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THE BEHOLDER'S SHARE: PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION AND IMAGINATION

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Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.
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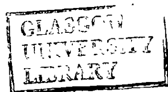

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is twofold. I undertake to show that theories of pictorial representation give an unsatisfactory account of pictorial experience because they neglect the role of imaginative activity in the spectator's response. To remedy this problem, I outline a theory of imagination and use it to elucidate the nature of this activity.

In Part I, I review theories of pictorial representation and assert that while "seeing-in" recognizes the imaginative component in pictorial experience, it concentrates too narrowly on the visual experience of the spectator. I advocate Schier's Natural Generativity as an alternative to "seeing-in" because it has a wider scope than perception theories.

In Part II, I examine the diverse activities attributed to imagination in the work of philosophers from Plato to Wittgenstein and put forward a spectrum model to organize these activities. Using the aesthetic theories of Kant and others, I argue that imaginative activity is central to the creation and appreciation of works of art. After delimiting the role of imagination in aesthetic experience, I show the ways imagination is used in the interpretation and appreciation of <u>pictures</u> by analyzing the kinds of imaginative activity possible (and relevant) in the spectator's response.

In the final chapter I offer further justification for the value of imagination in aesthetic experience. I draw together the ideas of Parts I and II, and conclude that as a theory of pictorial representation, Natural Generativity offers a flexibility which welcomes the role of imagination.

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Finally, special thanks go to my family for their caring support, and to my husband, Raymond Gillespie, for his enduring optimism.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that the work is my own.

PART I

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

My objective in this thesis is to elucidate the nature of pictorial representation through an examination of the spectator's experience. The logical relation which holds between a picture and some object is that the picture represents the object. While we can accept this as an account of the function of a picture, it does not explain how we understand pictures as representations or how our experience of a picture differs from that of the object it represents.

Most theories of pictorial representation attempt only to explain the relation between the picture and the object it represents. For example, the Resemblance Theory maintains that pictures represent their objects in virtue of the resemblance which holds between the picture's images and what they represent. Some theories, such as "seeing-in", explain the relation in terms of how the spectator sees the picture. "Seeing-in" claims that pictures represent in virtue of the fact that we see objects in the picture, e.g. we see a tree in the painted patch in the corner of a picture. In this respect, both views illustrate that the concept of a picture entails that it must be perceived, so in this respect we approach

the question of pictorial representation from the point of view of the percipient.

An inquiry into the nature of pictoral representation thus includes a consideration of the beholder's share: what we see in the picture; how we recognize the images in the picture; what role perception, thought, and imagination have in the activity of interpreting the picture's content. "Seeing-in", for example, concentrates on the visual experience of the spectator. This kind of approach isolates a feature of the spectator's experience as definitive of how a picture represents a thing. While it does not entirely ignore the other features of pictorial experience, it marginalizes them. In Part I, I argue that this approach does not provide a cogent account of pictorial experience, even if we wish to identify some conditions which must hold if a picture is to be understood as such. In respect of establishing such conditions, the merits of Flint Schier's Natural Generativity will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Pictorial experience is not unique, though it differs from ordinary experience in that the spectator treats a picture as a representation in addition to treating it as an object in the world. In other words, a picture is treated as an object hanging in a gallery and as a picture _of_ _something_. I advocate the view that we use the same interpretative tools when we perceive both the world and representations of it. That is, no special perceptual

capacities are required in pictorial experience. However, this is not to suppose that when we approach pictures as art objects that the experience is not aesthetic.

1.2 Pictures, Interpretation, and Imagination

We know that pictures function as representations of the world, but in studying this relationship pictorial experience itself should be taken into account. What this experience consists in, and the variety of responses which are appropriate to a single picture, are an integral part of understanding pictures as such.

My observations about pictorial experience are confined to our perceptions, thoughts and imaginings in connection to pictures as art, namely paintings. In this context, as is the context of pictorial representation, my subject is <u>representational</u> paintings. While some aestheticians put abstract works, such as one of Rothko's colour paintings, in this category, I will limit my discussion to naturalistic or realistic pictures, including impressionism and some post-impressionist works. The line between representational and non-representational is not sharply drawn, and I make no attempt here to draw that line. In my view, each picture should be considered on an individual basis, and it might even be counter-productive to try to see how an abstract work is representational if such a treatment was not

intended.

The activity involved in the understanding and appreciation of pictures is an interpretative activity. Therefore, when using "interpretation" to describe pictorial experience I equate the term with the activity of interpreting.[1] In this sense, the interpretation of a work is an experience which is part of the overall appreciation of a picture, rather than just a particular reading of a work (taking into account that different interpretations of a single picture can be equally valid).

The spectator's interpretation of a picture consists in a range of activities from perception to imagination, including both sensory imagining or imaging, and non-sensory imagining. While visual perception of a picture is a necessary condition of experiencing it properly, and therefore of appreciating and evaluating it, other activities such as thought and imagination may play a greater or lesser role depending on what the artist has created and depending on the spectator's "cognitive stock", that is, his or her background knowledge, beliefs, etc. The shortcomings of some theories of pictorial representation stem from a failure to take into account some of these aspects of the spectator's experience. I will claim that there is a particular lack of attention to the imaginative component of pictorial experience. In fact, some theories discourage imaginative

activity, and argue that it is has no place in the appreciation of artworks. This position is supported by claims that imaginative activity is irrelevant to interpreting the work and that it can be detrimental to our aesthetic experience of the object- imagination spiriting the spectator away from the work itself.

There are two main reasons why this view is not unpopular. Firstly, imagination is commonly associated with fancy, fantasy, daydreams, and with anything which frees us from practical concerns. The concept has also been generally distrusted in philosophy. Alan White's observation encapsulates this view: "Descartes says he gave up reading fables because they may 'make one imagine many events possible which in reality are not so'."[2] Imagination is thus treated as a capacity which must be kept in check by reason, for without this restraint, it will misrepresent reality to us.

Secondly, the concept of imagination is so overused that it has become vague and therefore obsolete. There is an odd connection between this point and the previous one. Romanticism replaced reason with imagination, maintaining that imagination led the way to truth and understanding about the world. Herein lay the roots of a new view, where imagination is recognized for its creative potential and is associated with inventiveness, originality, and genius. But our concept of imagination has suffered for this. Imagination is now equated with

any creative endeavor, so that we have lost touch with what it is that imagination, strictly speaking, actually does. What are its functions? How do we use it to perceive the world and how do we use it in aesthetic experience?

For these reasons, I attempt to define imagination (in Part II). By identifying its activities and uses as recognized by various philosophers, we can reach a better understanding of its role in the creation, interpretation, and appreciation of art. Moreover, a clearer notion of imagination will provide the foundation of an argument for its relevance in aesthetic experience.

Imaginative activity can be exercised in a way which is part of the interpretation of the work, in fact it may in some cases facilitate a full understanding of the content of the work. In cases where imagination is so involved, and where it increases the pleasure in the individual's aesthetic experience, such activity is not only justifiable, but should be cultivated. This is the position I will take when evaluating an important and defensible pictorial theory, Richard Wollheim's "seeing-in".

The connection between pictorial representation and the imaginative activity in the spectator's response is not tenuous. Although I will not argue that this activity is always necessary for grasping pictures as representations or for interpreting their content

properly, I will show some of the ways we use imagination in pictorial experience. There is value in this project in two respects. I aim to remedy the weaknesses in existing theories of pictorial representation, and, by elucidating the ways in which we use imagination in this context and in the wider context of aesthetic experience, the desirability of this capacity for enriching our appreciation of art will, I think, become apparent.

1.3 Aesthetic Experience and Pictures

Pictorial experience is a category of aesthetic experience. In my view, an experience need not meet necessary and sufficient conditions in order to be called "aesthetic", so I am not advocating such a definition. But since my ideas in this thesis focus on the spectator's response to pictures, it will be useful to make a few preliminary observations about the character of aesthetic experience. (My observations are relevant to art rather than to nature.)

Artworks do not require us to use different capacities than those which we use for perceiving and understanding non-art objects. Aspect perception is used in ordinary perception, such as when we mistake a paper bag, at a distance, for a cat, and it can be used deliberately to see things as other things. When we look at pictures, we use aspect perception, "seeing-as", but

there is no special pictorial perception invoked. The thoughts that we have when looking at a real person, and looking at a representation of that person may not be the same, but many of the things we think about them will be similar. For example, we might wonder why a face, real or representational, is so flushed. We might guess that the real person has just run a long distance; the representation, alternatively, might lead us to believe that the person normally has a red face. The use of imagination for contemplating artworks is also an extension of the use of imagination in ordinary experience. I can imagine what my cat is thinking when she stalks across the garden after an insect. Similarly, I may want to imagine the thoughts of Psyche as she sits below Cupid's castle in Claude Lorrain's _Landscape with Psyche at the Palace of Cupid_.

While these capacities are the same, they are _exercised_ differently in relation to works of art, whether such works represent the real world or the fictional. That is, the end to which they are used is different; to an aesthetic end, our perceptions, thoughts and imaginings are involved in appreciating artworks in and for themselves. We use these capacities to explore the artist's creative work, and we take pleasure in this exploration, even if part of our response takes the form of shock or horror. In this respect aesthetic experience is marked by a heightening of the senses. In particular,

I believe that the nature of art makes it prone to evoke the percipient's imagination; artists often demand (and intend) an active use of imagination in response to their works.

We can recognize ways in which we treat non-art objects aesthetically, so my remarks here are not intended to entirely mark off aesthetic experience from ordinary experience, only to describe some of the ways in which we approach art. My characterization of aesthetic experience is also deliberately open-ended in order to take into account the various kinds of responses we have to artworks. It is intended to be unrestrictive because I believe that the appropriate interpretation of a work of art can include both information intrinsic and extrinsic to it.

For example, to interpret a picture it may help to know something about the artist's life and previous works. A full understanding of what is represented might be impossible without such knowledge, though not all pictures will require this information to be appreciated properly. The artist's intention can also be part of the knowledge we use when interpreting the picture, even though the intention may not be self-evident in the work. In any case, knowing or guessing the intention can be relevant to appreciating the work properly, though such knowledge is by no means always necessary.

The spectator's own "cognitive stock" can be tapped

as well, provided that the information is relevant to the work. This point is important in relation to the imaginative activity called into play by the picture. The spectator may be required to restrain this activity if it draws his or her attention away from the content of the work by, for example, replacing contemplation of the work with unrelated imaginative reflection on some past personal experience. Such restraint, while not always possible, is necessary in order to take advantage of imagination's resources. In Chapters 6 and 7, the relevance of imaginative activity in this context is examined at length.

1.4 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, I have sketched the arguments in my thesis and provided some preliminary remarks regarding my position on the nature of aesthetic experience, and what is justifiably part of that experience. To summarize, it is not my aim to formulate an original theory of pictorial representation. Rather, I will assess seeing-in for its strengths and weaknesses, and conclude that Natural Generativity offers a better account of how we understand pictures as representational. Natural Generativity defines the structure of pictorial experience less narrowly than "seeing-in", and this provides a good starting point for

an account of how we use imagination when contemplating pictures.

The imaginative component of the spectator's response merits attention, not only because pictorial theories neglect this component, but, in general, descriptions of how we use imagination in response to art lack detail and specificity. Here, the non-aesthetic uses of imagination provide some insight into its aesthetic uses.

The second part of the thesis is concerned with explaining imagination in relation to art. My account concentrates on the spectator's experience rather than the artist's, since the context, pictorial representation, requires this- but I do not intend therefore to marginalize the role of the artist or the artist's imagination. Although I make only a few observations about this, I do think that it is a fascinating aesthetic problem which deserves lengthy treatment elsewhere.

Notes

[1] S. Feagin, "Some Pleasures of Imagination" Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XLIII: 41-55, Fall 1984, pp. 46-7.

[2] A. White, The Language of Imagination (Basil Blackwell, 1990), 24.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION

2.1 Introduction: What is Pictorial Representation?

What is a pictorial representation? How do we experience representations? These are questions I hope to answer through a review of various theories of depiction. Before considering answers to the main question, let us examine the question itself. What it really asks is, what is a picture? In itself, that question is easy to answer. A picture is a two-dimensional, flat object with lines, perhaps colours, and images that represent a real or fictional things. A drawing of a person is a configuration of lines which forms an image we recognize as representing a person. Likewise, a painting is coloured blobs of paint on a canvas. A portrait has blobs of paint and colours which form images on a canvas and are recognizable as a representation of a particular person. So a picture is a representation created with the intention that it depicts something through images in a physical medium.

"Picture" herein will include all kinds of representations in different mediums: paintings, drawings, photographs, comic strips, graphic art. Since the subject of this thesis is limited to pictorial representation, I exclude some of the visual and dramatic arts such as sculpture, film, television, theatre, dance,

and also novels and music, which are sometimes described as representational.

Our present definition of pictures defines them as physical objects. We perceive pictorial representations as objects in the world, created through a physical medium. We can see, touch, smell, (and taste) the painted images on a canvas. A picture is constructed out of a frame, canvas, and paint, so the images themselves, though representational, have a physical existence. But this definition does not yield a complete understanding of what a picture is, because pictures have a function: they are objects with images that represent real or fictional objects (including events or states of affairs). It would be useful to turn to the question of how the images in pictures are related to what they represent, particularly because theories of depiction use this as a starting point.

William Charlton poses a key question, "What makes a coloured object a picture of a horse?" Thus far we can say that the canvas is a picture of a horse because of the configuration which extends over the canvas.[1] There are similarities between the ways in which we describe the horse in a picture and a real horse. Pictorial horses can be said to graze in fields, be male or female, and be coloured like real horses.[2] It would thus be intelligible to describe a particular image of a horse by saying, "she is a chestnut mare grazing in a field". The language we

use is the same as if we were describing a real horse in a real field, but underlying our descriptions is an understanding that the reference is to a represented horse and not a real horse. (This understanding depends, of course, on the context of the description. The context is established as pertaining to the picture within the conversation itself or by being in the presence of the picture.) However, there is a difference between the image of a horse and a real horse, and this difference is what forms the fundamental division between representation and reality.

Pictorial horses are not actually furry, fleshy creatures standing fifteen odd hands from the ground. They are not born, ridden, raced, or slaughtered. Nor do they really graze in fields. Therefore they only exist as representations of horses- as images created by an artist for an audience. The picture exists in real space while the actual images in the picture are located on the canvas as blobs of paint spread onto it. When looking at the picture, we see it as perhaps hung on a wall in a room or gallery, but the horse-image is located within the picture's world. We might say that the horse appears in the represented space of the picture, for example, in a field which is itself represented. Here I follow the view that representational space is distinct, and therefore, discontinuous with real space.[3] Depicted objects are located in the representational space of the

picture.

This representational space, like real space, is both limited and unlimited- there is the immediate location of the image as well as locations distant from the image. We see the representational space in the picture, but this space can be extended beyond the painted images through imaginative leaps. I can imagine what a painted landscape looks like beyond what is depicted. On this point Charlton offers the telling example of a picture of a king trembling on his throne after being given the news that his army has been wiped out. He points out that we can only understand the picture properly if we imagine the corpse-strewn battlefield which is not depicted. In this instance we rely on imagination to complete our interpretation by responding to the visual clues provided by the picture's images.

How do we talk about the qualities of representational objects? The real, physical qualities of images differ a great deal from what they represent. The horse-image is made of coloured pigments while the horse is flesh and all. However, we can speak of the qualities the image is _represented_ as having, qualities which are identified with the image, not the object represented. For example, we can say of a portrait of George Washington that his skin is pinkish and robust, his hair white-gray, and his suit ruby-red velvet. We might have attributed the same qualities to the man himself. But we

could not say of the real George Washington that his earlobe is undefined and smudged. Nor could we say of the picture of George Washington that his voice has a rough quality or that his mouth twitches nervously (unless we could somehow tell this from the image).

Portraits have formal qualities and people have natural qualities. Formal qualities include colour, style, shape, detail, definition, texture, and any other qualities related to the medium. Humans have the characteristics which make them living beings like real flesh, hair, eyes, etc. We can attribute the qualities of colour and texture to paintings and people alike, but in paintings, the non-formal qualities are merely representational qualities, e.g. the suit in the picture is not velvety really, it just looks that way. Representational qualities need not correspond to real qualities, though it may be no accident that the portrait of George Washington depicts a suit identical to one he actually wore. Through painterly techniques artists seek to create the appearance of certain textures like satin or velvet, and they do the same with colours, finding the right combination on their palettes to give the appearance of, say, a certain skin colour.

The ideas of representational space and representational qualities contribute to understanding the ontological distinction between pictures and the real or imaginary things they represent. Still, the inquiry

must be directed at how we treat pictures, that is, how we approach and interpret them. Part of our response is connected to the concept of resemblance. The resemblance between pictures and their subjects cannot be ignored, though I do not maintain that resemblance sufficiently explains how pictures are representational.

2.2 Resemblance

Too often the concept of resemblance is entirely rejected from theories of pictorial representation. Historically, it comes as no surprise considering the implications of the Imitation Theory for the value of artistic creativity. Few aestheticians now deny the unique character of works of art, and most support the view that artists rarely seek only to produce copies of reality. Resemblance cannot be the sole criterion for defining and judging a work of art, but this is not a satisfactory reason for overlooking the role of resemblance in the creation and enjoyment of works of art. In fact, the concept is more important to pictorial representation in particular because representational art consists of depictions while abstract art does not (strictly speaking).

When defining pictures, there are similarities in the way we talk about things in pictures and things in real life. Returning to the horse picture example, in the

presence of the picture, pointing to it, I may say to my companion that the horse is a chestnut mare, a thoroughbred, and a great champion. As remarked above, it comes as no surprise that such language is used, since a context has been established, and because we have no special representational or image-language to use. But what is also true is that we would not so readily use the same language if we did not see some similarity in appearance between the depicted horse and a real horse. To some extent, I describe the depicted horse as if I were looking at the real horse. This is not to say, however, that we see an illusion of the horse. In my view illusion is not part of pictorial experience (except in cases of successful trompe l'oeil pictures). We notice resemblances but are always aware that the differences between the horse-image and the real horse are greater than the similarities.

Resemblance also has a role in the artist's creative process. The horse picture is the kind of picture in which realistic depiction may be the objective; in conveying the beauty and grandeur of the champion, the artist may try to depict as accurately as possible the presence of the great animal. If the real champion serves as the artist's model, then capturing the horse's true appearance may be the best way to paint her. On the other hand, we also have horse pictures which are less realistic, like Gericault's paintings of horses in stormy

landscapes. Though not abstract, the artist seems to be less concerned with the realistic depiction of the subject than with expressing a particular mood.

Resemblance and recognition are connected in the spectator's experience. Sometimes, though not always, realistic depiction can cause the spectator to recognize more readily what images are of. A true-to-life picture of Desert Orchid will be recognized as a picture of Desert Orchid by anyone who reads the sports pages or follows horse racing. The concept of recognition may be the key to understanding why we cannot get rid of the role of resemblance in representation. Schier argues that pictures and the objects they represent do not have properties in common but that they do provoke similar recognitional abilities in spectators. He notes that the experience is not one of recognizing the real object in the picture, but that when looking at the real object and looking at the picture, the same recognitional abilities are provoked in each case.[4] His remarks on resemblance can, I think, explain the intuitive idea that resemblance enters into our interpretations of pictures. However, he does not maintain that resemblance explains the relation between a depiction and what it depicts.

Another point in support of the role of resemblance is that we do enjoy realistic representations. We admire an artist who can give us a picture that looks like the real thing and are amazed when a picture looks like a

photograph; we wonder how the artist achieved such an effect. It is clear from such experiences how much value we do place on realistic depictions. But it is not that our enjoyment of pictures depends on resemblance, only that resemblance permeates our ideas about pictorial representation. We can and do enjoy pictures which do not resemble their subjects, and we value the creative and original perspectives of artists. Also, we do not judge pictures solely by whether or not they "match" what they represent. Representational art is more typically valued for the artist's skill and originality, and not for its realistic style (though this depends on the individual's preference).

In conclusion, it seems that resemblance is a factor in representational art that comes into play in the artist's creation of a work as well as in the spectator's response to it. The spectator may enjoy a picture because he or she finds resemblances, and in finding them, delights in them. Some artists aim for realistic depiction. A picture of Desert Orchid looking proud could be the next best thing to seeing the horse in the flesh. In seeing the picture, a spectator's enjoyment may result from the feeling of being in the presence of a champion, while not having anything like an illusory experience of seeing Desert Orchid. The value of this work is not in its being an imitation of nature, but in the artist's ability to move the spectator through the images on the

canvas.

