, the aesthetic attitude involves considering or appreciating something (for example an artwork) for its own sake. This means that we want to experience the work, not because it fulfills some desire for something else, but just because we want to have that experience. So a museum-goer may spend time in the Egyptian art galleries in order to make her son happy, but she may spend time in Islamic art galleries simply because she wants to look at and experience Islamic art, that is, she wants to see the objects for their own sake and not for the sake of anything beyond or outside of them. We will return to both of these traditional characterizations at greater length below.

Now that some idea of the nature of the aesthetic attitude is in place, we can turn to the development of the aesthetic attitude in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After that, we will be appropriately placed to look at the three main twentieth-century aesthetic attitude theories and some of the criticisms that have been made of them.

2. Historical Underpinnings

Aesthetic attitude theories are marked by their general insistence on the fundamental importance of the aesthetic attitude. Some of these theories hold that the nature of art is explained by the aesthetic attitude. This is generally accepted as an insufficient way of setting the boundaries of art, for reasons we have already seen, since nature, too, is a perfectly fine thing to take the aesthetic attitude toward. Most aesthetic attitude theories thus offer subtler and more complex accounts of the interaction among the aesthetic attitude, art, and beauty. Indeed, many of these philosophers have been keen on distinguishing a variety of different aesthetic qualities. In addition to beauty, they are interested in sublimity, novelty, charm, and so on.

There is no consensus regarding where exactly in the history of philosophy the aesthetic attitude first appears. The phrase ‘aesthetic attitude’ only appears in print very late in the nineteenth century, so some maintain that, before the twentieth century, there were no aesthetic attitude theories properly speaking. Even granting this, there is still clear historical precedent for the

theory, and in spirit these historical theories bear a great deal of resemblance to the later aesthetic attitude theories.

Tracing the aesthetic attitude theory back to its origins, we may find its clearest early ancestor in the eighteenth-century notion of disinterest. This is to be found among a group of British thinkers writing about beauty and taste. Among these, Lord Shaftesbury is probably the earliest to discuss the notion in any real depth. The next important figure is Immanuel Kant, who wrote his three critiques at the end of the eighteenth century, the third of which, the Critique of the Power of Judgment (1790), is devoted to his theory of aesthetics and teleology. The final seminal figure is Arthur Schopenhauer, whose book The World as Will and Representation (1844) discusses aesthetic contemplation at length. It is in Schopenhauer that some notion of the aesthetic attitude is most noticeable and the similarities to modern theories most apparent. This section will provide an overview of the classical sources of aesthetic attitude theories, starting from their seeds in eighteenth-century British theories of taste, through Kant, and up to Schopenhauer.

a. Eighteenth-Century British Philosophers

The relationship between the aesthetic attitude and eighteenth-century British theories of taste is a subject of debate. Some philosophers, like Jerome Stolnitz, argue that there is a deep continuity, and that, really, these British philosophers have the same essential views as other classical aesthetic attitude theorists like Kant and Schopenhauer. Others, like George Dickie, have argued that there is an important divide between the two groups of theories. The details of the debate aside, it is hard to deny any connection. At the very least, these British philosophers influenced Kant and thus, either directly or indirectly, inspired everyone who has written about the aesthetic attitude since.

Several important British philosophers wrote about aesthetics and art. Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, and David Hume, among yet others, wrote prominently about beauty and taste. Their theories are often referred to as theories of taste because they each essentially involve the notion of a special kind of faculty, the faculty of taste, that we use to determine an object's aesthetic value. This faculty is generally taken to be naturally better in some than in others, though we can do things to improve it (expose ourselves to variety, learn about the artistic medium, and so on).

Later British theorists, such as Edmund Burke, argued against such a faculty, worrying that it failed to really explain anything.

Most importantly, it is in these theories that we first find the notion of disinterest (though in Hume it appears as a lack of "prejudice"). Each of these philosophers argued that aesthetic appreciation involves disinterested pleasure. Despite slight differences among their notions of disinterest, the general idea is clear. When we are disinterested, we do not regard the aesthetic object as a tool for serving our own interests. One might wonder, however, whether it is independent from all other interests and all other values.