Resemblance, then, is to some degree involved in the way that pictures are created and understood. But an argument against the view that resemblance defines representation is still necessary to clarify the precise relevance of the concept to understanding representation.

2.3 Theories of Pictorial Representation

Philosophers have developed various theories to explain what pictures are and how we understand them. In the next two chapters I will concentrate on arguing against perception theories of pictorial representation, specifically, Wollheim's "seeing-in", since it is considered to offer the most convincing account of how we understand pictures. Before examining this theory, I will give an overview of other current theories and briefly discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

Resemblance Theory

This theory is intuitively appealing. It claims that X represents Y, if X visually resembles Y.[5] At first glance this view seems remarkably clear. The image of a peach looks like a peach because we recognize it as a succulent, fuzzy, peach-coloured, peach-shaped object. But resemblance is a symmetrical relation; if X resembles

Y, then Y should resemble X. This leads us to discover that there is a strong sense in which a painting does not look at all like a peach. The painted peach is two-dimensional, and though it looks round we can see that it is only two-dimensionally round, being painted on a flat canvas. Unlike a real peach, the surface of a painted peach may even reflect the light in the gallery.

A variant of this view is more plausible. X represents Y in virtue of creating an experience for the spectator which resembles the experience of seeing Y.[6] Still, though this emphasis eliminates the problem of a the real peach literally resembling an image of it in every visual way, a new asymmetry emerges. My experience of seeing a still life picture of a peach may not be so different from seeing a peach in a bowl on my kitchen table. I may have the urge to pick that peach right out of the picture and eat it. But I do not do this, nor would I ever believe that I could. Every spectator can tell the difference between appreciating a real peach and appreciating an artist's rendering of it. Though we can appreciate nature's artistry, we appreciate different aspects of a real peach compared to a picture of it.

The Resemblance Theory attempts to show how we come to recognize an image in a representation in virtue of a resemblance to what it represents. Beyond identifying some similarities in appearance between pictures and their subjects, e.g. colour, resemblance does not

elucidate the nature of depiction. Many things resemble other things in one way or another because of similar characteristics or appearances. Also, resemblance expressed in terms of "looks like" is vague. To what degree must X resemble Y for X to be a representation of Y? Therefore, it can be said against this view that it gives an unsatisfactory account of what it is for a picture to be representional.

Illusion Theory

"Seeing-as" forms the basis of Ernst Gombrich's view that representation is illusion.[7] He takes the concept of "seeing-as" from Wittgenstein who describes it as interpretive seeing or seeing an aspect. In *Philosophical Investigations* (part II, section xi), he gives various examples of how we can see different aspects of the same object or picture. We can see the duck-rabbit figure as a duck or a rabbit, the double cross as a white cross on a black background or as a black cross on a white background.[8]

Gombrich maintains that all seeing is "seeing-as" so that our perceptions of reality are inseparable from the interpretations of what we see. Our perceptions are not expressed in terms of "seeing-as", e.g. "I see that object on the wall as a clock."; we simply say when asked, "That's a clock." But according to Gombrich, we

cannot separate our perception of an object from a description of it. The duck-rabbit picture illustrates how we cannot simply look at the pattern and see it both as a duck and a rabbit, rather, we have two interpretations based on the two different aspects we see in the one configuration.

Gombrich applies his theory of perception to how we perceive representations, where interpretive seeing becomes a kind of representational seeing. To see a painting of a peach is to see a part of the canvas as a peach. So X is a representation of Y in virtue of our being able to see X as Y.

"Seeing-as" offers a way of understanding representation, but it is limited to a description of how we look at pictures: we see part or all of the picture as some object, event, state of affairs, etc. Although we often use aspect perception when we look at ordinary objects and representations, the theory falls short of an explanation of the images themselves and how we go about interpreting them. Charlton faults "seeing-as" for leaving many questions unanswered.

> We want to talk about objects in pictures, about the face, say, in a Rembrandt picture of an old woman. Are we to say we are talking about the face we see part of the canvas as? What then is the status of a face something is seen as? How does it compare with other faces? Where is it?[9]

To his questions we can add the general question of what

pictorial experience consists in.

For Wittgenstein, illusion plays no part in "seeing-as". "Seeing-as" in his terms is simply the distinction between seeing an object and "seeing an aspect" of that object. By contrast, Gombrich's "seeing-as" implies that when we see pictures, we are seeing illusions of real things. For if the spectator sees part of the canvas as a peach, this implies that he or she sees an illusion of a peach since the image is intended to have the appearance of a real peach (in realistic paintings). Yet the picture is something quite different from that, namely a construction of paint on a canvas.

Gombrich recognizes the incredible skill of some painters, but his analysis of pictorial representation is misleading.

> While standing in front of a painting by Jan Van Eyck we fall under this very spell. We believe he succeeded in rendering the inexhaustible wealth of detail that belongs to the visible world. We have the impression that he painted every stitch of the golden damask, every hair of the angels, every fibre of the wood. Yet he clearly could not have done that, however patiently he worked with a magnifying glass. Little though we may know about the secrets of such effects, they must be based on an illusion.[10]

How literally are we to take Gombrich's words? Does it follow that illusion necessarily means delusion? When faced with a straightforward still life painting, does the spectator really see anything like an illusion of a

bowl of fruit?

It is not clear in Gombrich's account whether or not illusion leads to delusion. In Art and Illusion he devotes much of his discussion to the psychology of optical illusions, and he appears to be fascinated by our ability to be fooled by them. But it is possible to have the experience of an optical illusion which we cannot shake off and to be fully aware of the nature of this experience. It is his concentration on the allegedly deceptive aspect of the spectator's experience which weakens the Illusion Theory and makes it vulnerable to the criticism that Gombrich places too much importance on the painter's ability to reproduce the vision of seeing a peach. J.J. Gibson puts this criticism succinctly: "No matter how faithful, how lifelike, how realistic a picture becomes, it does not become the object pictured."[11]

Moreover, illusion is irrelevant to pictorial representation. In this regard, Dieter Peetz says:

> To be somewhat lost in contemplation, say at dusk, when confronted by a self-portrait of Rembrandt, might be to cease to notice the frame of the picture, to concentrate on, and be absorbed by the poignant facial expression, its mood....and to delude oneself in this rather extraordinary way that one is confronted by the great master Rembrandt himself. This is akin to day-dreaming, but in a standard setting of picture-viewing such delusion, although possible, could hardly enter into an account of what it is for a picture to represent Rembrandt.[12]

In his attempt to characterize our experience of representations, Gombrich claims that the experience amounts to seeing an illusion of the real thing. The drawback of this view is that if we simply see an illusion of the real thing, what information do we take in regarding the work itself? If we take Gombrich's theory literally, then seeing the illusion gives the same information as seeing the real thing. The implications of this claim are grave for the appreciation of artistic images in and for themselves.

If we experience pictures as Gombrich claims, we attend not to the representation, but to an illusory object. Even if most naturalistic paintings were illusionistic, which they are not, the point is not whether or not we are fooled by them, but how we interpret them. The Illusion Theory, therefore, ignores just what it sets out to define: an aspect of aesthetic experience.

These criticisms are based on a literal reading of Gombrich's theory as set out in Art and Illusion.[13] In response to his critics, he says that most spectators do not experience delusion. In defending this, he remarks that false belief is a contingent concept in illusion. Illusion in Gombrich's sense is the illusion the artist creates for us through his painterly effects.

> ...[the pleasure] lies in our continued feeling of incredulity that the visual effect of plumes, of gleam or softness has been achieved on a flat hard panel by

> a skilled hand using a brush dipped in paint. We may want to touch the panel to be quite sure there is no other trickery involved, for the visual effect is so striking as to set up a real conflict between our reaction and our better knowledge: the artist has made us see something different from what is there. He has aroused in us a visual experience of a kind that we know from our encounters with reality.[14]

The spectator's pleasure seems to depend on an awareness of the artist's ability to fool through such masterly techniques. But here Gombrich provides a better description of the spectator's experience, since he indicates that the spectator does attend to the artist's work.

While Gombrich's account does capture the sense of amazement we have in viewing some kinds of paintings, it is incomplete in its treatment of pictorial experience. Despite his enthusiasm for the artist's techniques, he overemphasizes the aspect of illusion, and therefore does not explain how we respond to pictures _as_ representational.

Make-Believe Theory

Kendall Walton defines depiction in the following way: X represents Y, if the spectator can make-believe that he is seeing Y in X.[15] As spectators, we play a game in which we pretend that the perception of a peach-image

is the perception of a real peach. Walton thinks that (as the Illusion Theory suggests) it is not difficult, especially with naturalistic paintings, to pretend to see the real thing. Within this imaginative game, there are rules that allow us to make-believe that the experience of seeing X and the experience of seeing Y are identical. Walton claims that when we see a picture of a horse, we pretend to see a real horse. This experience is not actually the same as seeing the real thing, but we deliberately imagine that it is.

Walton has developed his view considerably in his recent book, _Mimesis as Make-Believe_. Here his main example is of two children playing in the woods and pretending that all stumps are dangerous bears.[16] Making an analogy between make-believe and art, he argues that we treat pictures, novels, and films as props in this game. In this way, then, he uses make-believe to elucidate the nature of representation.

There are several problems with this view. Firstly, it is not an accurate description of how we approach works of art. Rarely, if ever, do we deliberately pretend to see a picture as the real object it depicts. Anders Pettersson sums up this point well when he says:

> If adequate responses to art and literature are analogous with games of make-believe in this respect, then the competent viewer or reader must be consciously, knowingly, engaged in a game of make-believe. And in that case, an art viewer or fiction reader who says that he is _not_ playing a game of make-believe must be either incompetent or

> else untruthful or confused.[17]

In his review of Walton's book, Charlton agrees with this criticism when he says that Walton's accounts of depiction "do not ring true".[18] Typically, we approach paintings and other works of art with a view to appreciating them as such, not as props for our own imaginative games. Make-believe does not realistically characterize pictorial experience, or the proper way we treat representations.

Secondly, I object to the way in which he defines make-believe as the imaginative activity we use in appreciating pictures. Specifically, it is defined as an exercise of imagination "involving props".[19] But make-believe is only one of imagination's many activities, and it is not one to be sanctioned in aesthetic experience. I would not characterize any of the important ways we draw on imagination in aesthetic experience as involving props. In this respect, then, I exclude this kind of imagination from any proper response to a work of art.

Walton also wrongly portrays imagination in art appreciation as egocentric.[20]

> It is my impression that virtually all of our imaginings are partly about ourselves....all imagining involves a kind of self-imagining (imagining _de se_)...[21]

Walton uses the example of imagining an elephant in Central Park, and claims that it is likely to involve

imagining oneself seeing an elephant in Central Park. It seems to me that we just visualize the elephant, and need not "put ourselves" into the imagining.

By including ourselves as part of the games of make-believe, Walton's account again sidelines the artwork itself. I believe that we can identify imaginative activity in artistic appreciation which enriches our experience of the work, but I emphasize the condition that it is essential that the artwork is the center of attention.

Make-believe, like the Illusion Theory, misses the point of representation altogether. Instead of discerning the difference between experiencing a representation and experiencing reality, these theories postulate the idea that the two experiences are the same by introducing concepts like illusion and make-believe. In a sense, artists can create new realities for us, making fantasy worlds and unicorns "real" for us, and we delight in their creations. We may even prefer an artist's representation to the frightening possibility of a live monster. But my point is that an explanation is required for how pictures are interpreted as works of art, as representations. Although artists do draw attention to parts of the world, pointing to familiar things, we approach pictures as representations of reality, not as reality itself. Pretending to have an experience of seeing the real thing does not realistically explain what

happens when I stand in front of a painting, and the idea that we play this game is unlikely. We understand pictures _as depicting_ things.

Semantic Theory

This theory holds that a picture belongs to a symbol system, and it gives a semantic explanation of how we understand pictures. In _Languages of Art_, Nelson Goodman compares pictures to descriptions.

> The plain fact is that a picture, to represent an object, must be a symbol for it, refer to it; and that no degree of resemblance is sufficient to establish the requisite relationship of reference.... A picture that represents- like a passage that describes- an object refers to and, more particularly, _denotes_ it. Denotation is the core of representation and is independent of resemblance.[22]

According to Goodman, "denote" means "describe", and the relation between a picture and an object is explained as denotation. For example, a picture of a horse is a representation of a real horse in virtue of the fact that the picture denotes the horse.[23]

He is eager to remove the ideas of resemblance and appearance from a definition of representation, and with his theory he attempts to rebut any view even remotely connected to imitation. But can the concept of resemblance be rejected so easily? In 2.2, I argued that the concept of resemblance, while not a sufficient

condition for representation, is involved in our understanding of how pictures relate to the objects they represent.

Another weakness in his account of representation is his description of pictures as symbols. Pictures are iconic, but by comparing them to descriptions, the analogy between depictions and language is misleading. Generally, it fails to give an accurate experiential account. Because of the special nature of a visual art like painting, we do not treat pictures as descriptions of the objects they represent. The artist gives us a creative impression of something, and we delight in the visual and imaginative exploration of it. The particularity of this project is an aspect of pictorial representation which Goodman's view neglects. Further problems in his account will emerge through my discussion of Schier's Natural Generativity in Chapter 4.

Natural Generativity

Schier offers this theory of depiction in his book Deeper into Pictures.[24] His theory locates pictures as members of an iconic system, yet he marks off real differences between pictures and language, namely the absence of the grammar and conventions which belong to linguistic systems. Pictures are icons in virtue of the fact that they are symbols, but not all icons are visual.

His theory is only concerned with visual icons, pictorial representations.

To explain what a picture is, he develops a theory of how we understand pictures- how we come to know that pictures represent things. Pictures, or "iconic modes of representation" have the property of "natural generativity". This property means that all icons can be interpreted as representational once an initial iconic interpretation is made. After an initial interpretation, all successive interpretations are automatic provided that the object depicted is recognized by the spectator.[25] Natural Generativity tells us "what counts as a picture, what counts as pictorial experience, and what counts as pictorial competence."[26] Therefore, he thinks it can both explain what pictures are <u>and</u> how we experience them.

His approach is original, and as a theory of depiction it has strong possibilities because of its emphasis on interpretation rather than perception. In my view this is the right starting point for understanding the nature of representation. As an account of pictorial experience though, it lacks a close look at what is involved in the interpretation of pictures.

Formalism

Formalism has most recently been associated with

Clive Bell's views in _Art_[27] and Roger Fry's views in _Vision and Design_[28]. "Significant form" is the concept which establishes the view developed by Bell; works of art which stir our aesthetic emotions possess a common characteristic called "significant form". Aesthetic emotions are defined as a peculiar sort of emotion, and he defines that quality as "...lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms..."[29] For a work of art to be a good work of art, it must move the spectator through its "significant form".

The main weakness in Bell's view is its narrow scope, which stems from two claims. He argues that only works of art with "significant from" move us aesthetically. Among those works which do not have this quality, and hence do not stir our aesthetic emotions, are narrative pictures. This is connected to his second claim which is that our aesthetic response only properly consists in a response to "significant form", not to the subject-matter of the work.[30] We are supposed to approach the work with an interest only in its formal qualities, not in its "representative element", and thus we need "bring with us nothing from life."[31]

Though formal qualities are recognized and appreciated, it is difficult both to understand the concept of "significant form" and to agree with the claim that it is the only quality responsible for the

spectator's emotional response and pleasure. What is "significant form" really? Bell's definition of the concept is vague, for he says only that it is the combination of forms which stir aesthetic emotions. This definition also turns out to be circular. We do not know if a painting has "significant form" unless it moves us, but how can we be sure that it is "significant form" which causes the emotional response? In response to this criticism the Formalist might say that if we take away the subject matter, what we have left is its form. But what is "significant" about that form? Here, the Formalist's reasoning fails because taking away the subject-matter of the work may not just leave us with the form.[32]

Furthermore, Bell maintains that information extrinsic to the work is irrelevant to the spectator's experience. But we can find many cases in which such information is relevant, and cases in which it can enrich our appreciation of the work. Moreover, an understanding of what the images depict, or what "is happening" in a picture is significant to the interpretation of it. It is hard to imagine not being moved by the expression on the face of Dolorosa in Murillo's Piedad. In this experience our response stems from identifying with Dolorosa's feelings, not to the picture's "significant form", whatever that may be.

Fry's view is more flexible and resembles other views

which are classified as Formalist. He refers to the importance of the unity of forms in a work of art and the elements of design which are line, gesture, the represented mass of the images, space, light, shade and colour.[33] On his view, the formal qualities of the work are more important than its subject-matter because it is the work's formal qualities that affect us. So in looking at a Cézanne still life picture, it is the organization of space, the shapes of the images and the composition that we attend to and appreciate, not the depicted objects- the pears, apples, or whatever. In this respect, Formalists try to separate themselves from views of art which make imitation and resemblance the primary criteria for critical evaluation.

Though it is a palatable theory because it attempts to define what is common between works of art as diverse as Cezanne and Rembrandt, Formalism pares down the spectator's experience to one in which there is no interest in the narrative of the work of art, or its subject.

2.4 Conclusion

I have given an overview of the main theories of pictorial representation currently important in aesthetics. The Resemblance Theory explains depiction through similarities in appearance between pictures and

their subjects. "Seeing-as", the Illusion Theory, and the Make-Believe Theory define depiction in terms of how we see what is represented in pictures. Goodman's theory does away with the distinction between iconic and non-iconic visual symbols, while Natural Generativity defines pictures and pictorial experience by examining how pictures and their interpretations are generated. Each account (with the exception of Natural Generativity) has been found to be inadequate in explaining what it is for a picture to represent a thing, so the next task is to find a theory which gives a true, cogent account of pictorial representation.

It should have become clear through my criticisms above that an account of pictorial representation requires some explanation of what constitutes pictorial experience. Discovering how pictures represent entails an understanding of how we treat them, and this includes determining what occurs in a spectator's response.

When we interpret pictures, we are involved in a search for the meaning of the images we see. We begin an exploratory exercise to discover what the images are of, how they are related to each other, why the artist created the picture in such a way and how; in other words, what the images mean. In reaching our conclusions we use perceptual, conceptual, and imaginative "tools" which move us from a basic perceptual recognition of what the images represent to a deeper understanding and

enjoyment of the work. Different responses to a particular picture may be similar in some respects, but we need not expect to interpret the same picture in a given way.[34] All that we can definitely say about pictorial experience is that a combination of particular activities in the spectator leads to a picture's overall interpretation.

The activities, or "tools", can be identified and defined, but there is no set formula. Therefore, we also cannot say that a particular picture must have a single correct interpretation. Several "correct" interpretations may be possible because various responses to a single work can be appropriate.

All of the theories outlined above consider pictures from the point of view of the spectator. The artist's experience is important too, since the artist acts as both spectator and creator of the picture. Although the artist's role is fundamental to understanding pictorial representation, as creator this role is only essential before and during the production of the picture. It is valuable to consider the creative process, but it is how pictures are treated once they are made which is the main concern of theories of depiction, hence the importance of pictorial experience. The creative process should not be left out though because it can shed light on how we make pictorial interpretations. For example, the artist's intention can sometimes explain why we interpret a

picture in a certain way.

In conclusion, the kind of theory that gives the most satisfactory account of pictorial representation is one which focuses on the spectator's response. It should address representations as such, not simply the objects they represent. It is an insufficient theory if it takes into account only one aspect of the spectator's response, for example the visual experience. Thus, for a comprehensive understanding of pictorial representation, a full explanation and description of how we contemplate and appreciate pictures is essential.

Notes

[1] W. Charlton, Aesthetics (Hutchinson University Library, 1970), 57.

[2] Charlton, 59.

[3] Charlton, 60.

[4] F. Schier, Deeper into Pictures (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 188.

[5] Schier, 3.

[6] R. Wollheim, Painting as an Art (Thames and Hudson, 1987), 76.

[7] E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion, 5th Edition (Phaidon Press, 1977), 5.

[8] L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, 1972), 206-7.

[9] Charlton, 57.

[10] Gombrich, 184.

[11] J.J. Gibson, "The Information Available in Pictures" Leonardo 4: 27-35, Winter 1971, p. 33.

[12] D. Peetz, "Some Current Philosophical Theories of Pictorial Representation" British Journal of Aesthetics 27 (3): 227-37, Summer 1987, p. 229.

[13] See especially his Introduction, 3-25.

[14] E.H. Gombrich, Image and the Eye (Oxford University Press, 1982), 181.

[15] K. Walton, "Pictures and Make-Believe" Philosophical Review, 283-319, July 1973, pp. 312-313.

[16] K. Walton, Mimesis as Make-Believe (Harvard University Press, 1990), 26.