Shaftesbury argues that aesthetic experience is disinterested, but has a Platonic picture on which beauty is essentially the same as goodness and truth. Aesthetic appreciation is thus not devoid of any connection whatsoever to other values (ethical and epistemological), despite lacking connection to our personal ends and interests. For him, appreciating something aesthetically involves the same essential feeling as appreciating something morally. Shaftesbury does not, however, have a proper aesthetic attitude theory according to the above classification. His view is not one according to which our approaching something aesthetically makes it an aesthetic object. Beauty, along with morality and truth, are independent of our minds, though it is through taking the aesthetic attitude that we are able to recognize them. Shaftesbury may think that these things depend on the mind of God, but they certainly do not depend on us.

Hutcheson and Hume, on the other hand, disagree with Shaftesbury's unified view. Both reject the equivalence of beauty, goodness, and truth, and see more of a gap between aesthetic value and other values. The details of Hutcheson and Hume differ, but both adopt Shaftesbury's stress on disinterest. This is the crucial point on which all three theorists agree: they all share the central idea of disinterested pleasure as independent from personal interest, and it is this notion that forms the starting point for aesthetic attitude theories.

b. Kant

Kant is the next place to look for a theory of the aesthetic attitude. He takes up the notion of our judgments of beauty, but seems to follow earlier suspicions about a special faculty of taste. He opts instead to make his central notion that of aesthetic judgments, also called judgments of taste

or judgments of the beautiful. His task is then to explain what exactly these are and how we make them. According to Kant, aesthetic judgments involve four important aspects. They must be disinterested, be universal, exhibit purposiveness without purpose, and be necessary. This article will focus mainly on disinterestedness, as it is there that we see most clearly the connection to the aesthetic attitude. A brief explanation of the other three will be included, as well, in order to present a clearer picture of the overall view. (See also the article on Kant's Aesthetics.)

The first necessary condition regards the quality that our judgments of taste have. This is not quality in the sense of their being good or bad, accurate or inaccurate, or so on. Instead, by the quality of such judgments, Kant means their nature, what they are like and what they feel like. Kant points out, first, that all judgments of taste are essentially subjective. They come from our feelings, not from any objective fact that exists out in the world. He then argues that there are three kinds of satisfaction: that which we take in the agreeable, the beautiful, and the good, and he uses the contrasts to better clarify the nature of judgments of taste.

First, the agreeable gratifies some desire. We find tea agreeable when we have a desire for tea. In this sense, the pleasure in the tea is interested, since it serves our purpose. Kant also points out that our finding it agreeable depends essentially on us and our psychology. This also means, though, that it is not up to us to choose what to find agreeable. Our psychologies determine what we find agreeable, and we cannot change what we desire simply by willing to. One cannot stop a craving, for example, just by choosing to stop, since cravings do not work that way.

Next, we come to the good. The good is esteemed and approved, and there is objective value set on it. We find being generous good when we set objective value on generosity or generous actions. Pleasure in the good is also interested, since, for Kant, reason determines what we find good. This is still a personal interest because each person has an interest in bringing about the good. The person who finds generosity good has an interest in bringing about a more generous world, for example, by being generous and encouraging other people to do so.

The beautiful, in contrast, is disinterested pleasure. The art collector who enjoys her artwork for its monetary value enjoys that work in an interested way, and thus has not taken the aesthetic

attitude toward it. Consequently, any positive judgment she produces will not be a judgment of taste. Kant takes this idea further, arguing that anyone who really approaches something with a contemplative, disinterested attitude and finds it beautiful (that is, takes the aesthetic attitude toward it) will not even be interested in whether the object in fact exists. To want the object to exist is to have an interest wrapped up in it, or in other words, to have something be at stake in its existence. Kant illustrates his point with a helpful example. Imagine a conversation in which one person asks another whether he finds a certain palace beautiful. He answers by saying that he dislikes things made on the backs and at the expense of the proletariat, or that he would never want such a thing for himself. These are cases where the palace's existence is offensive or undesirable. The man has simply not answered the question of its beauty. The man has not taken an aesthetic attitude toward it. This is what Kant means when he says that the object's existence cannot factor into the judgment. The aesthetic attitude is related to these remarks in that we must have a certain frame of mind, that is, a disinterested one, in order to make aesthetic judgments.