[17] A. Pettersson "On Walton's and Currie's Analyses of Literary Fiction" (unpublished, 1992), 4.

[18] W. Charlton, "Review of Kendall Walton *Mimesis as Make-Believe*", *British Journal of Aesthetics* 31 (4): 369-70, October 1991, p. 370.

[19] *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, 12.

[20] "Review of Kendall Walton *Mimesis as Make-Believe*", 370.

21. *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, 28-9.

[22] N. Goodman. *Languages of Art* (Oxford University Press, 1969), 5.

[23] A. Savile, "Nelson Goodman's 'Languages of Art: A Study" *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 11: 3-27, 1971, pp. 4-5.

[24] See F. Schier, *Deeper into Pictures* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[25] Schier, 43.

[26] Schier, 46.

[27] See C. Bell, *Art* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

[28] See R. Fry, *Vision and Design* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

[29] Bell, 8.

[30] D. Collinson, "Aesthetic Experience" in O. Hanfling (ed.), *Philosophical Aesthetics* (Blackwell/Open University Press, 1992), 146.

[31] Bell, 25.

[32] A. Isenberg, "Formalism" in W. Callaghan et al, (eds.), *Aesthetics and the Theory of Criticism: Selected Essays of Arnold Isenberg* (Chicago University Press, 1973), 35.

[33] Fry, 23-4.

[34] Schier, 32.

CHAPTER 3: SEEING-IN

3.1 Introduction

In attempts to define the nature of representation, some philosophers argue that an analysis of the visual experience of pictures best describes how pictures differ from what they represent. But because perceptual theories analyze pictorial experience in terms of how we <u>see</u> pictures, they fail to acknowledge that perception is only one aspect of the activity involved in the interpretation of a picture. The perception of a picture is not strictly visual, it can be largely perceptual, so my argument does not claim that perception theories exclude the way in which our perceptions and thoughts come together in the interpretation of the picture. However, I do think that these theories focus too narrowly the visual aspect of pictorial experience.

In this chapter, I examine "seeing-in" and compare it to "seeing-as" to determine (1) if it is an improvement on "seeing-as" and (2) whether or not it sufficiently explains pictorial representation. I conclude that Wollheim's theory does not acknowledge all aspects of the spectator's interpretation, especially in that it restricts the use of imagination. Generally, the concept of "seeing-in" is not explained adequately by Wollheim.

3.2 Perception Theories of Pictorial Representation

The main proponents of perception theories are Gombrich, Roger Scruton and Wollheim. Gombrich and Scruton base their views on Wittgenstein's aspect perception, and they develop his views, defining "seeing-as" as a kind of perception used in both pictorial and non-pictorial experience. For Gombrich, "seeing-as" serves as the basis for his Illusion Theory. In the last chapter we examined the drawbacks of that view, however, independently of the Illusion Theory, "seeing-as" has some merits, and it provides the basis of a theory which is an improvement on Gombrich's. Expressed as the Aspect Theory, it is defined as follows:

> X is a representation of Y, iff standardly, x may be seen as containing a Y-aspect, without, however, any belief by the spectator that X is Y.[1]

Scruton incorporates "seeing-as" into his theory of pictorial representation in Art and Imagination.[2] This kind of perception describes what happens when we see aspects of objects, for example when we do not see objects as what they are. I might see a crouching black cat against a black wall as part of the texture of the wall, not recognizing the cat until it moves. Also, I might see a certain object and not see it as anything I recognize at all, though I might be able to describe it. Wittgenstein points out that we do not use "seeing-as"

when responding to seeing the object as it actually is. For example, we do not say to the sight of a knife and fork that we see it as a knife and fork.[3]

I favour Scruton's version of "seeing-as" because it is closer to Wittgenstein's own views, and therefore the concept of illusion plays no part in his account of pictorial representation. He analyzes "seeing-as" as a kind of perception which is not used strictly for pictures. This point is valuable because the idea of a special kind of perception unique to pictorial representation is limiting and, I think, untenable. For Scruton, "seeing-as" is imaginative seeing because aspect perception involves the use of imagery. Though it is difficult to pin down exactly how imagination is present in "seeing-as", Scruton supports Wittgenstein's point that, for example in the duck-rabbit figure, seeing the duck aspect is like having the (mental) image of a duck.

"Seeing-as" is a useful concept for explaining how we see aspects of both objects and representations, but pictorial representation cannot be entirely understood in terms of this imaginative perception. We can use imagination separately from perception, for example when visualizing about the images perceived.

Thus far I have pointed to the problems in Gombrich's theory and the merits of Scruton's. I will now turn to Wollheim's "seeing-in" theory, which attempts to remedy the problems of other perception theories.

Like Scruton and others, Wollheim argues that Gombrich's Illusion Theory implies that when we see a picture, we are seeing an illusion of the object depicted and are deluded into believing that we see the real thing (though Gombrich himself denies this account of his view)[4]. He thinks that it misleadingly describes the way we see pictures, so to eliminate this problem he changes the wording of "seeing-as", introducing a new kind of representational seeing called "seeing-in". This term strikes me as equally problematic even though Wollheim believes that it gives a clearer description of the way in which we see pictures.

"Seeing-in" is a special visual capacity that precedes and is independent of pictorial experience. For Wollheim, the whole project of representation depends on this natural capacity because the artist exploits it by painting the canvas in a way which leads us to recognize what is depicted. The spectator's experience consists in an exploratory perception of the picture, concentrating on the images to understand the overall depiction.

Through my analysis of "seeing-in" in the next section, it will become clear how sharply defined the spectator's experience is for Wollheim. Because Wollheim's theory consists of a specific visual capacity, his view also lacks the broader scope necessary to elucidate representation. After examining the strengths and weaknesses of "seeing-in", I will consider what role,

if any, Wollheim assigns to imagination in pictorial experience.

3.3 "Seeing-in"

Wollheim maintains that "seeing-in" is an innate form of perception distinct from seeing, "seeing-as", and "seeing-that".[5] What defines "seeing-in" as opposed to other kinds of perception is a phenomenological feature which he calls "twofoldness". "Twofoldness" is unique to experiences of "seeing-in"; it is a way of seeing the configurational and recognitional aspects of both representations and non-representations. Wollheim uses the example of seeing a picture of a woman in which recognizing or identifying the woman in the picture is the recognitional aspect of the experience and awareness of the blobs of paint (the marked surface) is the configurational aspect. In fact, he also claims that "seeing-in" precedes depiction because it is a natural capacity we have to see things in other things. So "seeing-in" is engaged when I see an image of my mother in a Rorschach test card, a chubby face in a cloud, or a tree-shape in a stain. For representations in particular, Wollheim says that when an artist creates images on a canvas, there is an awareness of the spectator's ability to see in this way. The artist expects the spectator to use "seeing-in" in order to correctly recognize the

picture's images.[6]

"Twofoldness" is also the way in which Wollheim explains away the possibility of illusion. Because we can attend to both the paint on the canvas and the subject we see in the picture, we see the picture as a configuration of lines and colours which form the image of the subject. Thus, there is no confusion nor delusion, regarding what we see. Except when we are fooled by trompe l'oeil, Wollheim argues that we can see pictures as representations because of the ability to see the subject and its medium simultaneously.

The "standard of correctness" defines the difference between "seeing-in" used for non-representations and representations. Wollheim says:

> Seeing-in does not presuppose representation. On the contrary, seeing-in precedes representation, and this is why seeing-in can be used to elucidate representation. Very roughly, P represents X if X can be correctly seen in P, where the standard of correctness is set for P by the fulfilled intentions of the artist of P.[7]

Therefore, when we use "seeing-in" for pictures, we are meant to see the picture in a particular way, or to have an experience which concurs with the artist's intention.[8] Wollheim is not claiming that there must be a match between the spectator's experience and the artist's intention, but there is a requirement that the spectator correctly sees what is depicted by the artist. The

"standard of correctness" defines the relationship between the spectator, what is depicted, and the artist. The spectator can make mistakes, either by failing to identify what is depicted or by misidentifying it. Also, the "standard of correctness" does not demand that the spectator sees a picture in one particular way. In this respect, Wollheim allows for variations in the way different spectators interpret the same picture. For Wollheim, the relationship between the artist's intention and the spectator's response is not rigidly defined. For example, he approves of Proust playing the game of finding likenesses to his friends while enjoying portraits in the Louvre.[9]

Wollheim, then, gives a phenomenological description of pictorial experience. When we look at pictures, we use "seeing-in", and "seeing-in" makes it possible to correctly see what has been depicted by some artist. The "twofold" nature of "seeing-in" does not divide the experience into one of seeing the surface and one of identifying or interpreting what is seen. It is a single, visual experience which occurs every time we look at a picture or other surface/object in which we can see something else. Wollheim argues that

> ...no systematic account can be given of how the two aspects correlate or how the marked surface has to be or seem for any given thing or event to be perceived in it.[10]

He does say, however, that what the spectator sees is determined by the picture and the cognitive stock (beliefs, values, emotions, etc.) of the spectator.

Since Wollheim gives a perceptual analysis of representation, it will be in his interest to argue that the perception of the picture is at the fore of the experience.

> Periodically, as the spectator attempts to deepen his understanding of the picture, further concepts will be plucked out of his background beliefs and foregrounded: each time this happens, how we see the picture shifts somewhat. His perception expands.[11]

I do not object to the idea that concepts and background information are useful in understanding pictures, but the way that Wollheim expresses this view is problematic. Concepts and beliefs do not affect just what we see in a picture or how we see it, they affect our overall interpretation of the picture. By overall interpretation I mean everything that enters into the spectator's experience of the picture; the perception of it, identification or recognition of its content, interest in what the images mean. Though perception and interpretation are bound up with each other in the sense that the interpretation of a picture depends on perceiving it, they are distinct activities. We might define the perception as a fundamental part, or the basis of interpretation, e.g. when we perceptually explore a

picture _in order_ to discover the meanings of the images we see. But thinking about these images and imagining, say, movement in the images, reaches beyond perception. Because Wollheim analyzes the experience in terms of perception, he only points to the "expansion" of perception without explaining how the overall interpretation changes as the spectator "deepen[s] his understanding".

In my view, Wollheim's best explanation of pictorial experience is in the second and third chapters of his most recent book, _Painting as an Art._ Here, he outlines his theory of "seeing-in" and explains how it facilitates a spectator's understanding of a picture. In the course of his discussion he refers to how information and cognitive stock affect and shape a spectator's understanding of a picture according to how the artist marks the surface of the canvas. On this issue, like his view of the "standard of correctness", Wollheim is flexible with regard to the spectator's use of non-perceptual information in interpreting pictures. The only necessary condition is that the information will help the spectator to see something the artist intended him or her to see. With a particular piece of information at hand, a spectator may see something new in a picture, thus increasing the overall understanding and appreciation of the work. So Wollheim does attend here to the way in which non-perceptual information is useful.

In conclusion, it is clear that Wollheim characterizes pictorial experience in terms of a perceptual experience. Despite the fact that Wollheim identifies how non-perceptual information expands the spectator's understanding of a work, his account of pictorial representation still lacks attention to the non-perceptual capacities used by the spectator. In the next section, I will address the question of whether or not it is necessary to identify a special kind of visual perception for the perception of pictures.

3.4 "Seeing-in" and Ordinary Perception

Wollheim and others define pictorial representation by identifying something which marks pictorial experience. In their view, by finding that which is peculiar about pictures, they are able to say how we approach pictures, and thus how pictures differ from other objects we encounter in the world.

We have discovered that Gombrich and Scruton favour "seeing-as" as the kind of perception used by spectators to see pictures as depictions of objects. Wollheim rejects "seeing-as" in favour of "seeing-in" which, though not just for seeing pictures, is also the special tool which spectators use to see pictures, so it alone facilitates the understanding of representations. In this respect, "seeing-in" defines pictorial experience for

Wollheim. Without it, artist and spectator alike would be at a loss to interpret pictures.

So according to these views, the use of a particular kind of perception demarcates pictorial from non-pictorial experience. Wollheim's theory appears to rely more on "seeing-in" than Gombrich's and Scruton's theories do on "seeing-as". For, unless we can see both the configurational and recognitional aspects in one, single experience, it will not register in the spectator that he or she is seeing a picture and not an illusion. The "standard of correctness" is built into the concept of "seeing-in" (when used for seeing representations), and without this, the spectator will not see the picture as artist intended, perhaps seeing an illusion of the object instead. This is the line of thought which can be drawn from Wollheim's arguments for "seeing-in". Though he claims that "seeing-in" is activated by any differentiated surface (e.g. a stained wall), "seeing-in" is essential to interpreting depictions as such.

Wittgenstein makes the connection between aspect perception and pictures by using examples of pictures to illustrate how we see aspects of objects. But we should note that Wittgenstein introduces his concept of "seeing-as" by distinguishing between '"two uses of the word 'see'"'.[12] Furthermore, he says that seeing is not subject to the will while "seeing-as" and imagining are, though "seeing-as" is not entirely subject to the will.

Therefore, it makes sense to say: '"Now see the figure like <u>this</u>" but not: "Now see this leaf green."'[13] The picture itself has a role to play in how "seeing-as" and imagination operate. Something about the picture has to lead a spectator to see it as, for example, a picture of a peach.

In Wittgenstein's sense of "seeing-as", we can use it to see aspects in pictures, and it is a necessary condition for seeing pictures themselves. But we do in fact use "seeing-as" in two senses. The first sense is seeing an object as itself or mistakenly as something else. An example would be to see a brown paper bag as a brown paper bag or mistakenly to see it as a small animal. The second sense is seeing an aspect of an object when looking it (which sometimes happens as the dawning of an aspect). An illustration of the second sense would be to say of a Constable painting that it is through the dawning of an aspect that I realize that I see a red blob of paint on the canvas as a little boy. The duck-rabbit picture also exemplifies "seeing-as" in which there is the dawning of an aspect, that is, when we see an aspect of some object where previously there was none.

Scruton supports Wittgenstein's analysis of "seeing-as" and pictures, while Gombrich would call for a wider role for "seeing-as" in pictorial experience. Clearly "seeing-as" is used in ordinary perception, but I do not think that it serves to demarcate pictorial experience

from ordinary experience.

The theories of "seeing-as" and "seeing-in", then, are assigned different roles in pictorial experience. Against these views, I will maintain that "seeing-in" is not essential for the interpretation of pictures, and therefore that Wollheim introduces an unnecessary mode of perception. The kind of seeing that we use to see objects around us, ordinary visual perception, is all that is needed for interpreting pictures. To see aspects we call on "seeing-as".

Though it is not my intention to argue that "seeing-as" defines pictorial experience, I disagree with Wollheim's point that "seeing-in" is an improvement on "seeing-as". Here I follow some of the points made by Alec Hyslop in his article, "Seeing Through Seeing-in."[14]

Wollheim favours "seeing-in" for three reasons. The first reason relates to the "range of things that we may see in something as opposed to those which we may see something as."[15] He claims that "seeing-as" only makes it possible to see sections of a picture as particulars while "seeing-in" allows us to see not only particulars in a picture but also states of affairs. For a picture X, S may see a state of affairs in X but it is not possible to see X as a state of affairs. He offers this example:

> If I am looking at X, and X is a particular, I can see a woman in X, and I can also see in X that a woman is reading a love-letter: but whereas I can see X as a woman, I cannot see X as that a woman is reading a love-letter.[16]

Because Wollheim does not offer an explanation of how seeing states of affairs differs from seeing particulars, his argument amounts to one about awkward wording. It does make sense to say that I can see a section of some canvas as a woman reading a love-letter. A better example to illustrate this point against Wollheim is that it would be intelligible for me to say, "I see part of Titian's The Three Ages of Man as an elderly figure holding two skulls".

His second point against "seeing-as" stems from the first because it too involves seeing states of affairs. He says here that "seeing-as" has a "requirement of localisation." He claims that when we see X as Y or part of X as Y, "seeing-as" can only account for what is actually located in a particular place in the picture. "Seeing-in" apparently has no localization requirement because "seeing-in" is a special kind of perception which enables us to see things absent to the senses. So a spectator can see Y in X despite Y's having no particular location on the canvas.

Wollheim takes this point further when he says that the non-localization requirement on "seeing-in" establishes it as the kind of seeing appropriate to pictures (i.e. representational seeing). He offers some examples of states of affairs, but he leaves this idea unexplained. Judging by the examples, it is possible that

he is referring to non-localized or undepicted pictorial content. His examples are seeing the following in paintings: the gathering of a storm, that a stag is about to die, and a crowd of people, some of whom are obscured. Wollheim's point is that "seeing-in" facilitiates our seeing parts of the picture's content which are not actually visible.

But "seeing-as" and "seeing-in" are equally limited here, contrary to what Wollheim says. "Seeing-in" also has a localization requirement because when we say what we see in a picture, the location is implied. Put another way, we always see a part or the whole of the canvas _as_ something or we always see something in a part or _in_ the whole of the canvas. Thus, how X and Y are related has a localization requirement built-in as it were.

Furthermore, if what we "see" is not actually visible, like painted lightning in a sky, we can _imagine_ it happening in the picture. It would make sense to say that we can "see" the non-visible lightning in the sky thereby identifying where in the picture we would "see" this future state of affairs (as the consequence of a gathering storm). Translated into the terms of "seeing-as", I might say that I "see" the upper half of the picture as streaked with lightning. But because I have no actual visual experience of this future event in the picture, both "seeing-in" and "seeing-as" cannot provide a description of seeing non-visible pictorial content.

The "see" will always be figurative, e.g. "I can 'see' that the stag is about to die in this picture." Here imagination can supply the images to fill the gaps of undepicted representational content. "Imagine" can be used non-figuratively to describe how spectators experience certain pictorial images so that "I can 'see' that the stag is about to die" becomes "I can imagine that the stag in the picture is about to die." This imagining might involve visualizing the stag's death, thus grasping part of the picture's content in this way.

Wollheim overemphasizes the difference between "seeing-as" and "seeing-in"; there is really very little difference between the two perceptual experiences. He describes them as "distinct perceptual projects"; "seeing-as" is the visual curiosity of things present to the senses whereas "seeing-in" is the ability to see things not present to the senses (and also things which might not exist). Therefore, "seeing-as" is involved in all perception while "seeing-in" is not, the latter being especially useful for seeing pictures. However, because he fails to provide enough evidence for the value of "seeing-in" as a special kind of perception, his first two criticisms of "seeing-as" are unconvincing.

Wollheim's third objection to "seeing-as" points to what I consider to be a possibly valuable aspect of his theory. The concept of "twofoldness" was analyzed in 3.3. To review, it is the nature of pictures to have both

configurational and recognitional aspects, and we interpret them as being configurations of lines and blobs of paint which form two-dimensional depictions of things. Wollheim recognizes this awareness of both aspects- an awareness which facilitates the understanding of the object as a picture of something. This is the condition which, he thinks, eliminates the possibility of illusion (except perhaps with good trompe l'oeil pictures).

I think that Wollheim is right in his claim that "seeing-in" captures our ability to see both the configurational and recognitional aspects of a picture. For example, it is possible to see the figure of Joan of Arc in the brushstrokes of the painting. However, can we be sure that this twofold attention will always take place? Sometimes the paint may be so smooth that the brushstrokes themselves are indiscernible, therefore limiting the spectator's perception only to the images. In my view, there are degrees of "twofoldness"- sometimes we see the two aspects easily and at other times they are less distinct. It is also difficult to take on board the idea of "twofoldness" consisting in a <u>single</u> visual experience. When we see an image according to its shape, we do not always notice the brushstrokes at the same time, especially if the surface of the painting is smooth. "Twofoldness" is intended as a safety measure against illusion and delusion, but even if we fail to notice the painted surface, we still understand the

picture as a representation, not as reality. (In Chapter 4 I will argue that Natural Generativity provides an explanation of how we arrive at such an understanding.)

Wollheim's arguments for the value of "seeing-in" are not persuasive. I would like to stress that ordinary perception and "seeing-as" do meet the requirements of pictorial representation, so a special visual capacity does not underlie pictorial experience. To claim that there is something which marks pictorial experience, i.e. something that distinguishes pictorial experience from other kinds of experience or ways of seeing, is to assume that there is a feature unique to it (and perhaps therefore to pictures themselves). Though I maintain that there is no definitive feature of this experience, the spectator's imagination is an aspect of it which requires elucidation. The next section will explore the extent to which "seeing-in" makes room for this in its account of pictorial representation.