There are three other conditions of judgments of taste. They must be universal, which just means that they feel as though they apply to everyone. Calling something beautiful means feeling like everyone should recognize it as beautiful (even if we realize that it is not a fact about the object that it is beautiful). The objects of these judgments also exhibit what Kant calls purposiveness without purpose, or alternatively, finality without an end (a translation offered by Creed Meredith). This may sound complex, but it just means that, while there may be no actual purpose of the object (or at least, not one of which we are aware), we are struck by how it seems to be made for a purpose. For example, though we may not know why a plant's leaves are arranged in angles echoing the Fibonacci sequence, we notice a certain pattern and appreciate the purposiveness there. If, though, the actual purpose entered our judgment, then we would have the beginnings of interested pleasure, which Kant has argued cannot be aesthetic. Finally, these judgments are also necessary in the sense that it feels like we judge according to some unspoken universal rule, from which our judgment necessarily follows.

Above, we saw that Kant takes aesthetic judgments to be subjective. However, the bigger picture reveals a more nuanced view. Such judgments come from our feelings of pleasure, but only when we take that pleasure to be universal, necessary, and felt in response to purposiveness rather than purpose. The universality, necessity, and reaction to the appearance of purpose (and

not to actual purpose) exist only because our pleasure is disinterested. It is precisely when we experience this kind of subjective yet disinterested pleasure that we think these judgments hold universally and necessarily. Thus disinterest, a notion first brought to the fore by the eighteenth-century British philosophers, continues to be a central notion in Kant's aesthetics. However, Kant does not seem to have a true aesthetic attitude theory in the sense defined above. It is a matter of interpretation, but it looks as though he does not think that any object we approach with this frame of mind thereby becomes an aesthetic object. Many argue that it is not until Schopenhauer, for whom disinterest is even more important, that we see an actual aesthetic attitude theory.

c. Schopenhauer

The notion of the aesthetic attitude may not appear fully formed until Schopenhauer, in Book III of The World as Will and Representation. Schopenhauer does not use the term 'aesthetic attitude', either, but instead talks about aesthetic contemplation. His understanding of this form of contemplation, however, is clearly related to twentieth-century aesthetic attitude theories, and as such he is generally looked to as the historical philosopher whose view is closest to the contemporary versions of the theory

To understand his view of the aesthetic attitude, it helps to know a little bit about Schopenhauer's philosophy. He understands life as driven by the Will, which is a kind of unceasing desire and forms the basis of perpetual human suffering. When we desire something, we suffer in not having it. If we were to obtain all the things we desired, we would be overcome with boredom, a deeper and more poignant suffering. Experiencing the world in this way is experiencing the world as Will. However, he sees a few ways out of this. The most permanent solution is to adopt a severe ascetic outlook and stop having desires at all, but a temporary solution is to be found in aesthetic contemplation, where we experience the world as representation rather than as Will.

In a famous passage (section 34), Schopenhauer describes a few things that go along with the aesthetic attitude (although, again, he does not use this term). We may then begin to see how this

contemplative state can release us from the cycle of suffering. First, we do not look at things in the ordinary way. This is generally accepted as having both a perceptual meaning and a non-perceptual one. There is a special aesthetic mode of perception where we attend much more fully to the surface features of an object. However, we also typically look at something with an eye to its relationships to other things. Schopenhauer argues that this boils down to looking at it with an eye to how it might help our own goals, that is, relate to our wills. In the aesthetic attitude, though, this relational viewing is completely absent, and we only pay attention to things themselves. Second, we do not have in mind abstract thought or reasoning, but instead focus on the perception alone. Here Schopenhauer says that the representation fills our mind and we are thus filled with calm contemplation. In this way, we stop thinking about the will and, since the perception takes up all of our mental 'space', we no longer sense a difference between ourselves and the object perceived. This means that, third, we will begin to see, in a sense, through the object itself to its Idea. So far, what this means is a bit opaque, but we can understand it in the following way. When we stop looking at the particular thing and what it might do for our own ends, we stop experiencing the world as related to our wills. Instead, we experience the world as representation. But these representations must be of something, and indeed they are representations of Ideas. These are similar to Plato's Ideas or Forms: they are eternal and unchangeable. So when we contemplate things aesthetically, that is, take the aesthetic attitude toward things, we can know the Ideas. (It is, moreover, the aim of the aesthetic attitude to know the Ideas.)