3.5 "Seeing-in" and Imagination

In his debate with Anthony Savile entitled "Imagination and Pictorial Understanding"[17] Wollheim writes:

> ...imagination has no necessary part to play in the perception of what is represented. Imagination may put us in the right frame of mind for such perception, but it does not have to be a constituent of the perception itself.[18]

I have two objections to what he says here. Wollheim, nor Savile, clearly define what imagination means in their debate. Both philosophers take the common notion of imagination, fanciful imagination, rather than a philosophical definition. A philosophical definition can explain the various functions and activities of imagination as an image-maker, from its role in visual perception to its role in fantasy. If Savile and Wollheim had given its meaning a closer look they might have seen the presence of imagination in all normal visual perception in virtue of the fact that it makes use of images. They might then concede that in this sense imagination is necessarily part of "seeing-in" and of seeing pictures.

Secondly, it is not clear what Wollheim means by imagination putting us in "the right frame of mind". Does he mean by imagination that the imaginative stance is appropriate in the appreciation of art? It is assumed that art and imagination go hand in hand in the sense that imagination enables us to grasp the powerful, new ideas that art often presents to us. Though Wollheim acknowledges the value of imaginative activity in interpreting particular kinds of pictures, generally, he is suspicious of imagination used in the interpretation of just any picture.

It is not an uncommon view that fanciful imagination

used in the contemplation of an artwork can downgrade the experience. This view claims that if the spectator gives imagination free rein, it can become too free, as it were. In this state, imaginative activity distracts the spectator from the work because the spectator no longer attends to the features of the work itself, but rather to some personal fantasy. Such imaginative experience is too private to have any proper connection to the work. Formalism would take an extreme position in this regard, prohibiting any use of imagination because it has no relevance to the intrinsic properties of the work.

However, as I hope to show in the course of this thesis, we can usually control our imagination, and under control, imaginative activity can be a useful and valid way to interpret and appreciate artworks. In some cases the artist even requires imaginative activity for the proper interpretation of a picture.

Wollheim questions the value of imaginative activity on the basis that (1) it will lead to an experience of illusion; and (2) it will detract from the perceptual experience of the work.

> ...we have a perfectly good explanation of how we perceive representations without invoking imagination. Indeed invoking imagination would only erode the explanation by casting its adequacy in doubt.[19]

In general, many philosophers look upon imagination with suspicion because they believe that its functions cannot

be described in any systematic way; this may be due to not attempting the task of understanding its functions.

I have introduced some of the reasons why Wollheim believes that imagination leads to the incorrect interpretation of pictures. It is implicit in what he says that imaginative activity would contaminate the experience of "seeing-in".[20] Also, to set his theory apart from "seeing-as", he believes no role should be given to imagination in seeing pictures. For example, in his discussion of a spectator who "centrally imagines"[21] in order to understand a picture's content, he separates "seeing-in" from the activity of "centrally imagining". For Wollheim, when a spectator looks at a picture with an internal spectator (the imaginative projection of ourselves into a picture as spectators of the depicted scene from the inside) and uses imagination to identify with the internal spectator, "seeing-in" is inoperative. The spectator switches back to "seeing-in" after "centrally imagining". Wollheim argues that imagination is not part of our actual perception of pictures because it may upset the "twofold" experience of "seeing-in" with an experience of illusion (which can become delusion).

In fact, Wollheim believes that imagination dilutes our perception of pictures. Here, I think he means that with imagination, our perception of a picture moves from a clear, untainted perception to one in which the imagination's images change what we see into something

the artist did not intend us to see. For example, I can look at a picture of a little girl and identify it as that. But using my imagination, that little girl might begin to look like my mother as a child- an interpretation not intended by the artist. Here, imagination, according to Wollheim, interferes with "seeing-in" because there is an incorrect identification of what is represented in the picture. But in my view this interpretation is not incorrect as long as the spectator is aware that the artist did not paint a picture of the spectator's mother as a little girl (though this could have been possible). Recognizing a resemblance between the image and my mother can be incorporated into a proper appreciation of the picture, except in the case of being carried away by an emotional experience linked to the memory of my mother rather than to the picture.

In his discussion of the spectator's incorporation of concepts and beliefs into his perception of the picture, Wollheim also stresses that the spectator does not use imagination. He points out that for Wittgenstein, seeing different aspects of, e.g. the duck-rabbit figure, demands imagination,[22] but Wollheim appears to replace imaginative activity with cognitive activity.

> ...Imagination can in good faith be denied a role in the expansion of our perception of representations just in case each step in the expansion receives the same explanation, and this reiterated explanation is in terms of a visual

capacity, specifically seeing-in.[23]

So, in the duck-rabbit example, I assume that he means that we can be told that there are both aspects in one figure, and with this information we can try to see both aspects alternately. The "expansion of perception" means that we recognize more of what is in the painting when we use concepts and beliefs to understand what is there.

Wollheim also denies that we use mental images to "fill out" what we see on a canvas. Quoting Savile, he writes:

> 'We do not fill out the image at all. We rather come to amplify the description we are able to give of what is initially manifest to us, and do that by reason of knowledge about the subject that we bring to the picture from elsewhere.' Cast into my terminology, this means that a spectator, in advancing his pictorial understanding of a representation, may gainfully draw upon a background belief but without getting its constituent concepts to provide fresh descriptions under which he is then able to see what it represents.[24]

In the above quote, Savile denies the use of imagination in filling out what we see, but Wollheim claims that his argument is unsuccessful because he does not offer a view which is strictly in terms of "seeing-in".

The trouble in Wollheim's account is his misunderstanding of how imagination can be engaged with pictures. Instead of imagination adding to our experience of the picture, he suggests that if we use imagination at all in looking at pictures without an internal spectator,

we do not see what is depicted anymore, but perhaps some illusion instead, and this will not be attending to the _artist's_ representation.[25]

But imaginative activity need not end in illusion, nor have anything to do with it. Imagination helps us to recognize what is there, not to replace what is there with something else. A picture of a peach may not register as a peach to me unless I imagine how it tastes (if this is how a peach is defined for me). Or a sketchy picture of a peach may not look like a peach at all unless I can try to match its appearance with my mental image of a peach. Here, my imagination has not replaced the peach-picture with my mental image of the peach. I have simply used my visualizing ability to recognize what is depicted. If Wollheim allows concepts and beliefs to aid pictorial understanding, why can't imagination as illustrated in the peach example also have a legitimate role?

We have seen that Wollheim acknowledges that background knowledge and beliefs are used by the spectator in understanding a picture. I have objected to his view because it leaves out other aspects of the spectator's experience. Wollheim also denies that such cognitive and imaginative activity coincide with the perception of pictures. Sometimes, and especially on this point, Wollheim's theory reads very much like the Presentational Theory, a view which he rejects in _Art and_

its Objects. Wollheim does hold that "Pictures can have as their representational content things they do not represent."[26] But his description of pictorial experience does not allow for the spectator to imagine the undepicted content of a picture.

We cannot just see everything that the artist means to convey through his images. What we are meant to grasp is not always given, and therefore, not necessarily grasped through "seeing-in". Wollheim points to the "twofoldness" of "seeing-in" which facilitates recognition of what the painted images are of; but we may not be able to grasp the picture's meaning exclusively through "seeing-in", and there are many instances in which this is the case. Though he suggests the need for "centrally imagining" with certain pictures, he does not take the view (which I suggest) that imagination may be used freely in the interpretation of every picture (on the condition that we control and limit this freedom where appropriate). This returns us to the point of the preceding paragraph.

Pictures often evoke imaginative activity in a spectator. A portrait from the shoulders up might invite the spectator to fill out the rest of the figure. For example, one can imagine how the figure's dressing gown looks and what shoes are on the figure's feet. A Dutch painting of a group of seated men depicted from the waist up might call for imagining what lies below what is seen,

their legs and the floor. We can just know that the depicted figures have legs and sit in chairs, but it can be helpful to fill out the picture for ourselves. Often, what is depicted is unclear, as in a blurred photograph. Using imagination, we can picture what the painted image would look like if it was painted in perfect detail, in the same way that we can figure out the image of a blurred photograph. (We even use this imaginative skill to discern things we see around us.) What we see on the canvas provides clues which lead us to imagine how the images would look if they were fully depicted.[27]

There are other examples less obvious than these. As in my peach example, a picture of still life fruit covered in fresh dew invites us to imagine tasting the appetizing fruits. "Seeing-in" cannot account for an experience like this. Wollheim thinks that such experiences are inappropriate and even irrelevant to the artist's intentions. But if imaginative experiences are evoked by a picture, and enhance the spectator's interpretation, why should these experiences be considered inappropriate? I have pointed to how imagination can be part of the spectator's response, but further support for this claim will be considered in Chapter 7.

Wollheim does acknowledge that artists often require us or invite us to use imagination in understanding what is represented, but he does not accept such activity as

always useful or enhancing in the experience of seeing the picture. He discusses the "internal spectator" in which we project ourselves into the picture to watch what is happening there or to identify with one of the figures depicted, to "imagine this figure from the inside."[28] Wollheim recognizes this imaginative activity, but he separates it from "seeing-in". He says that the imaginative activity of becoming an "internal spectator" will

> ...colour the way in which the spectator of the picture perceives the picture, and specifically the way in which he perceives what he sees in the picture, when, as he is next required to do, he reverts from imagination to perception.[29]

His separation of perception and imagination is strained here. Typically, we perceive the picture when we imaginatively project ourselves into it because seeing what is there helps us to make this imaginative move. Also, by continuing our visual perception of the picture when using imagination we therefore attend to the picture itself, rather than indulging in a daydream or the like.

Insofar as he allows for the "internal spectator", he says that only certain paintings invite the spectator to place himself in the picture. Wollheim's description of "centrally imagining" is both clear and fruitful. Here he points to how a spectator can increase his or her understanding of a picture by identifying with a point of view in some picture. This exercise, he claims, is

planned by the artist so that particular paintings require spectators to complete the exercise in order to gain access to the picture's content. Through the two features of "centrally imagining" the spectator picks up more information about the picture, feeding it into the interpretation. "Cogency" is the transfer of the imagined experience back to the spectator, and "plenitude" is imagining something about the depicted protagonist's life.[30]

Velasquez's painting Las Meninas is used by both Savile and Wollheim to demonstrate the spectator's projective imagination. Before studying that example, we should consider the special kinds of pictures in which Wollheim's "internal spectator" is present.

Wollheim mentions Casper David Friedrich's nature pictures, Manet's single-figure pictures, Hals's and (maybe) Rembrandt's group portraits, and Jackson Pollock's splatter paintings. Each artist's images invite the spectator into the scene painted for one reason or another. In Friedrich's pictures it is the point of view he works into his nature pictures. A high viewpoint and a low horizon with an unbroken view across, for example, a landscape, position the external spectator into the picture, perhaps standing at the top of a hill.[31]

Certain single-figure paintings by Manet set off the spectator's imagination. Figures like the barmaid in the Bar aux Folies-Bergère and the woman in La Prune make us

wonder about who they are and what thoughts lie behind their pensive, perhaps forlorn, faces. Manet invites us into their world to imagine what they experience, and this invitation is conveyed through the expression of their personalities to the audience.[32]

Through these imaginings the spectator's understanding of the picture increases. Here, Wollheim does allow for imagining what is not actually depicted, but he sets limits on this activity; in becoming an "internal spectator", we must not allow imagination to wander. The main condition here is that the imaginative activity must concur with the artist's intention. In Painting as an Art, he says:

> ...once the spectator of the picture accepts the invitation to identify with the spectator in the picture, he loses sight of the marked surface. In the represented space, where he now vicariously stands, there is no marked surface. Accordingly the task of the artist must be to recall the spectator to a sense of what he has temporarily lost. The spectator must be returned from imagination to perception. Twofoldness must be reactivated. Otherwise the distinctive resources of the medium will lie untapped.[33]

Though sometimes we cannot avoid imaginatively projecting ourselves into pictures, we are supposed to enjoy the images through seeing them, and seeing them in a special way. Here Wollheim has attempted to incorporate what he cannot deny, that pictures do evoke an imaginative response in the spectator. However, while projecting ourselves into the picture may give us a more

intimate look at what is represented, once imaginatively there, not having the freedom to explore the space can make the move fruitless. "Seeing-in" sets unrealistic restraints on the artist and the spectator because while recognizing the use of imagination in the interpretation of pictures, it restricts its freedom.

Giving imagination a free rein can, in some instances, lead to imaginative experiences which have little to do with what is depicted. It can even lead to a misunderstanding rather than a better or fuller understanding of a picture. However, defining imaginative activity as useful only if we can identify with an internal spectator is too limiting on the spectator's attempt to interpret and enjoy a work of art.

In Las Meninas, the spectator is invited into the picture's representational space to look at a canvas turned away from the external spectator which Velasquez has depicted himself as painting. The picture is a realistic one with little fanciful detail or fictional overtones. We are simply presented with the figures of the royal family, their entourage, and Velasquez, who is in the process of painting a canvas.

The image of the canvas takes up a quarter of the left side of the picture. With its back to us and its presence so dominant in the scene, we cannot help but imagine what it is that we have caught Velasquez in the middle of painting. On closer inspection, it appears that

he is painting a portrait of the royal couple, Philip IV and Queen Mariana, whose figures are reflected in a mirror at the back of the room in the painting. Once "inside" the picture, "looking" at the canvas, we imagine how much progress Velasquez has made in the portrait- the style and the colours he uses. In the real picture almost all of the figures, Infanta Margarita, her maids, and Velasquez, are expressionless with their eyes focused on a point outside of the canvas. They seem to be looking at us, at the external spectator. Their gaze draws us into the space, where we wander, inspecting Velasquez's unfinished canvas and the rest of the figures.

This imaginative leap is evoked by the nature of the images. But my description of the "internal spectator" reaches beyond what Wollheim will allow. According to Wollheim, we become internal spectators in this instance, but our imaginations are not permitted to play with the images depicted, nor to add to what is depicted. Such activity would not concur with the artist's intention. Wollheim is really saying something like, look but don't touch.

If Wollheim allows for cognitive activity, e.g. using biographical information about a figure in a portrait to aid pictorial understanding, why should imaginative activity not be allowed if a correct or not wildly incorrect interpretation is reached by the spectator? The cognitive information which we use in interpretation is

not represented in the picture, but it still offers something to our interpretation. Knowing Velasquez's relationship with the King and Queen of Spain will help us to understand that the scene he painted may have actually occurred, and that it was not Velasquez's fantasy to paint a royal portrait. Imagining what that portrait looked like and perhaps the perspective he chose (based on what we do see in the picture) is an equally acceptable part of any spectator's interpretation. Wollheim has not provided sufficient reasons to exclude it. He also claims that the playful activity of the imagination leads to understanding pictures in a piecemeal fashion. But if we perceive the whole picture, what is to prevent us from imaginatively exploring its parts to gain a better grasp of the whole?

Furthermore, can Wollheim be certain that the artist's intention is so defined as to include only a particular imaginative stance? Once we have imagined ourselves in the picture, we cannot know for certain that the artist does not wish for a free imagination in the spectator. A theory that depends on the spectator seeing what the artist intended for him to see is more difficult to defend. Wollheim's examples demand a more precise response than we can pin down; it is not easy to foresee or predict what shape imaginative activity will take in response to as particular theme. For example, to claim that what the artist has depicted will determine how the

spectator imagines himself as an "internal spectator" is to assume that the artist's images exercise nearly perfect control over the spectator's response. Wollheim's analysis of the way the spectator uses imagination is therefore incomplete in that it does not consider the variety of equally legitimate responses we can have.

In addition to "centrally imagining", Wollheim identifies the activity of the external spectator as "acentrally imagining". "Acentrally imagining" is imaginative access to a picture from the outside, from no particular point of view.[34] Little consideration is given to it, but there is something about it in his debate with Savile and in Painting as an Art. He does not think that "acentrally imagining" is legitimate because it may "subvert" the spectator's perception of a picture.[35] Also, whereas "centrally imagining" is separate from the perception of a picture (what is imagined is then fed into the perception), "acentrally imagining" is reduced to a purely visual experience. I am not sure what he means by this, but he says that it is visual because this type of imagining has "no affective aspect" (whereas the "internal spectator" is able to imagine what the figure in the picture feels).

Despite the fact that "acentrally imagining" is described as visual, he still claims that it is inappropriate because it does not correspond to what the spectator sees when perceiving the picture. It offers a

different perspective and one which lacks "twofoldness" so it is in conflict with "seeing-in". Thus, according to Wollheim, even this form of imaginative activity does not enhance but rather disrupts our interpretation of a picture.

I disagree with his objections to "acentrally imagining" for the same reason that I disgree with his conception of the "internal spectator". His arguments against imagination are based on his assumption that most kinds of imaginative activity cause an incorrect interpretation of a picture, and that such activity conflicts with "seeing-in". If "seeing-in" is the way we look at pictures, then imaginative activity may be inconsistent with the way it operates, but Wollheim does not argue convincingly that "seeing-in" is the way we experience pictures; he only presents the nature of "seeing-in" and how it works.

If we accept that "seeing-in" provides a satisfactory account of pictorial experience, then we may fail to recognize the fruits of imagination for the interpretation and enjoyment of pictures. In this way, then, "seeing-in" restricts the spectator's experience.

Still, finding similarities between various spectators' responses can contribute to reaching a rough description of what makes an experience aesthetic, or perhaps, how ordinary experience differs from pictorial experience. It is clear that perception is the essential

requirement of the spectator- to look at the picture. However, this should not lead us to explain the spectator's experience exclusively in terms of it. When appreciating a picture, thought and imagination are also engaged by what we see. While perception is constant (unless we shut our eyes), imagination and cognition may become more or less active depending on the spectator and the kind of picture it is. So a mixture of these three mental and visual activities make up every spectator's response. Moreover, as I will show in subsequent chapters, it is possible to determine when imagination is too free for a reasonable interpretation to emerge. We can achieve this by the same method we use to determine how much background information is required or suitable in the spectator's response.

I advocate an approach that replaces a special visual capacity like "seeing-in" with a description of the several activities that come together in the interpretation of pictures. Also, I would like to emphasize that in my view "seeing-in" is a superfluous form of perception. It can be replaced with the idea that we use ordinary perception for interpreting representations, such visual perception perhaps involving a stronger element of imagination when looking at pictures than is required when I look at, say, my mother's face as she speaks to me. Pictures require more imagination because there is an artist who has created

them. Sometimes pictures are just for the imagination. When an artist paints my mother's portrait, he is not trying to reproduce her face, but to depict it in a certain way. The difference between representation and reality lies in the artist's role, not in the claim that we see pictures in a special way which differs from the way we see everything around us.

Notes

[1] D. Peetz, "Some Current Philosophical Theories of Pictorial Representation" British Journal of Aesthetics (27) 3: 227-37, Summer 1987, p. 232.

[2] See R. Scruton, Art and Imagination (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

[3] L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, 1958), 195.

[4] See my Chapter 2, p. 28, for Gombrich's response to these criticisms.

[5] My analysis of "seeing-in" is based on Wollheim's most recent discussions of it which appear in his debate with Anthony Savile entitled "Imagination and Pictorial Understanding" (Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LX: 19-60, 1986) and in his book, Painting as an Art (Thames and Hudson, 1987).

[6] Savile, Wollheim, 46.

[7] Savile, Wollheim, 46.

[8] Painting as an Art, 96.

[9] Painting as an Art, 51.

[10] Savile, Wollheim, 47.

[11] Savile, Wollheim, 49.

[12] Wittgenstein, 193.

[13] Wittgenstein, 213.

[14] See A. Hyslop, "Seeing Through Seeing-In" British Journal of Aesthetics 26 (4): 371-9, Autumn 1986.

[15] R. Wollheim, Art and its Objects, 2nd Edition (Cambridge University Press, 1980), 210.

[16] Art and its Objects, 210.

[17] See Savile, Wollheim.

[18] Savile, Wollheim, 46.

[19] Savile, Wollheim, 46.

[20] Savile, Wollheim, 47.

[21] See my more detailed discussion of "centrally imagining" later in this section.

[22] Savile, Wollheim, 49-50 (from Wittgenstein, 207).

[23] Savile, Wollheim, 50.

[24] Savile, Wollheim, 51.

[25] Wollheim recognizes the difference between an imaginative and an illusory experience of a picture (see _Painting as an Art_, p. 185), but what he says implies the view that imaginative activity can lead to an illusory experience.

[26] Savile, Wollheim, 45.

[27] On the other hand, using imagination to "adjust" or "focus" an image to the extent that we lose sight of the artist's depiction could lead to a misinterpretation.

[28] Savile, Wollheim, 54.

[29] Savile, Wollheim, 54.

[30] _Painting as an Art_, 129.

[31] _Painting as an Art_, 132.

[32] _Painting as an Art_, 141.

[33] _Painting as an Art_, 166.

[34] Savile, Wollheim, 59.

[35] Savile, Wollheim, 60.

CHAPTER 4: NATURAL GENERATIVITY

4.1 Natural Generativity and Pictorial Representation

Schier's Natural Generativity is not a perceptual nor a linguistic theory of depiction but a functional, interpretative theory. It is, in my view, an improvement on both Wollheim's "seeing-in" and Goodman's semantic theory primarily because it elucidates the structure of pictorial experience. Though it does not sufficiently explain the character of pictorial experience, it can at least provide an answer to how we make pictorial interpretations.

In contrast to other depiction theories, Schier begins with two propositions which form the basis of his theory. Firstly, he believes that "an interpretation of a picture is an assignment of meaning or content to it." Secondly, he argues that "to interpret a picture it is not necessary to experience it in a given way."[1] In abandoning the perceptual approach, he notes the inability for perception to do all of the work in interpreting depictions, and he replaces it with an inquiry into how we come to understand their content. He believes that a cogent account of pictorial experience will emerge from his theory.

In Deeper into Pictures, Schier poses a basic question about depiction:

> Just what do we have to add to my experience of S as a medley of colours in order to make it true that I see S as a picture of some object? In other words, what makes it true that I see S as a picture of O?[2]

Here, he points to the need to identify what makes pictorial experience pictorial, but rejects Wollheim's attempt to solve this problem through "seeing-in" as well as other attempts such as the Resemblance Theory and the Make-Believe Theory.[3]

Schier claims that both "seeing-as" and "seeing-in" are theories which depend in part on resemblance. A drawback of these theories is that they imply that the experience of seeing a picture of a horse resembles the experience of seeing a real horse. He acknowledges that there is an overlap between the recognitional abilities triggered by seeing a picture of a horse and a real horse. In other words, a picture of a horse may engage or provoke horse-recognizing abilities.[4] However, this does not make the two experiences necessarily similar in nature. Identifying what distinguishes these experiences is not Schier's concern in his argument for Natural Generativity, but I will argue that his theory is a starting point for understanding how we respond to pictures, and how these responses themselves differ.

Natural Generativity does not rely on the linguistic conventions which Goodman utilizes in his analysis of depiction as language. Schier believes that we naturally

generate our interpretation of a picture according to minimal non-linguistic conventions. This natural ability, which is itself a property of seeing pictures, also enables an artist to create a picture. Therefore, Natural Generativity is an ability used by both spectators and artists.

Schier's theory claims that our ability to interpret pictures depends on having succeeded in an initial pictorial interpretation and on recognizing what is depicted. He begins with this basic definition:

> A system of representation is iconic just if once someone has interpreted any arbitrary member of it, they can proceed to interpret any other member of the system, provided only that they are able to recognise the object represented.[5]

Even if we fail to recognize what is depicted, if we had been able to then we would have succeeded in understanding the picture as representational. Natural Generativity is not natural in the sense that we are born with the ability to interpret pictures nor is it analytically true that an initial interpretation will lead to further successful interpretations. Schier holds that

> ...it is a natural fact about us that such initial successes are fecund and generate a general ability to interpret novel pictorial symbols...[6]

In the next section I will examine Natural Generativity in more depth, however here we should note

that through rigorous argumentation, Schier demonstrates how this ability facilitates the interpretation of pictures. A particular strength of his theory is that it demarcates the recognition of the meaning and content of pictures from the recognition of the objects depicted.

It is necessary, I think, to consider pictorial experience in relation to the picture, not in relation to the object depicted. (This is not to say that we do not have an interest in the object depicted). Both Schier and Scruton (among others) have recognized this point, but only Schier has been successful in offering a theory of depiction which reflects this. Typically in art, pictures are created with the intention of showing us something from an original point of view, and they are assessed with that in mind. Pictures have the power to draw us into their worlds; for instance by presenting a thing in a particular or extraordinary way. We may appreciate a painting of a familiar landscape in a way entirely different from appreciating the landscape itself. There are several reasons which account for the difference in these responses.

To mention a few which only touch on this central topic in aesthetics, we consider the artist, style, period, subject-matter, etc. We contemplate the images as created by an artist with an apparent or not so apparent intention. The images may be suggestive, unleashing the spectator's imagination in a way that enriches the

experience. But it is worth mentioning that we should not assume that the two experiences will always be completely different, in fact the response to the picture and the response to the natural scene may resemble each other. For example, part of a spectator's response to a picture of a familiar landscape may be emotional. It may remind the spectator of where she grew up; the particular artistic rendering of the scene causing her to visualize her home, a flood of memories accompanying this.

Pictorial experience is not limited to just what the spectator sees in the picture. In addition to the visual experience, thoughts contribute to the picture's overall interpretation from the level of an initial recognition of the images to a deeper interpretation of them, perhaps including imaginative activity on the part of the spectator. The extent to which Natural Generativity gives an account of pictorial experience will, I hope, become apparent through an analysis of the theory.

4.2 Natural Generativity Examined

Schier locates pictures as members of an iconic system, yet he marks off real differences between pictures and language, namely the absence of the grammar and conventions that belong to linguistic systems. Pictures are icons in virtue of the fact that they are symbols, but not all icons are visual. His theory only

concerns visual icons, depictions. To define depiction, he develops a theory of how we understand pictures- how we come to know that pictures represent things. Pictures, or "iconic modes of representation" have the property of "natural generativity". This property means that all icons can be interpreted as representational once an initial interpretation is made.[7] Schier's theory of depiction could be construed as similar to Goodman's approach, but Schier rigorously defends Natural Generativity as a non-linguistic theory.

Generally, I think Schier is successful in putting forward a theory of pictorial representation which is free from the same kinds of rules and conventions that form the basis of Goodman's theory. Schier notes some similarities between pictures and language. Pictures can be used to communicate, and like sentences they can be bearers of truth-value. Also, once one becomes proficient in each system, linguistic or pictorial, one can interpret novel sentences and novel icons. The essential difference, he claims, is that to understand language we must understand its grammar- which is conventional- but we can understand a novel picture without having ever experienced its "parts", given that the spectator is "pictorially competent". Natural Generativity means that a spectator can understand that S depicts O just if the spectator recognizes O. Therefore while we have to learn the names of objects to identify them, there is no

pictorial vocabulary to learn for the interpretation of pictures.[8]

Pictures can be interpreted simply from the images the spectator sees. The process

> ...need in principle involve no more than searching the surface of the pictorial symbol for cues which in fact unlock one's ability to recognise the represented objects; this unlocking or triggering of one's visual recognitional capacity in turn leads spontaneously to an ability to ascribe content correctly to the picture...[9]

Although pictures have no grammatical rules, natural or conventional, Schier does say that pictures have iconic and sub-iconic parts. For example, the sparkle in the eye of Ruben's picture of his mistress is a sub-iconic part of the eye icon in the overall image.[10] These parts are meaningless without the whole of which they are the parts, but they are unlike letters of the alphabet because the meaning of letters is conventional. The upshot of these comparisons is that the meaning of pictures, unlike sentences, is not <u>fixed</u> by conventions, and we do not have to learn certain rules to make successful interpretations of pictures.

Schier acknowledges that there is a convention which is necessary to Natural Generativity though he argues that it is not linguistic. The only convention governing pictorial systems is the iconic convention he calls "Convention C". In Schier's terminology "Convention C"

is: "If S admits a naturally generated interpretation p, S means that p."[11] If this convention is in place, then the naturally generated interpretation is the correct one, the spectator therefore correctly identifying what the picture depicts.

According to Schier, the role of "Convention C" differs from that of linguistic conventions. In the case of a linguistic system, there are separate conventions governing the separate, meaningful parts of language, so that grasping language depends on grasping these many conventions, while

> Convention C, by contrast, does not assign any particular meanings to anything; it doesn't operate on particular iconic signs to tell us that. Knowing that Convention C governed an icon would not, in itself, tell you what it meant; knowing the convention governing the meaning of a word is knowing what the word means.[12]

Schier introduces another feature of Natural Generativity which I will call Mechanism M. Artists create the images of pictures with the intention that they are to be recognized as of certain things (assuming that such an intention exists). Mechanism M is that feature of Natural Generativity which explains the connection between our naturally generated interpretations and the correct ones.[13] Schier is <u>not</u> saying that S is a picture of O just because the artist creates S with the intention of S being of O. S is an icon of O only if it is interpreted as being of O which

depends on the spectator recognizing it as such.

Schier claims that we do not have to know the artist's intention in order to see that S depicts O. Here he is correct in claiming that it is simply our ability to recognize O that enables us to generate the interpretation that S is a picture of O. This approach to the problem of the artist's intention avoids the shaky view that the spectator's interpretation should match the artist's intention and that this depends on knowledge of the artist's intention. On Schier's view the spectator makes a successful interpretation <u>independently</u> of such knowledge.

> It is the fact that producer and interpreter alike share a set of recognitional abilities and that they can apply these abilities to pictorial symbols that explains the correspondence of producer's intention and interpreter's intention.[14]

One could attempt to argue that "C" and "M" are both conventions, and that they must be similar to lingusitic conventions. But Schier has predicted this objection; and in fact, he asserts that the difference between a lingusitic symbol system and a pictorial or iconic one lies in the nature of the conventions of each system (not that one system has conventions and the other does not).

He argues that the spectator and the artist do not have to acknowledge "C" and "M" but that "C" and "M" have to be "in place". Schier also notes that this is true of

linguistic conventions, but he clarifies the distinction between the function of "C" and "M" and the function of linguistic conventions through a discussion of the nature of icons and iconic systems.

Icons, he claims, do not function in the same way that words do. What distinguishes the two is the fact that artists create icons. We expect words to be used in certain ways and understand them because of how they are used. These expectations are based on standard habits that are part of communication. On the other hand, with pictures

> The artist experiments until he gets something which he can naturally understand on the basis of relevant recognitional abilities.[15]

Furthermore, an icon differs functionally from a word. A picture of Henry is not a picture of Henry in virtue of the fact that it is a configuration of lines and colours created by an artist who intends for the configuration to represent Henry. The picture must make a successful "performance", that is, it is not a picture of Henry unless it is interpreted by both artist and spectator as such. A word, too, must be understood in order to perform its function but the difference is that a word fulfills its purpose once it is accepted as designating something, while a picture "does not perform its function merely by making its function manifest".[16]

Schier's defence of his theory that pictorial

conventions are non-lingustic is convincing. He has overturned the idea that pictures are interpreted like words or language. I support his view, primarily because I think the relationship between the artist and the spectator cannot be defined simply in terms of a systematic method of interpretation. Schier reveals the conventions which do exist when we interpret pictures without the effect of an inflexible definition of pictorial experience. He identifies a structure in the interpretation of pictures while avoiding the drawbacks of a narrow conception of pictures as symbols of communication.

Natural Generativity offers a plausible explanation of how we grasp the meaning of a picture, this being fundamental to analyzing pictorial experience. Once we have understood how an initial interpretation is possible, we are closer to understanding what is involved in our overall experience of any particular picture.

4.3 Natural Generativity and Pictorial Experience

Natural Generativity helps us to understand the nature of pictorial experience because it explains the connection between a depiction and what it depicts. Schier's theory defines the relationship between picture and subject in terms of how the spectator interprets a

picture. "Seeing-in" fails to do this because, Schier says

> It is not possible to explain this structure in terms of experiences which simply have as their objects the same elements- S and O- as my pictorial experience....the simple coincidence of 'seeing S' and 'seeing O' cannot amount necessarily to an experience as of their being related in a certain way.[17]

Natural Generativity is a starting point for an inquiry into pictorial experience but it may offer no more insight into the spectator's response besides identifying how pictorial interpretation is possible. Perhaps more than this is unnecessary. A theory of depiction may only need to define how a depiction is related to the object it depicts- further characterization of the spectator's response to that relationship lying outside of such a definition.

Schier does recognize that there is "more to pictorial experience than simply knowing what a picture means".[18] But he is also dissatisfied with an explanation of pictorial experience in terms of a visual experience.[19] Through his objections to "seeing-in" Schier concludes that a theory of depiction does indeed require an explanation of pictorial experience because otherwise it is inadequate.

Schier's argument for pictorial experience in terms of Natural Generativity begins with an extraordinary example. He asks us to imagine a blank canvas, a "magic

canvas", which we naturally interpret as a picture of Marilyn Monroe. The magic lies in the fact that there are no marks on the canvas but we can nevertheless interpret the canvas as a picture of Marilyn Monroe. It is natural to ask how this is possible, and Schier's answer is that we receive subliminal visual cues that trigger Monroe recognizing abilities. Schier has chosen this particular example to demonstrate that pictorial experience cannot be defined solely in terms of a visual experience.

He argues that his characterization of pictorial experience as illustrated by the magic canvas "lacks the phenomenological constraint which Wollheim's twofold experience model imposes."[20] That constraint is "twofoldness" which Wollheim claims is a unique phenomenological feature of "seeing-in". It is a way of seeing both the configurational and recognitional aspects of a picture in a single visual experience. Schier thinks that "twofoldness" is an incoherent concept, and that, by itself, it cannot define pictorial experience. The magic canvas is a pictorial experience in which "twofoldness is not invoked" because the surface of the picture is not marked. We interpret the picture as a depiction of Marilyn Monroe, so that according to Natural Generativity it counts as pictorial.

While I would agree here that "twofoldness" is not necessarily invoked every time we look at a picture (and therefore that it is not sufficient to define pictorial

experience), I do think that "twofoldness" is a coherent concept, despite Wollheim's lack of explanation as to how two visual experiences can come together as a single one.

Schier's example may be too far-fetched to serve as a decisive blow against "seeing-in", but it at least illustrates two important points. Firstly, "seeing-in" is not adequately analysed by Wollheim. The upshot of this is that it does not follow that "seeing-in" is a sufficient condition for representation. I agree with Schier on this point: seeing Y in X "is just a fancy way of saying 'P sees S as a picture of O'".[21]

His runic stones example illustrates this objection. He imagines a tribe in which the native grandsons project an image of their grandfathers onto a runic stone, in the same way that we might discern a face in a stain on a wall (an example of "seeing-in"), and this amounts to seeing the grandfather in the stone. The native grandson does this while attending to both the runic marks and the appearance (projected) of the grandfather. Schier claims that this experience is not an experience of seeing a picture or a picture of the grandfather, even if the runic marks are intended to be seen in that way.[22]

Secondly, "seeing-in", while perhaps providing part of an explanation of the spectator's visual experience of pictures, fails to tell us what pictorial experience consists in. Walton supports both of these objections (and attempts to improve "seeing-in" with his problematic

make-believe theory). He acknowledges the value of "seeing-as", but he says that

> Wollheim does not fully explain what seeing-in amounts to....what is that special visual experience? What is a person doing when she sees a dog in a design?[23]

Schier's argument against "seeing-in" is intended to justify his move away from a perceptual account of depiction.

Schier supports the view that a spectator's interpretation (and experience) of a picture can be a visual experience, but with an essential condition attached:

> ...a visual experience of S is a pictorial experience if it specifically reflects or shadows the perceiver's naturally generated interpretation of S. Without specifying the specific nature of a pictorial experience E, I have simply said that its structure must track the structure of the naturally generated interpretation of S.[24]

Here he offers a valid description of how pictorial experience can be defined according to Natural Generativity. He refrains from describing the content of that experience, maintaining that it will follow the structure of a naturally generated interpretation. This is a valid point, for it is reasonable to expect that a spectator will respond to a particular picture in predictable ways. A spectator may gradually arrive at an interpretation, rather than immediately grasping the

picture's meaning, so that the interpretation itself is an activity; one which varies depending on the spectator and the picture. A description of the nature of this experience may not be required for Schier's argument for Natural Generativity, but I believe that this weakens Natural Generativity as a theory of depiction. Wollheim, for example, attempts to define the nature of pictorial experience through "seeing-in". However, both views only elucidate the structure of pictorial experience, and therefore neglect to give a more specific explanation of the content of pictorial experience. Though I have objections to "seeing-in", we have seen that Wollheim at least offers some description of different kinds of responses to pictures. This helps to fill out just what is constitutive of pictorial experience.

What kind of account might Natural Generativity be able to give of a typical spectator's response? I will try to illustrate this with the following example. When looking at a Stubbs painting of a horse, the spectator possesses an underlying understanding of the object as a picture of a horse, provided that the spectator is acquainted with pictoral systems and horses. The interpretation of the picture as a horse is thus naturally generated. Because of Mechanism M and "Convention C", the picture is understood as depicting a horse which is recognizable as such because the spectator knows what horses look like, and what one sees in the

picture activates one's horse-recognizing abilities.

This part of the spectator's response might not occur in the order I have assigned it, but what is significant is how such an interpretation is possible in the first place. My description of the spectator's response leaves out details about how what the spectator sees in the picture leads to recognizing what the images represent (or any other interpretative components of the overall response to the picture). These particular components are worth examining in order to show that pictorial experience is not simply a visual experience. It _is_ a visual experience in the sense that under normal viewing conditions a spectator can only interpret and enjoy a picture by perceiving it. (Keen visual attention to the images need not be constant, I think, since imaginative activity in the spectator might momentarily draw him or her away from such perceptual curiosity).

Further extended interpretative activity might take place. For instance, while looking at the horse picture the spectator might try to guess who painted the picture (before referring to the nameplate) confirming this guess by noting the similarity in style to other Stubbs paintings- clean lines, glossy paint and majestic equine figures. Possibly, he or she notices the difference between, say, a Gericault painting of a horse and a Stubbs painting of a horse. The spectator might then move to the images lying behind the figure of the horse,

asking the question, Is it a manor house or just a barn? This attention might change if the spectator recalls, for example, that the horse pictured was the sire of a champion. Does the figure here look like a fine racehorse? An image of a racetrack and galloping horses flashes through the spectator's mind.

My example illustrates the various ways in which a spectator might respond to a particular picture. Further explanation of the levels of interpretation might include additional questions posed by the spectator about the content of the picture, and perhaps even further imaginative activity related to that content which enhances the appreciation of the picture.

Schier has certainly acknowledged that pictorial experiences vary, and he claims that at least Natural Generativity can account for the structure of these various responses. However, while Natural Generativity lays the foundation for understanding the nature of pictorial experience, it lacks a consideration of just what the content of that experience is. Schier apparently believes that it is enough to define what counts as a pictorial experience. What is required is an explanation of how we respond to pictures, for this will contribute fundamentally to understanding the relationship between pictures and the objects they represent.

Notes

[1] F. Schier, Deeper into Pictures (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 32.

[2] Schier, 196.

[3] His discussion and criticisms of these theories are particularly insightful, especially his remarks in support of the Resemblance Theory (see Deeper into Pictures, pp. 2-9; 20-26).

[4] Schier, 187.

[5] Schier, 44.

[6] Schier, 55.

[7] Schier, 43.

[8] Schier, 51.

[9] Schier, 61.

[10] Schier, 87.

[11] Schier, 132.

[12] Schier, 132.

[13] Schier, 97.

[14] Schier, 98.

15 Schier, 98.

[16] Schier, 99.

[17] Schier, 204.

[18] Schier, 197.

[19] Schier, 197.

[20] Schier, 207.

[21] Schier, 202.

[22] Schier, 17; K. Walton, Mimesis as Make-Believe (Harvard University Press, 1990), 301n.

[23] Walton, 300.

[24] Schier, 212.

PART II

CHAPTER 5: IMAGINATION

5.1 Introduction

We use the word imagination in many ways, and generally understand what is meant by it. It is a familiar word, and we have a familiar way of thinking of its uses, e.g. an imaginative person, an imaginary world, etc.[1] However, this familiarity can be misleading. Our understanding of the concept beyond common usage is not extensive because, though we know what it means to say "Ginny is imaginative", we might be challenged if asked to define imagination. This reveals the perhaps overused nature of the concept: it is used to describe anything which is creative, unusual, odd, eccentric, or even suspect. Though the meaning of the term "imagination" has become vague, it can be used accurately to describe a wide range of diverse activities and experiences. In philosophy, many writers refer to the concept without properly defining it. In aesthetics, the term is certainly overused, so that it has come to mean almost the same thing as "creative". In this chapter, I hope to make apparent some of the problems involved in defining the concept of imagination and some of the misconceptions about the activities which are attributed to the

imagination. I hope that a clear and coherent notion of imagination will emerge, one which will provide a foundation for the next chapter on imagination and art.