Since everything represents Ideas and manifests the will in some way, anything can become the object of the aesthetic attitude. Not only does this mean that, according to our definition, Schopenhauer has an aesthetic attitude theory, but it also means that the aesthetic attitude has profound practical import. It can release us from the cycle of constant suffering, since we stop experiencing our wills in any way. Aesthetic contemplation also helps us deal with very real, very difficult situations. If we start to think aesthetically about the world, other people, and ourselves, then we will stop being angry, resentful, or sad (though we will also stop being excited or happy). We will instead see things that cause us pain as manifestations of the Idea of humanity, as nothing new or special. To put it a slightly different way, we will stop taking things

personally. The vicissitudes of life will become just that, simply fluctuations through which we can have real encounters with Ideas.

It would be misleading to suggest that taking the aesthetic attitude is easy and comes naturally to everyone. It is even slightly misleading to call it aesthetic contemplation. Contemplation suggests passivity, but Schopenhauer argues that artistic geniuses can not only actively adopt the aesthetic attitude, but can also remain in that state for longer than the typical fleeting moment. They find beauty in all kinds of places and use art to communicate their insights to the rest of us. These views have inspired a debate about whether the aesthetic attitude (and aesthetic experience) is active or passive: whether we can make ourselves adopt this outlook and have aesthetic experiences, or whether they simply happen to us when the stars align just right. Schopenhauer answers that the aesthetic attitude is some mix of these, that certain people are more adept at engaging it actively, while it is a transient and happenstance state for others.

In Schopenhauer, we thus see a clear extension of the earlier notion of disinterest. In aesthetic contemplation, we stop thinking about the world and the objects in it as means to our ends, that is, as objects of our will. We also see attention and perception take center stage. Aesthetic contemplation, which can be active or passive, involves intense focus where the perception completely fills the mind. Finally, we see a crucial role for the aesthetic attitude in the larger theory. It helps us know Ideas, and by doing so, releases us from endless suffering. Many aspects of Schopenhauer's view have resonated with subsequent philosophers of aesthetics. But in order to fully adopt his view, one must adopt much of the rest of his philosophy, that is, his theory of Ideas, representation, and the Will. Later aesthetic attitude theorists are generally unwilling to do this, but they still manage to preserve some key aspects of the view.

Chapter 12

Aesthetic Attitude Theories

Twentieth-Century Aesthetic Attitude Theories

There are three prominent aesthetic attitude theorists in the twentieth century: Edward Bullough, Jerome Stolnitz, and Roger Scruton. Each of these three theorists tries to accomplish at least two major goals. First, each tries to give an intuitive definition of what the aesthetic attitude is, one that does not make the wrong attitudes (for example, interested ones) aesthetic attitudes but includes all the attitudes that do seem to be aesthetic. The second aim of each theory is to say something about the relationship between the aesthetic attitude and the philosophy of art and aesthetics more generally. In particular, they all use the aesthetic attitude to provide a definition of aesthetic objects, that is, to demarcate aesthetic objects from non-aesthetic ones.

a. Bullough and Psychical Distance

Bullough, a psychologist, is the first theorist here to use the term ‘aesthetic attitude’, but actually most often uses the interchangeable term ‘aesthetic consciousness’. His theory essentially involves disinterest, which he talks about as psychical distance. It is worth noting at the outset that his theory has not gained widespread support, though it has significantly contributed to the shaping of subsequent theories of the aesthetic attitude. We will see that his way of approaching and developing the notion of disinterest, though perhaps flawed, provides an interesting and evocative metaphor for aesthetic experience.