5.2 The Uses and Activities of Imagination

"Imagination" can describe several different kinds of activities. To do something "with imagination" is to do something in a creative, inventive or original way. We can "imagine that" the world is flat, thereby imagining something which is not the case. To "imagine something" may be to conjure up an image of something not present to the senses, e.g. a place, a person's face, a future event, or a non-image like imagining a feeling, or "what it would be like to...". We can imagine things which do not appear to us as images, and we can imagine things which do not appear as visual images[2] to the mind's eye. Imagining Desert Orchid winning a race might be to imagine a dapple-grey horse ridden by a jockey and crossing the finish line by a nose. That image might be visual because we might "see" the horse and the jockey but this imagining might also include an auditory image of the sound of the cheering crowd, or an olfactory image of the earthy smell of the racetrack. Imagining without images, for example, imagining how it feels to lose a lover might necessitate imaginatively putting oneself in someone else's shoes.

Imagination can be inventive, both voluntarily and involuntarily. One can construct fictional worlds through visualizing Utopia and Paradise and imagine new possibilities such as pink elephants or buying a new car. We can also be fooled by imagination, for instance, when we "hear" the footsteps of an imaginary burglar coming up the stairs. We can be confused by imagination, as when we cannot tell the difference between a memory image and a dream image: did it really happen or was it just a dream? There is a relationship between dream images and memory images. Dream images can be classified _as_ memory images since when remembering dreams we engage ourselves in recalling the images of our dreams. Even when experiencing dream images which simply "come to us", they are still images of the past, i.e. having occurred in the past which includes our dreams. Also, our dreams may draw on our memory images.

With all of these various activities in some way indebted to imagination's powers, how can we reach a reasonably unified conception of imagination? The complexity of its functions makes this task tedious, but not impossible. I will argue that we can conceive of the activities of imagination as closely connected, and that they can be organized, though not systematically, into a spectrum of activities.

One might suggest that the common link between imagination's activities is that of the images it

produces, a power imagination alone possesses (in comparison to perception and understanding). In addition, because sight is the sense used most often, the images we have are therefore most often visual images. In turn, therefore, we commonly think of images in terms of visual images. We experience visual images in the form of internal images like mental images or external physical images like pictures, photographs, etc. It is unlikely that external, physical images can be anything but visual, but mental images can be both visual and non-visual because we have four other senses besides visual perception. We can have olfactory, gustatory, tactual, and auditory images so that one can "see" a face in the mind's eye, and one can imagine the smell of lavender, the taste of mint-chocolate, the feel of suede, and the pitch of a piccolo.

Imagination can be described as the faculty which produces images, primarily visual ones, but this is not the definitive feature of all of its activities. The problem is that there are instances of imaginative activity which do not include images. Alan White puts this point succinctly: "Imagery is confined to the copyable and the picturable, but imagination is not."[3] Though we commonly think of imagination as responsible for the images we have, there are many ways in which we use imagination that are non-sensory. We can imagine the solution to a problem, and have imaginary troubles or

pains, but we can imagine these things without images though certain images might accompany them. For example, in imagining how one could solve a problem, such as how to manage paying a bill, one could imagine the steps to be taken to pay the bill, and in so doing one might visualize oneself moonlighting as a dishwasher. Similarly, an actor might imagine having a pain in his leg when there is no actual pain there. These are cases of deliberately imagining that something is the case. We can also have irrational imaginings or mistaken beliefs, such as when a hypochondriac imagines being ill. So though imagination is responsible for producing both visual and non-visual images, whether at will or passively, there is also a sense in which imagination produces imaginings which do not make use of any kind of mental imagery.[4]

It is clear that there are diverse activities linked to the imagination, but seeking something they all have in common may be a fruitless exercise. Still, the activities are related, so it is my task here to arrange these activities into some organized group. Through this I hope to achieve a unified concept of imagination which reveals the polymorphous nature of it.[5]

The activities of imagination can be placed under four headings. Firstly, it aids our perception and understanding of reality. This is properly described through imagination as the faculty which facilitates

sense perceptions. In this capacity it synthesizes sense perceptions into images. Though this function is disputed, we can at least be certain that it is imagination which supplies images to perception, and that images are essential to perceptual knowledge. Imagination therefore is the mediating power between sense perceptions and concepts. This function is defined in different ways by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume and Kant.

Secondly, imagination is the faculty which forms images either at will or passively (i.e. voluntarily or involuntarily). This heading covers generally any kinds of sensory images from the basic images of sense perception to images we conjure up, but not including images which are inventive or fanciful. Passive and active mental images are fleeting, have duration, appear in little or great detail, and can be described to some extent. Retinal images, after-images, hallucinations, illusions, and dream images fall into this category.

Retinal images and after-images are strictly visual images and are part of visual perception itself. Every time we look at something an image of what we see is formed on the retina which is like a screen on which the image appears. After-images are traces of perceptions. They are caused by bright light bleaching the photopigments of the retina with the effect of a block of colour with some shape perhaps resembling something just

seen.[6]

Mistaken perceptions are also in this category of sensory imagination, for example, mistaking a tree in a field as a man waving his arms, or the optical illusion of seeing a stick in the water as bent.

Hallucinations, too, must be understood as related to both perception and to imagination. They are caused by abnormal neuronal discharges, and can be artificially induced by stimulating part of the brain.[7] Visual hallucinations appear to the subject in physical space in relation to other physical objects. When a person experiences a visual hallucination, what is seen may look so real that it is accepted as the real thing.

Involuntary images of another kind are those which simply "come to mind". It is common to have such imagery while reading a story or poem, and when someone relates an event to us. We also "call up" images, for instance, we can visualize images when requested to, or when trying to imagine what someone or something looks like. Visualizing is often called "picturing" because it can be compared to depicting. Visualizing is not like seeing because it is active rather than passive.

There is a close relationship between imagination and memory, but they are not interchangeable nor identical concepts. Rather, imagination is responsible for forming images which are stored in the memory. Memory images are a kind of passive imagery. They are spontaneous and often

we cannot even control their force and impact. In Oliver Sacks's book The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, there is the case of a woman with a brain tumor which seemed to be the cause of an uncontrollable flow of vivid memories of her childhood. Though she seemed to enjoy her dream-like state, she could not release herself from it.[8]

An image of recollection (which I believe is a kind of memory image) is called up deliberately, so in this sense the images of recollection are active images. Memory and recollection images are distinctive because they are related to what has been experienced in the past. Remembering something does not require a memory image, but mental images often accompany recollection, helping us to remember an experience more clearly.

A third aspect of imagination is its inventive nature. Its activities in this category rely almost exclusively on its active, constructive powers. It is the faculty which enables us to think of and contemplate possibilities, especially by forming images of possibilities. Here the imagination is primarily creative, fanciful, unleashed and even unruly. Imagination in this mode is particularly suited to the creative activity of the artist as well as the spectator involved in aesthetic contemplation. (Though in this aesthetic role imagination is also controlled to an extent.) Of course, imagination here may also be the source of the creative power of architects, cooks,

engineers, and scientists.

There are a number of activities which fall under this heading, the most prominent one being the deliberate creation of fantasies, imaginary worlds, imaginary people, imaginary encounters, etc.[9] Also, images can excite us into action through both visualizing our desires and visualizing the possible consequences of our actions (see Aristotle in 5.3). This activity of imagination is significant to moral behaviour because by imagining ourselves in another person's shoes, we can develop feelings of sympathy and empathy which might in turn motivate us toward benevolent actions.

But in its inventive capacity imagination can work in ways which are counter-productive and even harmful. For example, I might hit a person whose aggressive behaviour made me imagine that he was about to hit me when he actually had no such intention. The imaginings of paranoiacs can have a detrimental effect on the individual and others. However, the inventive imagination can be a skill: it is something which can be sharpened and controlled, and, as I will argue later, it is a skill which should be cultivated.[10]

Fourthly, there are uses of imagination which are not necessarily accompanied by images. In this capacity, it may be passive, active or inventive, but it does not conjure up or manipulate images. Inventively, imagination finds "unexpected and useful solutions to problems of all

kinds."[11] We can imagine dilemmas, doubts, fears, and other concepts and ideas.[12] For example, I might imagine the dilemma where telling the truth meant that an innocent person would suffer, or imagine doubting a scientific hypothesis, or imagine fearing all people with red hair, or imagine a world without cars. People and things are described as imaginative, such as an imaginative accountant or an imaginative science project. Here the term imagination is used to express an inventive ability, originality or creativity, especially at a conceptual level.

My brief summary of the four kinds of imagination is intended to organize the many uses and activities of imagination into some kind of order. The headings are not meant to limit varying interpretations of the uses: I am open to some uses of imagination falling under more than one heading and to any exceptions which might not be suitably described as falling into any of the four categories. At this stage, an examination of various philosophers' views of imagination will lend some clarification to the general types of imagination identified above.

5.3 Theories of Imagination in the History of Philosophy

The concept of imagination in the history of philosophy has been a changing one. Imagination was

favoured by philosophers as a "magical faculty" which produced the images essential to synthesizing perceptions into a unified conception of reality. It supplied images to thought and memory and provided the materials for the most fantastic of reveries. But imagination was also in disrepute among philosophers. It was cast aside as the unruly, irrational faculty which did not give us truths about the world, but only fictions and inaccurate representations of reality. In this section, I will review several accounts of imagination. My task here is not a critical one, rather it is to gain an understanding of the range of activities assigned to imagination.

Plato

Plato's account of imagination[13] relegated imagination to a mere instrument of imitation. He equates the image-maker to the artist who uses images to imitate reality. Imitations are three times removed from the truth. Like the shadows in the Cave, they are only representations of reality and thus cannot yield truth about the world. Images are imperfect copies of things, and because artists use images, they are accused of presenting false appearances. There is the Form of the bed, the material bed, and the painted image of a bed.[14] Essentially, the artistic image is an appearance of an appearance according to Plato. Thus, only the Forms are

truthful while artists' images are deceptive.

Plato made other, more positive observations on imagination, and these fall into my second category of imagination's activities, defined as the non-inventive imagination which produces images both passively and in the service of thought and memory. Plato distinguishes between images, phantasms, and mental images (though he does not use this terminology). Phantasms are images we see in nature like the reflection of a tree in a still pool or a face in a mirror. We also receive phantasms in dreams and hallucinations.

According to Plato, we use mental images to understand concepts.[15] (This exercise of imagination falls into my first category.) For example, Socrates might employ metaphorical language to paint a picture, through speech, of some point he is trying to make. The images we have in response to verbal descriptions aid the listener in understanding the ideas of the speaker. In the service of reason, images are used to convey the appearance of things and are then discarded.[16] Thought identifies objects through the images formed in perception, but the images are understood <u>not</u> to convey the truth about things. Plato writes that philosophers:

> ...make use of and reason about visible figures, though they are not really thinking about them at all, but about the originals which they resemble; they are arguing not about the square or diagonal which they have drawn but about the absolute square or diagonal, or whatever the figure may be. The figures they draw

> they treat as illustrations only, the real subjects of their investigation being invisible except to the eye of the mind.[17]

In this respect, Plato assigns a role to imagination in acquiring knowledge, but the images are used solely as temporary tools or "stand-ins" for reality.

Plato also identifies a relationship between memory images and opinion. In Philebus (39b,c), Socrates expresses the sense in which the painter of the soul forms internal images which aid rational thought. In making opinions Plato claims that we refer to past images retained by the memory. If these images provide an accurate record of past events our opinions are likely to be true, but memory can fail us, turning out false images which lead to false opinions. Once again, Plato contends that images can lead us away from the truth.

Aristotle

Aristotle raises imagination to a worthy place in both art and knowledge. Though imagination is not central to his aesthetic theory, imitation is regarded as a positive idea, so that artistic images are valued. They are valued because they express the true nature of things rather than being far from the truth.[18]

For Aristotle, images put reason in contact with the sensible world. Unlike Platonic images, they have a

central use in leading us to truth for they are not considered to be worthless copies of it.[19] We can clearly translate Aristotle's views on imagination from his discussion of _phantasma_ and _phantasia_.[20]

The role of imagination as a mediator between perception and understanding is recognized by Aristotle. Firstly, _phantasia_ occurs in ordinary perception. By this he means that in all perception we receive images (a view echoed by later philosophers). In _De Anima_ (428b) Aristotle uses an example of the sun: "For instance, the sun appears to be a foot across. Yet we are convinced that it is greater than the inhabited world." The appearance supplied by _phantasia_ is of a small, bright, round sun in the sky. This illustrates how appearances accompany perception. However, Aristotle notes that _phantasia_ is not equivalent to perception because _phantasia_ operates when our eyes are shut, when dreaming, and it can be false, while perceptions are always veridical.[21] _Phantasia_, when it accompanies perception, belongs to my first category of the activities of imagination since in this role it contributes to our interpretation of reality. Aristotle does not employ _phantasia_ as the key to interpreting reality, rather it is one of the mental powers which make knowledge possible. It is present in perception and integral to thought. In fact, Aristotle believes that _phantasia_ is essential to thought because it provides the material we

use in thought. White clarifies the relationship between _phantasia_, perception and thought:

> Though _phantasia_ is... different from either perception or thought, it is linked to them both in that it implies perception and is implied by thought.[22]

Literally, Aristotle defines imagination as "a movement coming about from the activity of sense-perception."[23]

Here, the activities of imagination identified by Aristotle raise the question of the role of _phantasmata_. They are the products of _phantasia_ and are the mental entities which accompany perception and thought. They occur (corresponding to my second category of imagination) in illusions; illness (probably hallucinations); and in moments of extreme emotion such as fear.[24] _Phantasmata_ can take the form of after-images.[25] We experience dream-like images in the time just before falling asleep and when waking up. In sleeping itself the dream-images we have are products of _phantasia_.[26] Interestingly, Aristotle identifies _phantasmata_ as responsible for the things we do when sleepwalking.[27]

Phantasmata play a role in memory and recollection for Aristotle. Though memory is distinct from _phantasia_, it requires _phantasmata_.[28] Like thought, memory cannot function without images.[29] It acts as a storehouse for images but remains distinct from imagination.[30] Recollection is distinct from memory because unlike the

passive nature of memory images coming to us, recollection is searching for an image, for Aristotle, it is the search for a _phantasma_.[31]

Aristotle's main contribution to the uses of imagination is his emphasis on _phantasia's_ capacity to move us to action. In combination with desire, _phantasia_ is responsible for animal locomotion.[32] Because _phantasia_ produces images of desirable or repellent things, the future, etc., based on these _phantasmata_ we can regulate our behaviour to avoid what we see as a possible outcome of our actions.[33] The human ability to deliberate and to act prudently relies on the images we have of things we fear or desire. This exercise of imagination accords with the third category in which we use it to envisage possibilities.

Aristotle also connects _phantasia_ with pleasure. When thinking about certain things like memories, hopes, friendship and revenge, the _phantasmata_ which accompany such thoughts give rise to the pleasure we feel.[34]

Aristotle does not refer to _phantasia_ as inventive nor does he refer to individuals being especially prone to using _phantasia_ (as in someone "being imaginative"). He does account for the active use of _phantasia_ for example when we use _phantasmata_ to deliberate before actions, or perhaps in trying to remember a past event, but he does not discuss the use of imagination in constructing fantasies, though he does recognize the

usefulness of visualizing in the poet's creative activity.[35] In Rhetoric, Aristotle points to the role of phantasia in setting a scene "before the eyes" of an audience of tragedy[36] or reader of poetry.[37]

Aristotle's views are echoed to greater or lesser extent in Aquinas, Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant. Some of these philosophers are more sympathetic to the usefulness of imagination and some less so.

Aquinas

Aquinas assigns imagination the intermediary role between the data of sense and concepts for understanding, but the highlight of his discussion of imagination is his view of the creative imagination.

For Aquinas, phantasia or imaginatio (imagination) is one of four internal powers, and it is essential to the intellect since the acquisition of knowledge depends on the "material" of sense perceptions and imagination: "...it is impossible for our intellect to perform any actual exercise of understanding...except by attending to phantasms."[38] The senses are the starting point of knowledge for Aquinas, but imagination is required to synthesize sense experience into the universal concepts which constitute knowledge. This synthesizing function is defined as turning the material of sense experience into

images which are stored in the imagination. From these images the universal concepts of knowledge are abstracted by the "agent intellect".[39] Imagination is thus necessary for interpreting reality, but also for thought and reflection. (However, this is not to say that Aquinas held that all thought is accompanied by images.)

> Anyone can experience in himself that when he tries to understand something he forms for himself some images by way of examples in which he can see, as it were, what he is trying to understand.[40]

Images take on religious importance for Aquinas because they are integral to understanding incorporeal bodies. Since there are no images of incorporeal bodies, we imagine them through images of real things (of which we can have images).[41]

Imagination is also active. This is perhaps Aquinas's most astute observation; that imagination collects, modifies and combines its images. Umberto Eco calls it a "free rearranging of the elements of experience".[42] Imagination forms and plays with images, images of things which may not have come from perceptions. Because this ability to manipulate images can be likened to an inventiveness, it falls into the third category of imaginative activities.

Aquinas's ideas on imagination are applied to his aesthetic theory of the creative imagination. The active character of the imagination is put to use in artistic

creation, thus our creative capacity stems from the imagination's ability to manipulate images. Like nature, artistic creativity is a process of combining things, presumably images. By playing with images, an artist arrives at something which matches his or her conception. The artist can even produce something which is not found in nature. For a model, the artist has only the image in his or her mind to follow.[43]

Aquinas, like his contemporaries, is observant of the possible perversion of the constructive power of the imagination.

> There are intellectual habits by which a man is prompted rightly to judge of the presentation of imagination (imaginatio). When he ceases from the use of intellectual habit, extraneous imaginations arise, and occasionally some even of a contradictory tendency, so that unless by the use of the intellectual habit these are cut down or repressed the man is rendered less fit to form a right judgement.[44]

But in spite of this, Aquinas moves us forward in terms of giving imagination a non-imitative role. He makes progress on Aristotle's notion of imagination by expounding its creative powers.

Hobbes

Hobbes's theory of imagination, while similar to Aristotle's in pinning down the relationship between images and sensory perception and images and thought,

extends beyond the passive imagination to the inventive activity of imagination and, like Aquinas, Hobbes recognizes the role of imagination in the experience of art.

For Hobbes, images are formed from sense impressions. After looking at something, and if the object is removed from before the eyes, an impression of it remains. This impression is the image formed by imagination (through sense perception).[45] As time passes, images become weaker and faded, hence he calls imagination the "decaying sense". Faded, decaying images signify memory images, but Hobbes makes almost no distinction between imagination and memory. He says, "...Imagination and memory, are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath divers names."[46] In this sense, imagination and memory are one and the same thing because all images, memory images as well as fresher images, reside in imagination. So the images of the past which are stored in the imagination differ from present images in their quality. He is not comparing the quality of images to the objects they represent, rather he is comparing new and old images, as it were. Memory of several things is called Experience by Hobbes.[47]

Hobbes contrasts "Simple Imagination" with "Compounded Imagination", the imaginative activity of bringing several images together to yield a concept. He uses the example of bringing together the images of a man

and a horse to form the concept of a centaur. The "Compounded Imagination" makes it possible to imagine non-existent things like centaurs, and to imagine oneself as, e.g. Hercules.[48] Hobbes, like Aristotle, describes the kinds of images we have in different circumstances. On after-images, he describes the images of the sun we can "see" after looking at it, and the geometric lines and angles that we can still "see" after staring at geometrical figures.[49]

In Leviathan, Hobbes writes four or five paragraphs on dreams and their images. Dreaming is defined as imaginings that take place during sleep. The content of our dreams necessarily come from sense perceptions and memory because we retain images through both, but imagination is not active during sleep because all of our organs of sense "are so benummed in sleep".[50] Since the senses are inactive in sleep, "a Dreame must needs to be more cleare, in this silence of sense, than our waking thoughts." The vivacity of dream-images causes us to sometimes confuse sleep with being awake (though when awake we can be sure that we are not dreaming according to Hobbes).[51] In fact, the images of dreams and hallucinations can have a stronger and more vivid presence than the objects themselves.[52] They can cause us to shriek in horror, and based on the images of something we desire or hate, we may take drastic actions. Thus, what we take from reality and turn into images can affect

us like reality itself, and images have the power to cause more extreme behaviour than reality ever could.

Hobbes's view captures the sense in which images are new and different representations of reality, not copies of it. This marks a departure from theories of imagination before Hobbes which place images at the level of imitations of reality or surrogates for reality. So images for Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas do not affect us except as copies of real things.

We have observed imagination in Hobbes's views as integrated in sense perception, in memory, and in the kinds of passive sensory images we have in the form of after-images, hallucinations, and dreams. How are images related to thought in Hobbes's theory of imagination?

Hobbes uses thought and imagination interchangeably. Images in succession are called a "Trayne of Imaginations" which in turn is called a "Trayne of Thoughts", or, "Mentall Discourse". He clearly identifies images with thoughts:

> All Fancies are Motions within us, reliques of those made in the Sense: And those motions that immediately succeeded one another in the sense, continue also together after Sense.[53]

So images do not accompany thoughts, they constitute thoughts.

Hobbes distinguishes between "unguided" and "regulated" thought. The meaning is clear from his names

for the two kinds of thought: "unguided thought", being the passive images we receive in day-dreaming or dreaming in sleep, and "regulated" thought, being the passive and active images we have from desire (i.e. images of some desire, or of the means to achieve some desire). He makes the distinction as follows:

> The Trayne of regulated Thoughts is of two kinds; One, when of an effect imagined, wee seek the causes, or means that produce it: and this is common to Man and Beast. The other is when imagining anything whatsoever, wee seek all the possible effects, that can by it be produced; that is to say, we imagine what we can do with it, when wee have it.[54]

The active sense of "regulated" thought is described as:

> ...nothing but Seeking, or the faculty of Invention...a hunting out of the causes, of some effect, present or past; or of the effects, of some present or past cause.[55]

Here Hobbes points to the inventive power of imagination; its power to envisage possibilities. He also discusses how thoughts and images facilitate having recollections. And, like Aristotle, he recognizes the ethical function of imagination: the power to provide images of the consequences of our actions. He calls these thoughts "Foresight", "Prudence", "Providence", and sometimes, "Wisdome".[56]

The role of imagination in creativity and in the pleasure taken in reading literature is recognized in brief moments by Hobbes. The artist is able to put things

before our eyes, and it is both the images of tragedy and of literature that move us to emotion: "For not truth, but image maketh passion; and a tragedy affecteth no less than a murder if well acted."[57]

Hobbes gives prominence to the powers of imagination. It provides us with images after our sense perceptions of the world; it is the stuff of our thoughts; and it enables us to be inventive both in thinking of possibilities for our own actions, and for the ideas behind great moments in history.[58]

Descartes

Descartes recognizes the passive and active powers of imagination. It is one of our three faculties which are understanding, imagination, and sense, so in this capacity, imagination functions as the faculty that forms images. However, it does not occupy a central place in Descartes's thought because he claims that it is prone to error and that it depends on the understanding for any contribution it makes to knowledge. While understanding can form concepts independently of imagination and can formulate concepts of universals, imagination is limited to particulars, that is, images of particular objects.[59]

Descartes hints at a connection between what he calls "ideas" and mental images. "Idea" means something like both an operation or act of the mind and the object or

content of an operation or act of the mind.[60] He clearly rejects Hobbes's claim that images constitute thought and though he sometimes uses the term "idea" synonymously with "thought", he says that ideas are modes and forms of thought.[61] Ideas, then, are not equivalent to thoughts but the operations of imagination belong to thought.[62] He says, "Of my thoughts, some are, so to speak, images of things, and to these alone is the title "idea" properly applied"[63], but he is unclear as to whether or not "ideas" mean the same as images. He clearly states that ideas are not the same as cerebral images (pictures in the brain), but it does not follow from this that ideas cannot be mental images. However, he rejects Hobbes's view that our mental images resemble the real objects to which they correspond.[64] Anthony Kenny tackles the ambiguity in Descartes, concluding that

> ...his ideas have some of the properties of material pictures, some of the properties of mental images and some of the properties of concepts."[65]

Whereas images are significant to thought in Aristotle, Aquinas and Hobbes, for Descartes images sometimes aid understanding but can fail to be of service to it because imagination often gives us untrue and poor copies of reality or images of fantastic things.[66] Though in this respect Descartes recognizes the fanciful imagination, he is disparaging of this capacity because its images have little or nothing to do with truth or

knowledge.

Descartes also observes that reading literature causes us to conjure up images of fantastic things, and that painters have particularly inventive imaginations.[67] But he sees the proper function of imagination as that which produces the passive images of illusions, daydreams, dreams, moments of intense emotion and sense perceptions, rather than its active or inventive roles, though he acknowledges its capacity to construct images.[68] Descartes is therefore unsympathetic to imagination's creative powers, and his account represents a step backward from the views of Aquinas and Hobbes.

Berkeley

For Berkeley, reality exists for us only through our perception of it. When we perceive objects, we have ideas of sense which are objects of the mind. These ideas are objects "actually imprinted on the senses"; or "perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind"; or "ideas formed by the help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways."[69] There are other kinds of ideas, however, which are not given immediately through the senses. They are thoughts, passions, and ideas formed in the imagination.[70]

What is the relationship, then, between ideas of

sense and other kinds of ideas? Berkeley at least says that "...Ideas of imagination are images of & proceed from the Ideas of Sense."[71]; and "Ideas of Sense are the Real things or Archetypes. Ideas of Imagination, Dreams etc. are copies, images of these."[72] What he means by the distinction is this: sense-ideas are what we call things, because they "have more reality in them" but they also, in a way, exist in the mind since they are perceived by it.[73]

By contrast, the ideas of imagination are faint, weak, unsteady, less vivid, less regular, and less constant than the ideas of sense. Ideas of sense have no dependence on the will, nor are they randomly excited, and they are "more affecting, orderly and distinct"; "more strong, lively" than ideas of the imagination.[74] Furthermore, ideas of imagination are "raised up" in us by our minds while ideas of sense are imprinted on our minds by God.[75]

Berkeley also discusses the way in which we can tell the difference between the ideas of dreams and ideas of sense. The "visions" that come to us in dreams are "dim, irregular, and confused" and because they do not occur in real time, i.e. preceding or proceeding real actions, they are easily distinguishable from sense experience.[76]

Both sense ideas and ideas of imagination seem to take the form of images, and sense ideas can be pictures, namely, the "pictures" we have in visual perception.[77] In

addition to images which derive from sense-ideas, Berkeley recognizes the constructive power of imagination which forms new images by "compounding" and "dividing" ideas we already have.[78] Finally, Berkeley attributes a fanciful capacity to imagination. He observes that imagination has the power to conjure up images of both real and fantastic things.[79]

Because Berkeley distinguishes between ideas or images of sense and those of imagination, the former do not properly belong to imagination. Thus, according to *his* account of imagination, such ideas would not even fall into my first category. The ideas of imagination and dreams, however, do fall into my second and third categories. It is difficult to evaluate the importance of imagination for Berkeley since he separates imagination's ideas from perception, but his account certainly lacks the disparaging tone of Descartes's, and therefore we might assume that Berkeley is not critical of imagination's creative and inventive powers.

Hume

Hume's theory is the most thorough of the pre-Kantian theories of imagination. Like many of them, it says little of the creative or artistic imagination, but he gives a thorough account of imagination as a mediator between sense and knowledge, and as the image-making

faculty which forms ideas from sense-impressions.

Like Berkeley, Hume distinguishes between ideas of sense and ideas of imagination and thought. He calls the former, "impressions" and the latter "ideas"; the difference between the two being one of degree (a difference also observed by Berkeley).

> Those perceptions which enter with the most force and violence we may name impressions; and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning.[80]

Images, according to Hume, are weaker and less vivid copies of the real objects we perceive. This point, which is one entertained by many pre-Humean views, is suspect because images, though often representational of reality and resembling real objects, appear to us as having their own individuality. Against Hume, we know that many images we have can be more vivid than reality thus having a stronger effect than the real things they represent. So, ideas are defined as images, images which are important to our understanding of the world.

Imagination operates according to three principles: resemblance, contiguity in time and space, and causal connection. The ideas that are formed through imaginative activity are particulars and universals. Therefore, through images we can have both an idea of a particular cat and the universal idea of cat. When we see

resemblances between things, we can match the image to the idea of it.

Contiguity and causal connection are related by Hume to imagination's fundamental power to retain images. Our belief in the continuous existence of objects and their existence independent of ourselves seems to depend on imagination's powers. Were it not for the image of a cat we could not hold the concept in memory, which acts as a reference point when the real cat is absent. Imagination connects experiences together causally, and with the help of memory, identifies objects, orders images of them, and unifies experience with its images.[81]

Furthermore, memory and imagination work side by side in the ordering and unifying of experience. Memory orders ideas in time (and space) according to the order in which the sense-impressions were received. Imagination contributes to this ordering by unifying the ideas using the three principles of resemblance, contiguity, and causal connection. Imagination turns present sense-impressions into ideas, and memory serves to fill in the gaps by providing memory ideas, i.e. calling up past, vivid images.[82]

Thus, Hume makes images central to understanding; in fact, as White points out, he often equates the mind with imagination, but Hume does try to distinguish memory, reason, understanding and imagination in a narrower sense.[83] The other functions of the mind are dependent on

the images which come from sense-impressions.

The clearest difference noted by Hume is imagination's potential waywardness.[84] It can be, surprisingly, both rational and fanciful, since Hume makes no distinction between imagination and fancy. Imagination can also be inventive, creating fictions and fantasies.[85]

Finally, a most important use of imagination for Hume is its role in our ability to feel sympathy and pity for others.

> As we ourselves are here acquainted with the wretched situation of the person, it gives us a lively idea and sensation of sorrow....A contrast of any kind never fails to affect the imagination, especially when presented by the subject; and it is on the imagination that pity entirely depends.[86]

Hume's account of imagination mediates between a positive and negative analysis of its powers. On the one hand, images play an essential role in our understanding of reality. On the other hand, he recognizes imagination's creative and inventive potential, in spite of the frivolity of this mode.

Kant

Kant's analysis of imagination reflects the other theories of imagination examined here, but he adjusts the concept for his own system. Imagination is the

"Einbildungskraft", the maker of images or pictures of things. It is also a "faculty of a priori synthesis":

> By its means we bring the manifold of intuition on the one side, into connection with the condition of the necessary unity of pure apperception on the other. The two extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must stand in necessary connection with each other through the mediation of this transcendental function of imagination, because otherwise the former, though indeed yielding appearances, would supply no objects of empirical knowledge, and consequently no experience.[87]

In this transcendental mode, the imagination is productive. While not a different faculty, but rather a different function of imagination, the empirical or reproductive imagination is active and constructive. The empirical imagination's task is to identify objects (through images) as of a certain type. These images form a series according to a rule ("schema"). Kant calls this the "association of representations". So it appears that the empirical imagination is involved more in the ordering of images rather than in synthesizing perceptions into images for the intellect.[88] Imagination, in both of these functions, lies between sense experience and the intellect, and differs from them in its power to construct images of experience.

Some interpretations of Kant's analysis are misleading because they attribute the Humean role of gap-bridger and unifier of sense and knowledge to Kant's

concept of imagination. In the Subjective Deduction of the <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, Kant calls imagination a faculty which has the power to construct experience in conjunction with the powers of sense and intuition. But as Schaper points out, Kant already identifies three faculties- sense, understanding, and reason which leaves no room for imagination as a separate faculty. This is the clue which, along with the evidence that Kant omitted the Subjective Deduction from his second, revised edition of the <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u>, shows that imagination is not a separate faculty working alongside the others.[89] Imagination is not the image-making power which constructs ideas out of the impressions of external objects. It is involved in concept-application and the recognition and recollection of separate experiences but imagination is not a presupposition of experience.

Kant's analysis, without being entirely clear on the function of imagination, succeeds where Hume's analysis fails. Imagination for Hume plays a role in distinguishing between objective and subjective experience. It functions as the interpreter, through its images, of immediate experience. The problem in Hume's account lies in his description of the difference between experience of real objects and images of them as one of degree (vivacity and liveliness). This analysis of images is incoherent so his distinction between objective and

subjective experience is unsuccessful. Schaper points out how Kant's analysis corrects Hume:

> ...if a role for imagination in the analysis of the presuppositions of experience is to be found in the recognition of objects, and of an object as being of a certain kind, as the identity condition requires, thought or experience of such particulars cannot be constituted by experiences filled out or supplemented by images formed in the imagination.[90]

Kant in particular brings out myriad uses of imagination in both non-aesthetic and aesthetic experience. The creative power of imagination in relation to the aesthetic is discussed at length in the _Critique of Judgement_. Sparshott reflects this well when he says that in Kant "Imagination is exercised everywhere... but in the fine arts its exercise is as it were celebrated and emphasized."[91] I will address Kant's work in this area in more depth in Chapter 6.

Sartre

The theories of imagination of Sartre, Ryle and Wittgenstein diverge from the preceding theories discussed because, for them, imagination does not consist in the production of images as mental entities. They do not interpret mental images as _pictures_ in the mind's eye, mental copies of perceptions or sensations, and though they do not reject the notion of pictorial

imagery, they emphasize that mental imagery need not be pictorial.[92]

Sartre, Ryle, and Wittgenstein consider imagination in significantly different ways, but they do have in common a shift from imagination as the essential faculty for synthesizing perceptions into ideas to imagination as a secondary mental process with specific uses which does not provide first-hand information about reality. Thus their accounts mainly identify the uses of imagination assigned to my second, third, and fourth categories.

In the Psychology of Imagination (1940), Sartre observes that images are not equivalent to thoughts nor do images accompany thoughts, but they are a subclass of thoughts.[93] His starting point differs in this way from earlier philosophers: imagination does not go hand in hand with thought, nor is it the same as thought. This appraoch contrasts imagination with perception. He asks how "seeing" objects of imagination is like or unlike seeing objects in the external world.[94] In this way Sartre focuses on the visual imagination rather than on its non-sensory activities such as "doing something with imagination".

Though he rejects the notion of mental images as "a detached bit, a piece of the real world"[95], he discusses kinds of mental images like voluntary or involuntary imagery of people, places, etc. These images are not copies of perceptions but constitute an imaginative

consciousness of things. He calls the identification of images with copies of perceptions the "illusion of immanence" and refers specifically to Hume in this respect.[96] Hume's misconception of images is explained as follows:

> The fact of the matter is that the expression 'mental image' is confusing. It would be better to say 'the consciousness of Peter as an image' or 'the imaginative consciousness of Peter'....The imaginative consciousness I have of Peter is not a consciousness of the image of Peter: Peter is directly reached; my attention is not directed on an image, but on an object.[97]

Sartre wants to revise our notion of image from a mental image to a form of consciousness. He calls imagination the "image function" of consciousness.[98] For Sartre, mental images are therefore related to perceptions while not being mental copies of them. In fact, they are defined as:

> ...an act that is directed towards an absent or non-existent object, as if it were an actual body, by means of a physical or mental content, but which appears only through an "analogical representative" of the pursued object.[99]

Furthermore, he points out that the images of imaginative consciousness are not seen or perceived in the way that the physical images of pictures are, and they are not located in space. Sartre explains the nature of mental images through a discussion of the "material" (i.e. perception of the object) of mental images where he uses

an analogy to physical images to clarify his point.

Physical images, like the images of paintings, are called "quasi-images", hence, "The material of a portrait is a quasi-face."[100] These remarks are made when he describes the process which occurs when looking at a portrait (of Peter), and how we contemplate the quasi-image (of Peter) using our mental image (of Peter) for comparison.[101] Here, Sartre reveals the differences between seeing Peter, seeing a portrait of Peter, and having an imaginative consciousness of Peter.

We can tell whether or not the portrait is a good likeness of Peter through a process which seems to be something like "seeing-as".

> This quasi-face is moreover accessible to observation: naturally I do not refer the new qualities I see in it to the object I am looking at, to this painted canvas. I project them far beyond the picture, on the true Peter....When I say 'Peter's eyes are blue', I imply: 'provided this painting represents him at all faithfully'.[102]

Sartre points out that in perception ("perceptual consciousness") we can only see specific, individual "instances" of Peter either as himself or in the physical image of a portrait, but that our mental images can represent Peter generally. In other words, mental images can show us Peter in different ways, for example with a sunburn, but the particular image of Peter with a hat on might be the mental image I always have when I think of him. The mental image of Peter with a hat on can

therefore be how I represent him generally to myself (my example).

What changes in the process of turning the material of the perception of the object into imaginative consciousness is the material itself. Sartre says:

> As the imaginative consciousness rises in degree, the material becomes increasingly impoverished....This means that there is an essential poverty in the material of the image, namely, that the object intentioned through the material grows in generality.[103]

For Sartre, mental images are not mental objects, but we do have them, and use them at will (as in the Peter example) or in any kind of visualizing. However, we cannot _know_ anything true about them, since introspection in his view is fruitless because of the nature of imaginative consciousness. Mental images are not like the real things they are related to through perception, rather they are a consciousness themselves.

Ryle

Ryle discusses his views on imagination in _The Concept of Mind_ (1949) and _On Thinking_ (1979). I will concentrate on the first text, though it must be noted that he revises his views in _On Thinking_ mainly by downplaying the connection between imagination and make-believe, and by emphasizing the inventive imagination.[104]

Like Sartre, Ryle concentrates on the visual imagination. He, too, denies introspection as a useful method for probing the nature of mental images, primarily because mental images are not mental objects which we can see, hear, taste, smell, or touch. Ryle makes some astute observations on how we do not experience mental images. Firstly, he contrasts seeing and visualizing, remarking that we can only see when our eyes are open and when there is light.[105] With this point he eliminates the possibility of seeing any visual mental images we have when our eyes are shut- the after-images of closed eyelids, the dream images of sleep, and any constructed mental images we have when we close our eyes. Secondly, "seeing" is not a species of seeing, nor is "hearing" a scream in a dream a kind of hearing a real scream. "Seeing", "hearing", "smelling", "tasting", and "feeling" mental images are not real sensations of any sort. They are not sensations at all because mental images are not real things. Therefore, experiencing mental images is not the same as having ordinary perceptions of real objects.

The main problem in his discussion of imagination in The Concept of Mind is his view of imagination as make-believe. He holds that imagining is a kind of pretending, as illustrated in his definition of imagination:

> There is no special faculty of Imagination, occupying itself single-handedly in fancied viewings and hearings. On the contrary, 'seeing' things is one exercise of the imagination, growling somewhat like a bear is another; smelling things in the mind's

nose is an uncommon act of fancy, malingering is a very common one...[106]

He also says, "There is not much difference between a child playing at being a pirate, and one fancying that he is a pirate."[107]

I agree with White who argues that Ryle is wrong on this point (see Chapter 17 in his The Language of Imagination). There are similarities and differences between imagining and pretending, but they are very different activities. The main difference is that in pretending, for example, to be Blackbeard, we are acting in ways we think pirates do, whereas in imagining to be Blackbeard, we imagine what it is like to be a pirate and we may have imagery of a pirate. Imagining may be part of the activity of pretending, but it is not necessary to pretending nor is pretending necessary to imagining. Imagining what it is like to be Blackbeard may be helpful to someone who pretends to be Blackbeard, but one can wear the costume and act the part with no imaginative activity before or during the act of pretending.

Imagining and pretending can be voluntary activities; however, imagining can be involuntary while pretending is always a deliberate activity, usually with some purpose behind it. Pretending is always a kind of performance and is itself a performance, while imagining is not a performance.[108] Imagination cannot always be controlled, while pretending, because it is deliberate, can be

controlled.[109] Put another way, imagination can "run away with us". We can get carried away when pretending, but under normal conditions, we control our actions.

The main similarity is that both imagining and pretending have to do with the unreal. The activities of both involve conjuring up, acting, and engaging in things, people, and places which are often not real. Since I cannot be Blackbeard the pirate, I can at least try to look and act as he would. This similarity may be behind Ryle's close association of the two activities.[110]

In On Thinking, Ryle revises his view of that association in his chapter on thinking and imagination. He argues that thinking and imagination should not be contrasted as if imagination necessarily operates separately from thinking. The tendency to separate the two is rooted in the classification of imagination and intellect as two different faculties. Ryle aims to close the gap between the two while not making imagination a species of thinking.[111]

To illustrate his argument, Ryle compares the intellectual projects of novelists, historians, and scientists. He maintains that what they do involves a collaboratory effort between imagination and thinking. For example, a historian can portray Napoleon's battles in accurate detail, but tell the story of his battles in an imaginative way, e.g. by not just reporting facts but by using metaphorical language to communicate facts.

Likewise, a scientist uses his scientific knowledge to create an invention, but such creation requires originality, innovation, exploration, and resourcefulness. Ryle therefore stresses the creative power of imagination and its active role with thought in both scientific and artistic enterprises.[112] He seems to have almost entirely dispensed with his definition of imagination as make-believe.

> But imaginativeness is not <u>more</u> of a necessity for make-believe than it is for advancing knowledge, or winning a campaign, or writing a history.[113]

Ryle's later remarks on imagination show that it is not a mysterious faculty; it has a particular role to play alongside our other mental powers.