Bullough calls the central feature of aesthetic consciousness psychical distance, a metaphorical extension of spatial and temporal distance. We are all familiar with what it is to be distanced from something in space; it is just to be far away. Similarly, to be temporally distant from something is to exist, say, a hundred years after it. Bullough characterizes the experience of psychical distance as that of not being very emotionally close to or attached to something and not thinking about its practical role. His example is of a fog. Normally, a fog at sea causes us anxiety

because it drastically reduces our field of vision, is associated with unexpected dangers, and is difficult to navigate. If, however, we take the aesthetic attitude toward it, we can direct our attention to its surface features. The fog may look soft and even palpable, and the air may feel peaceful and still. These latter sensations occur because we have been able to insert the proper psychical distance between ourselves and the fog.

This distance, Bullough says, is the result of putting the perceived object "out of gear" with our practical interests. Our practical ends should have no traction on our thoughts when we are properly distanced. We should not think about practical or personal concerns, but instead focus on the object itself. We also need, therefore, to be properly distanced from certain emotions, like those that concern our personal stake or even those that concern morality. That said, emotional response is still intimately involved in aesthetic consciousness and experience, but these emotions need to be generalized beyond our individual, particular feelings. So far, this sounds similar to the notion of disinterest discussed above. Bullough adds to this by explaining two ways distancing can go wrong.

We can fail to be properly distanced from a work if we are too psychically close to it or too psychically far away – that is, if we are too emotionally involved or too emotionally removed. Bullough refers to these conditions respectively as under-distancing and over-distancing. Under-distancing occurs when we are unable to separate our personal interests from what we experience. Suppose a jealous husband watches a performance of Othello and becomes increasingly suspicious, his rage building, and eventually only really sees himself and his wife instead of Othello and Desdemona. This man is under-distanced, since his emotions are too involved in the play's action. On the other hand, imagine a brilliant satire of ancient Chinese society that we are now in very poor position to appreciate. This is a case of over-distancing. For many such works, the artwork may be sadly unable to engage our emotions sufficiently because we are too removed from it. Thus there is what Bullough terms a distance-limit, beyond which we are too far away to have aesthetic consciousness. He says that, practically speaking, people should err on the side of trying to distance themselves, since our tendency is to get too emotionally involved. What we should aim for, in theory, is the greatest distance without passing the distance-limit.

Here, we can see that spatial and temporal distance are not merely metaphors for psychical distance. We are too temporally removed to properly engage with the brilliant Chinese satire. Similarly, Bullough argues, being too spatially close to a work can make us unable to engage with it properly. This is in fact how he explains the relegation of culinary art to a second class art form. Since we have to taste these things and thus come into direct physical contact with them, we are simply unable to distance ourselves sufficiently from them.

Bullough also uses his theory to interesting effect in explaining why artists are sometimes censored, ostracized, or banned. Artists are better able to distance themselves than the average person, so they see more objects aesthetically. Non-artists, however, may look at the art and see only a hypersexualized youth (Nabokov's Lolita), say, or a sacrilegious depiction of a holy figure (Serrano's "Piss Christ")

Many have found these implications implausible. Physical closeness to a work, for example, does not actually seem to preclude the proper psychical distance or disinterested attitude. There are further worries that, at best, Bullough only offers a necessary condition for the aesthetic attitude. Without something further, he ca not distinguish it from the court judge's disinterested attitude. That said, Bullough is still an important figure in the development of aesthetic attitude theory. His development of a structured and explanatorily ambitious view set the tone for the aesthetic attitude theories that follow.

b. Stolnitz

For Stolnitz, the aesthetic attitude involves attending to something (anything) in a disinterested and sympathetic way, and doing so for its own sake. When we look at something in a disinterested way, we look at it non-instrumentally. This is just to say that we do not look at it as a means (as an instrument) to some other end. So, as above, the collector who admires her painting for its rarity fails to engage with her painting aesthetically. Similarly, the music student who looks for musical knowledge in the keys and chords of the symphony does not engage with it aesthetically. Interestingly, Stolnitz mentions that this also implies that the attitude of an art critic, either amateur or professional, is opposed to the aesthetic attitude. To see why this is so, it is enough to recognize that the critic has a goal: to form and pass judgment.

By including sympathy as a criterion of the aesthetic attitude, Stolnitz introduces the idea that the right attitude must take the artwork on its own terms. One needs to ignore personal conflicts and biases. The discovery that an artist was a miser should not change one's aesthetic attitude toward the work, though it may give one pause when thinking morally about the artist. To up the ante, he argues that in order to view propaganda art or Nazi art with the proper aesthetic viewpoint, one will have to view it sympathetically, as well, and ignore the moral backdrop against which these things exist. (Nobody said that taking the aesthetic attitude was easy.) Failure to do so will taint any aesthetic experience that results, something we may be able to see in our occasional complaints to others that they "haven't even given it a chance." (To be clear, Stolnitz does not make and is not committed to any claims about the moral import of taking the aesthetic attitude in these difficult situations.)

Stolnitz understands attention, the third major component of his definition, as a kind of alert state. He agrees with predecessors that it is a kind of contemplation, but says that we have to understand contemplation in the right way. He agrees with Schopenhauer that the aesthetic attitude is not as passive as the term 'contemplation' suggests. (He disagrees, however, with Schopenhauer's claim that only artistic geniuses can actively engage in aesthetic contemplation.) Aesthetic contemplation does not involve simply sitting back, relaxing, and letting the mind wander. It involves mental focus and thought, and such intense mental involvement may manifest itself in a tightening of muscles during a thrilling scene, a foot tapping to the beat, or a tilt of one's head like the figure in a painting. Such physical manifestations are not required by the aesthetic attitude, but they exemplify the active, engaged mental state that itself does constitute the proper attitude.

Stolnitz is a proper aesthetic attitude theorist who argues that we can adopt the aesthetic attitude toward anything. He acknowledges that this implies that nothing is inherently unaesthetic. Stolnitz offers intuitive support for this view, pointing out that artists often approach ugly or boring objects with the aesthetic attitude and create something beautiful. A deformed and hideous bell pepper may, when approached in the right way, become a striking aesthetic object, as in the photographs of Edward Weston. Similarly, a humble shipping container or typeface may, when one takes the proper aesthetic attitude toward it, appear noble, subtle, and beautiful. So we can find traditionally ugly things aesthetic, but we can also find boring, everyday objects

aesthetic when we approach them in the right way. It follows, moreover, from this view that neither art nor nature is inherently more aesthetic than the other. Since nothing is inherently unaesthetic, nothing in art is at an aesthetic disadvantage to anything in nature, and vice versa.

He also uses the aesthetic attitude to demarcate the bounds between things that count as aesthetically relevant and irrelevant, that is, what is and is not relevant to the aesthetic experience and to any verdict that may result from it. Thoughts that are compatible with disinterested, sympathetic attention can be aesthetically relevant as long as they do not divert attention away from the aesthetic object. Certain kinds of interpretation can thus count as aesthetically relevant or be ruled out as irrelevant. A poem might perfectly well suggest a cathedral without saying it explicitly. The thought of a cathedral that accompanies the poem is thus aesthetically relevant. However, it might also remind one of a personal experience, say, of one's wedding that took place in a cathedral. This diverts attention away from the poem and is thus, argues Stolnitz, aesthetically irrelevant.

Stolnitz also applies these ideas to the problem of determining the aesthetic relevance of external facts. Such facts are aesthetically relevant when they do not weaken our aesthetic attention, pertain to the meaning or expressiveness of the object, and enhance the quality of one's aesthetic response. For example, it may be relevant to know that a certain painting is of the crucifixion of Jesus. It may, however, be irrelevant that Gauguin's rendering of the Crucifixion does not accurately capture the story as it is told in the gospels. Perhaps the point is, so to speak, precisely to paint it in a different light.

Of all the theorists surveyed here, Stolnitz falls most squarely into our model of an aesthetic attitude theorist. His notion of the aesthetic attitude is completely explicit and forms the core of his theory. He uses it to define aesthetic objects and explain the aesthetic relevance of external thoughts and facts, as well as a host of related aesthetic issues.

c. Scruton

For Scruton, the aesthetic attitude has three main components. First, its goal is some kind of pleasure, enjoyment, or satisfaction. This means that, although the aesthetic attitude may not always in fact yield pleasure, it is our hope in taking such an attitude that it will. If we thought

there were no enjoyment of any kind we could get out of an object, we would not attend to it aesthetically. The view should not be mistaken for what we might call aesthetic hedonism, the view that aesthetic value resides solely in a thing's ability to give us pleasure. Pleasure should not be thought of too narrowly, either. Sad music can afford aesthetic satisfaction, as can paintings of violent scenes.

The aesthetic attitude must also involve attention to an object for its own sake. Scruton expresses dissatisfaction about how little the notion of 'for its own sake' has been explained by other theorists. To see this, consider that we know perfectly well what it means to do something for our own sake or for someone else's sake. It is to do something with their interests in mind. What would attending to art for the sake of the art's interests be, though? Scruton finds the particular phrase strange, but tries to find the kernel of insight in it. To be interested in something for its own sake involves a desire to go on experiencing it, but not in order to satisfy another, separate desire. This means that, if the art collector has a desire to look at her painting, and part of her desire to look at it is that she desires to admire its rarity, then she has not taken the aesthetic attitude. She is interested in it for its own sake only when there are no other desires she has that seeing the painting would satisfy.

Third and finally, the aesthetic attitude is normative. Normative just means that there is a certain kind of 'should'-ness about it or that it explicitly or implicitly contains a value judgment. If a mother tells her son to be respectful, she makes a normative claim on him: that it is good to be respectful, and that he should do it. Furthermore, if she just notices that he is being disrespectful and disapproves, there is something normative involved in her disapproving reaction. The aesthetic attitude is normative in the sense that any judgment that comes out of the aesthetic attitude carries normative force. In other words, when we think that something is beautiful, we think that other people should find it beautiful, too. This is how Scruton, a self-proclaimed Kantian, sees himself as taking on Kant's view above that aesthetic judgments are universal.

It is worth remarking that Scruton may not be talking about the aesthetic attitude as we have seen it so far. Until now, the aesthetic attitude has been understood as a state of mind or a kind of viewpoint that one can generally adopt at will, and that must exist prior to any aesthetic experience. Scruton writes, however, that the aesthetic attitudes are what we express when we

make aesthetic judgments. This would mean that, in calling something beautiful, we make an aesthetic judgment and thus express an aesthetic attitude, namely, the aesthetic attitude we had when we judged or experienced the object as beautiful. While not a problem with his view, this means that he may not be talking about exactly the same thing as the earlier theorists. Among other things, this view leads to there being many different aesthetic attitudes, rather than just one special frame of mind or mode of perception that we are in when we have particular aesthetic experiences. Scruton's definition may actually come closer to the normal meaning of 'attitude', in the way that we talk about an attitude of disapproval or an attitude of hope. Here, we find attitudes of beauty, elegance, loveliness, their opposites, and so on.

4. Criticism

In 1964, George Dickie offered a set of famous objections to aesthetic attitude theories. After Dickie, the aesthetic attitude has received very little attention outside Scruton, which may suggest a general acceptance of his objections. A few defenses of aesthetic attitude theories have been offered, but the literature has not stirred much since, indicating perhaps instead simply a waning interest in the topic.

a. Against Aesthetic Attitude Theories

In his well-known paper, "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude," Dickie objects in turn to each of Bullough and Stolnitz's theories. Dickie argues that the former thinks of distancing as a special kind of action that we can perform: we put ourselves "out of gear" with practical concerns. We can aim to and can successfully distance ourselves from perceived objects. These make distancing sound very much like an action. Dickie swiftly dismisses this view on the grounds that there really is no such special action. What really happens in such cases is that we attend differently, and attending is a perfectly normal and unmysterious action. One might worry about the details of Dickie's argument here, but since Stolnitz's view is the more nuanced and fully developed of the two, the majority of criticism is focused on his view.

Recall that, for Stolnitz, the aesthetic attitude involves a special kind of aesthetic perception: disinterested, sympathetic attention. Dickie focuses on the 'disinterested' part of this definition, noting first that 'disinterested' is an unhelpful clarification unless it means something to be

'interested'. Stolnitz, so far, should be fine with this, and we may recall that he gives many cases of interested attention to clarify what disinterest amounts to.

In essence Dickie argues that there are really no cases of interested attention. Any alleged case of interested attention in fact falls into one of two categories: either it is not attention to the artwork at all; or it is, but it really is not a different kind of attention from disinterested attention. On the one hand, there are examples like the jealous husband watching Othello or the art collector who is happy about her investment. Dickie argues that these are really cases where the perceiver is not actually paying attention to the artwork. In the former case, the jealous husband is paying attention to the situation with his wife rather than the play. In the latter case, the art collector is paying attention to her finances, rather than the painting.

On the other hand, there are cases like the music student paying attention to chord progressions or a father watching his daughter at a piano recital. In these situations, Dickie argues, the music student and the father are paying attention to the artwork. There is no difference in their manner of attending or perceiving, despite perhaps a difference in motive. To sharpen this, the idea is that there is no special mode of perception that corresponds uniquely to the way we perceive when we adopt the aesthetic attitude. There is only one way to perceive or attend to something, and that is just by looking at it or noting features of it. The father, the music student, and the ideal aesthetic perceiver are all doing just that. The father and music student may be differently motivated, but this means nothing for the way in which they actually perceive or attend to the work.

The key to Dickie's argument is that he takes Bullough and Stolnitz to understand the aesthetic attitude as involving a special kind of action or attention. From this, he argues that there is no special mode or manner of acting or attending that uniquely produces aesthetic experiences.

b. In Defense of Aesthetic Attitude Theories

As mentioned earlier, some responses to this have been offered. Gary Kemp offered an extended response to Dickie's objections. Foremost among these is the denial of Dickie's crucial premise that there is only really one way of acting or attending. Kemp argues that there are many different ways of attending. The music student may attend to the chord progressions, to the

orchestration, or to the rhythms. Here, the student seems to be attending fully, but also in an interested way. But if he attends for the sake of enjoyment, then he is certainly attending differently and perhaps disinterestedly. These, Kemp says, are genuinely different ways of attending, and the real difficulty of the aesthetic attitude theory is to explain why some of them seem aesthetic and some do not. He then offers his own explanation of this distinction.

Kemp argues that disinterested attention does not seem to select the right cases. For example, it is intuitive that the father who attends his daughter's recital could attend perfectly aesthetically to her performance, despite the fact that the reason he is there is to see his daughter. Kemp instead prefers Scruton's notion of interest in the experience for its own sake. This supports examples like the father. Once he starts listening, he has a desire to go on listening to the music, we can imagine, and this desire does not now depend on any other desire to sustain it (although it came to exist only because he wanted to hear his daughter play). There is now no reason for his desire aside from his wanting to keep listening to the music.

c. Where to Go From Here

Aesthetic attitude theories have enjoyed isolated appearances in the past forty years, but the interest in it may be declining. Again, this may be due in part to the belief that Dickie's criticisms were devastating and final, but it may also be due to the general dissatisfaction with the theoretical role the aesthetic attitude has been made to play. Many have moved to views of aesthetic experience, rather than aesthetic attitude, as the crucial notion to be considered. The differences between the two are subtle, but definite. Recall that the aesthetic attitude is a point of view one takes. It is, in a sense, a way of priming our experience in which we mentally set ourselves up to pay attention to certain things. The experiences that result, if we have been successful, are aesthetic experiences. These aesthetic experiences, in certain contemporary views, play the theoretical role that the aesthetic attitude was originally meant to play. Thus, philosophers have recently tried to draw the boundary between aesthetic and non-aesthetic objects using the notion of an aesthetic experience instead of the aesthetic attitude. The things that afford aesthetic experiences (or, alternatively, facilitate it) are aesthetic objects. These views can extend their theoretical reaches further in many ways. For example, they can offer a definition of artworks as the things that are created intentionally in order to afford aesthetic

experiences. As such, these theories may have largely supplanted the original aesthetic attitude theories, since aesthetic experience can seem like a less presumptuous notion and more theoretically powerful. This move to aesthetic experience is most prominent in the work of Monroe Beardsley, but also to be found in Malcolm Budd, Kendall Walton, and many other contemporary thinkers. Whatever the fate of the aesthetic attitude theories and the aesthetic experience theories that follow them, the notion of a special kind of aesthetic attitude or experience remains, if not of central theoretical importance, of great interest in thinking about our aesthetic lives.

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