Wittgenstein

Though Wittgenstein remarks on some of the ways in which we use imagination, he is interested in the concept from this point of view, "One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when one imagines anything, but how the word imagination is used."[114] He is particularly struck by the fact that we use the same language to talk about our mental images that we use to talk about the objects they correspond to. He asks, "How do we compare images?"[115]; and "How do I know from my *image*, what the colour really looks like?"[116] He also

asks us to consider certain questions related to imagination, like, '" What does a correct image of this colour look like?" and, "What sort of thing is it [an image]?"; Can I <u>learn</u> from this [image]?'[117] We can describe our images and are often doing so when describing our mental picture of something to someone. In this way Wittgenstein says that we communicate what we imagine so that someone can understand what something looks like, e.g. in describing the mental picture of a room.[118] Wittgenstein suggests that there is a difference between "seeing" and seeing when he says that having a mental image of the colour red is not the same as seeing red in front of us.

Are mental images pictorial according to Wittgenstein? Sometimes our mental images are pictorial, but against the pictorial nature of some mental images he says, "An image is not a picture, but a picture can correspond to it."[119]; and '"The image must be more like its object than any picture."'[120] His view seems to be that mental images resemble the real things they correspond to but they do not necessarily resemble pictures of the real things they correspond to. There can, of course, be some kind of resemblance, e.g. the four-leggedness of a horse, in all three kinds of representations, but Wittgenstein is clear that the mental image does not function like a physical picture. The mental image, the real thing, and a picture of the

real thing are distinguishable: "Thus one might come to regard the image as a super-likeness."[121] However, he contrasts the experience of a meaning with that of a mental image, concluding that the content of the experience of imagining, "...is a picture, or a description."[122] He argues that

> The concept of the 'inner picture' is misleading, for this concept uses the 'outer picture' as a model; and yet the uses of the words for these concepts are no more like one another than the uses of 'numeral' and 'number'.[123]

He warns against introspection: "Do not try to analyse your own inner experience."[124]

We can conclude from his remarks that mental images can be both pictorial and descriptive. This is illustrated when he says that we can imagine an animal angry, frightened, unhappy, or startled.[125] This captures the possibility of pictorial or descriptive imagery. I can visualize a startled deer, or I can imagine that a deer is startled.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I refer to Wittgenstein's discussion of "seeing-as". To review, he connects imagination to "seeing-as" in this way:

> The concept of an aspect is akin to the concept of an image. In other words: the concept 'I am now seeing it as....' is akin to 'I am now having this image.'[126]

"Seeing-as" is described as seeing which demands imagination, and "seeing-as" and imagination are subject

to the will.[127] In this context, he may mean something like "hearing as" when he remarks that it takes imagination to hear "...something as a variation on a particular theme."[128] So certain kinds of sensory activities use the imagination. He also notes that we can do sums in the imagination[129]; that we call up images of people we know[130]; and that we can visualize: "I could easily imagine the kind of thing such a picture would [show] us."[131]

Wittgenstein refers to our non-sensory imaginative powers. Scattered throughout Philosophical Investigations are requests to imagine possibilities: "Imagine a language with two different words for negation." ; "We can imagine human beings with a 'more primitive' logic."[132]; and "Imagine this case..."[133]

He does not make any references to imagination as especially inventive or fanciful, though imagination can be inventive for Wittgenstein in the sense that we use it to think of possibilities.

5.4 The Spectrum Model

The previous section has provided an overview of various philosophers' ideas of imagination throughout the history of philosophy. I have deliberately refrained from extended critical analysis of these views since my intention here has not been to show the merits of one

view over another but to illuminate the variety of activities of imagination and to illustrate how different philosophers have recognized and designated these activities.

We have seen that discussion on the topic of non-aesthetic imagination has shifted from its image-producing and epistemological functions in theories prior to Ryle, to a fundamental rethinking of the question, What is it to imagine? Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume and Kant recognize some kind of essential role for imagination in the synthesis of sense-experience into ideas for thought and understanding. All of the philosophers reviewed here acknowledge the passive and active powers of imagination which are responsible for illusions, dreams, hallucinations, after-images, images which "come to mind", visualizing, and the particularly creative, fanciful, and unruly images of fantasy.

It seems that only Hume, Ryle, and Wittgenstein explicitly acknowledge the non-sensory (non-image forming) use of imagination which facilitates our creative ability. In this respect, we can only guess that the other philosophers assume that, by definition, imagination produces images in all of its activities; however, this is not to say that all of the philosophers would agree that all thought is accompanied by images. We know that for most of the philosophers discussed above, "image" means "visual image" though they recognize that

the imagination produces appearances of "smells", "tastes", etc.

Do the many activities of imagination have something in common, something which links all of them together? On this point I agree with Francis Sparshott who has analyzed the spectrum of imagination's uses and concluded that

> The idea of imagination, then, combines cohesiveness and diversity. It runs together a number of different themes and distinctions, some very general in scope and some quite specific, easily relatable and habitually thought in relation to each other, but such that a systematic relation among them seems teasingly hard to establish.[134]

But this should not lead us to apply the family resemblance model here. That model would suggest a complex web of similarities between the various activities but without a common thread running through them. It could be said that there is a wide gap between imagination in its capacity to synthesize sense perceptions into images and the act of imagining a possibility, and therefore that all we can say about imagination's varied uses is that they all share a set of characteristics. However, I do not believe that the family resemblance model captures the true affinity between the activities which belong to our idea of imagination.

I am tempted to identify imagination's inventive and

creative power as the thread which runs through the variety of activities of imagination. But though this would explain how we tend to think of imagination in the familiar sense, it does not have a place in the epistemological and passive functions of imagination.

The ability to envisage things (real or unreal) whether or not they are before us could be said to link together imagination's various activities. The passive images of after-images, illusions, hallucinations, and dreams give us appearances of things which are not actually perceived or before us to be perceived. Also, the active images of visualizing give us appearances of people, places, and things whether actual or not.

The envisaging power of imagination is particularly common in the third category identified above in which we imagine possibilities, solutions, and alternative worlds through the use of images. Finally, even in its non-imaging capacity, imagination's creative power enables us to think up possibilities; to envisage things in ways different from what we are familiar with, and for example, to imagine ourselves in a situation we are not actually in at present. In all of these ways imagination provides an experience of something beyond actual experience as it were.

Sparshott, though not identifying the envisaging capacity of imagination as a common thread, suggests that it is an aspect of imagination common to various ways we

speak of imagination. He says that to "use imagination" could be to envisage a different world which is an activity relevant to decisions regarding practical actions; "To be imaginative" is a talent to imagine alternative worlds; and "To be fanciful" is to be prone to envisage alternative worlds for non-practical purposes, as when we day-dream. Sparshott remarks (and I include this as a reminder) that our envisaging power need not make use of imagery.[135]

Still, this power common to the many ways we use imagination (and indeed a power which often first comes to mind when we wonder what it means to use one's imagination), is not one which has a place in the first category of imagination. Sparshott is correct, then, in suggesting that we cannot establish a common thread running through the activities of imagination. But I believe that there is a useful model which illustrates how imagination's activities are related more closely than by mere resemblance.

Imagine a spectrum which represents the activities of imagination as bands of colour merging and overlapping into each other. We could organize the activities from left to right beginning with imagination's epistemological mode through to its more active uses, and finally, far to the right of the spectrum, imagination in its most inventive mode. The "colours" on the spectrum would only correspond roughly to the four categories. The

inventiveness of imagination would be represented in order of intensity from left to right, while non-sensory imagination would be represented in the right-hand side of the spectrum along with the active uses of imagination. In this way the non-sensory imagination is represented as a creative, inventive activity even though it does not include the use of images. The spectrum model shows how the various uses of imagination merge into each other because they are connected, in most cases, by imagery of some kind, and how the inventive imagination stems from imagery.

5.5 The Activities of Imagination and their Relationship to Art

It is convenient to discuss imagination in terms of its non-aesthetic and aesthetic activities. The first type is imagination used to interpret reality, to visualize, to dream, to envisage possibilities. In regard to the second type, a particular kind of imaginative activity is especially useful for artistic endeavors: fancy. For the artist, imagining a certain idyllic landscape can contribute to the creative process. For the spectator, imagining oneself in such a picture can be to "walk" through the fields, "feeling" the dew in the air, and "smelling" the wildflowers. It is this free aspect of imagination which can be applied in our experience of

art. By contrast, we can pin down the epistemological uses of imagination and argue that imagination underlies the formation of intelligible concepts from sense experience. Also, as the mental power which provides images for thought and memory, it plays a significant if not essential role in understanding.

But a sharp division between these two types is misleading. Why, afterall, do we believe art and imagination to be inseparable? One way of approaching the matter is this: it takes imagination to create and appreciate works of art, but imagination does not require art to carry out any of its functions. Sparshott sums up this difference when he calls the fine arts arts _of_ the imagination. The way in which he explains this point provides a springboard for my argument that the activities of imagination cannot be divided into aesthetic and non-aesthetic, for the very reason that most of the activities of imagination can in some way be used in the creation and appreciation of art works. I will maintain that the imaginative activity used in perception, thought, understanding, and memory is the same as that we use in artistic experience. For example, the free activity of imagination used for envisaging possibilities is the very same imaginative activity used in combining and arranging images in novel ways on a canvas.

Two points in Sparshott's view are worth mentioning

here. Firstly, the fine arts are arts of the imagination in the sense that art provides both artist and percipient with interesting and novel viewpoints. This is due to imagination opening our minds to new prospects through its ability to envisage things otherwise. Secondly, works of art are appreciated, which is to say that when we contemplate works of art, we do so through _looking_ at pictures, _listening_ to music, or _reading_ poetry. Therefore, Sparshott argues, our immediate and direct interest in art "lies in the values yielded in cognition". He connects this second aspect of art to imagination wherein it can "formulate, frame, and consider objects of sensation and cognition other than those directly anchored in the reality presented to the percipient."[136]

In _Imagination_, Mary Warnock suggests that there is a tendency to separate imagination as it is used in perception and understanding from imagination as used by critics and aestheticians to describe the activity of art-making and art appreciation. She attempts to establish a connection between the two kinds of imagination through a discussion of Hume and Kant, and then through Wittgentein and "seeing-as". Though I do not agree with some of her conclusions, her remarks in respect of the connection are insightful.

> Forming mental pictures, creating or understanding works of art, understanding the real world in which we live, are all of them to some extent dependent on the _same_

mode of thought.[137]

Both Sparshott and Warnock to an extent support my view that the powers of imagination I have defined as present in perception, visualizing, dreaming, fantasizing, inventiveness, resourcefulness, etc. are also employed in the special activity of aesthetic creation, contemplation, and appreciation. In Chapter 6, I will attempt to establish, in more detail, the close relationship between imagination and art. Though the activity of imagination is not of a different sort in aesthetic experience, it may be more free, which in turn may account for the heightened nature of aesthetic experience.

Notes

Abbreviations: Summa Theolgiae: ST; Leviathan: L; Psychology of Imagination: POI; Philosophical Investigations: PI.

[1] F. Sparshott, "Imagination- the Very Idea" Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 48 (1): 1-8, Winter 1990, p. 8.

[2] I will use "image" for any kind of imagining which seems to occur "in one's head". An image in my view is not necessarily visual or pictorial, i.e. an image which is "seen in the mind's eye." Rather, the concept of an image can be used for any kind of sensory imagining.

[3] A. White, The Language of Imagination (Basil Blackwell, 1990), 90.

[4] By distinguishing non-sensory uses of imagination from imagery I am not claiming that imagery is not a function of imagination. In my view imagination produces mental images which are imagery. Some philosophers define mental imagery as a separate activity. For example, see Anthony Flew's definition of imagination in his Dictionary of Philosophy (St. Martin's Press, 1979), 163-64.

[5] Sparshott, 6.

[6] R.L. Gregory, Eye and Brain (Wiedenfield and Nicolson, 1966), 49-50.

[7] D. Dennett, "The Nature of Images and the Introspective Trap" in N. Block, (ed.), Imagery (MIT press, 1981), 56.

[8] O. Sacks, The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat (Duckworth, 1985), 147-48.

[9] Generally, when I use the term "fancy", I mean a specific activity of imagination which is particularly free and inventive, and most often describes imagination when it combines and plays with images for the purpose of creating fantasies, expecially of fictional places, creations, and worlds. Though fancy has not been entirely distinguished from imagination in the history of philosophy (and in literary criticism), some philosophers (e.g. Descartes and Berkeley) have identified it as a function of imagination which can mislead us by presenting untruths to the mind. Other philosophers (Hobbes and Aquinas) have celebrated fancy as the power of imagination responsible for creative activity. On the

value of the fanciful imagination, David Novitz argues in Knowledge, Fiction, and Imagination (Temple University Press, 1988) that "our ability to fantasize...is essential to the acquisition and growth of empirical knowledge" (p. 3).

10 Sparshott, 5.

11 Sparshott, 5.

12 White, 78.

13 Plato's remarks on imagination are interpreted through the modern usage of the terms "imagination" and "images". I will use the modern terms freely for what is referred to by Plato as phantasia and eikasia and phantasma and eidola.

14 Plato, Republic trans. G.M.A. Grube (Pan Books, 1981), 597a.

15 Republic, 510c.

16 Republic, Book VI.

17 Republic, 510d-e.

18 Aristotle, Poetics trans. S. Halliwell (Duckworth, 1987), 1447-1448.

19 De Anima, II, III, trans. D.W. Hamlyn (Clarendon Press, 1968), 427b.

20 Here I follow Alan White's view that phantasia means "'a state of being appeared to'" and phantasma means "appearance". (White, 7) He does not equate phantasma with image nor phantasia with imagination, though some philosophers do. He denies that the Greek terms are necessarily connected only to imagery and suggests the wider correspondence of phantasia to "appearing" and "what appears". (White, 8) Of course, there is a sense in which it is not inaccurate to consider phantasmata as mental entities in the way that images are, so for our purposes phantasia operates like imagination, i.e. it produces phantasmata.

21 De Anima, 427b.

22 White, 12; see De Anima, 429a, 425b, 458a, 460b.

23 De Anima, 429a.

[24] Aristotle, De Somniis in J. Barnes, (ed., trans.), The Complete Works of Aristotle, Revised Edition (Princeton University Press, 1984), 460b.

[25] De Somniis, 459b.

[26] De Somniis, 459a.

[27] De Anima, 456a.

[28] Aristotle, De Memoria in J. Barnes, (ed., trans.) The Complete Works of Aristotle, Revised Edition (Princeton University Press, 1984), 450a.

[29] De Memoria, 449b-450a.

[30] De Memoria, 451.

[31] De Memoria, 453a,

[32] De Anima, 432b, 433b.

[33] De Anima, 431b.

[34] Aristotle, Rhetoric in J. Barnes, (ed., trans.), The Complete Works of Aristotle, Revised Edition (Princeton University Press, 1984), I.xi. 12, 16, 17; II.ii. 2; II.v. 1, 16.

[35] Poetics, ch. 17.

[36] Rhetoric, II.viii. 14.

[37] Rhetoric, III.x. 33.

[38] T. Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, (Blackfriars, 1963), 1a, 84, 7.

[39] ST, 1a, 84, 6.

[40] ST, 1a, 84, 7.

[41] ST, 1a, 84, 7, ad 3.

[42] U. Eco, The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas (Radius, 1988), 171; see ST, I, 84, 6ad, 2.

[43] Eco, 172; see ST, I, 84, 6ad, 2.

[44] ST 2, 53.

[45] T. Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. R. Tuck (Cambridge University Press, 1991), II, 15.

[46] L, II, 16.

[47] L, II, 16.

[48] L, II, 16.

[49] L, II, 16.

[50] L, II, 17.

[51] L, II, 17.

[52] T. Hobbes, Elements of Philosophy in W. Molesworth, (ed.), English Works (London, 1839-1845), 396-399; 406-468.

[53] L, III, 20.

[54] L, III, 21.

[55] L, III, 21.

[56] L, III, 22.

[57] T. Hobbes Rhetoric in W. Molesworth, (ed.), English Works, (London, 1839-1845), II.viii, 14; and Elements of Law (in Molesworth), I.xiii, 7.

[58] White, 18.

[59] White, 20.

[60] R. Descartes, Meditations, I, in E. Haldane, G. Ross (eds.), Philosophical Works, I, II (Cambridge University Press, 1911-1912), 138.

[61] R. Descartes, Discourse on Method, 101; Meditations, 160; Objections and Replies, 52; all in E. Haldane, G. Ross (eds.), Philosophical Works, I, II (Cambridge University Press, 1911-1912).

[62] Objections and Replies, 52.

[63] Meditations, 159.

[64] Meditations, 161.

[65] A. Kenny, "Descartes on Ideas", in W. Doney, (ed.), Descartes: A Collection of Critical Essays (Macmillan, 1968), 236.

[66] Discourse on Method, 84.

[67] Discourse on Method, 84; Meditations, 146.

[68] R. Descartes, Meditations, 145, 149, 152, 188; Rules for the Direction of the Mind, 44; Principles of Philosophy, 220; Passions of the Soul, 341; all in E. Haldane, G. Ross (eds.), Philosophical Works, I, II (Cambridge University Press, 1911-1912).

[69] G. Berkeley, Principles in A.A. Luce, T.E. Jessop, (eds.), The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne, I, II (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1948), 1.

[70] Principles, 3.

[71] G. Berkeley, Philosophical Commentaries in A.A. Luce, T.E. Jessop, (eds.), The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne, I, II (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1948), 818.

[72] Philosophical Commentaries, 823.

[73] Principles, 33.

[74] Principles, 33,36; Dialogues in A.A. Luce, T.E. Jessop, (eds.), The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne, I, II (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1948), 235.

[75] Principles, 33.

[76] Dialogues, 235.

[77] G. Berkeley, Theory of Vision Vindicated, in A.A. Luce, T.E. Jessop (eds.), The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne, I, II (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1948), 56, 57.

[78] Principles, 1; Dialogues, 215.

[79] Dialogues, 215, 251; Principles, p. 28, 34.

[80] D. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, 2nd Edition (L.A. Selby-Bigge), ed. P. H. Nidditch (Clarendon Press, 1978), I, 1, i, p. 1.

[81] Hume, I, 1, iv, pp. 10-11.

[82] Hume I, 1, iii, p. 9; I, 1, iv p., 11.

[83] White, 37.

[84] White, 39.

[85] Hume, II, 1, x, p. 314; II, 1, xi, p. 324; I, 3, ix, p. 117.

[86] Hume, II, 2, vii, p. 371.

[87] I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. N.K. Smith (Macmillan, 1929), 146.

[88] Kant, (Transcendental Deduction, A).

[89] E. Schaper, Studies in Kant's Aesthetics (Edinburgh University Press, 1979), 5.

[90] Schaper, 14.

[91] Sparshott, 3.

[92] White, 47-8.

[93] H. Ishiguro, "Imagination" in British Analytical Philosophy, B. Williams and A. Montefiore, (eds.), (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 175; see Sartre, 158.

[94] Ishiguro, 155.

[95] J. Sartre, The Psychology of Imagination (Methuen, 1972), 156.

[96] POI, 2-3.

[97] POI, 5.

[98] POI, 21.

[99] POI, 60.

[100] POI, 57.

[101] His method here is of particular interest because it illustrates the mental process some spectators might experience when looking at a portrait, or any other representational pictures.

[102] POI, 57-8.

[103] POI, 58.

[104] White, 58.

[105] G. Ryle, Concept of Mind (Hutchinson University Library, 1949), 232.

[106] Concept of Mind, 244.

[107] Concept of Mind, 250.

[108] White, 151.

[109] White, 152.

[110] White, 153.

[111] G. Ryle, _On Thinking_ (Basil Blackwell, 1979), 63.

[112] _On Thinking_, 53.

[113] _On Thinking_, 63.

[114] L. Wittgenstein, _Philosophical Investigations_, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, 1958), 116.

[115] PI, 117.

[116] PI, 119.

[117] PI, 118.

[118] PI, 115.

[119] PI, 101.

[120] PI, 119.

[121] PI, 119.

[122] PI, 175.

[123] PI, 196.

[124] PI, 204.

[125] PI, 174.

[126] PI, 213.

[127] PI, 213.

[128] PI, 213.

[129] PI, 118.

[130] PI, 132.

[131] PI, 183.

[132] PI, 148.

[133] PI, 116.

[134] Sparshott, 6.

[135] Sparshott, 7.

[136] Sparshott, 6.

[137] M. Warnock, *Imagination* (Faber and Faber, 1976), 183.

CHAPTER 6: IMAGINATION AND ART

6.1 The Role of Imagination in Aesthetic Experience

In the last chapter I found that certain aspects of the concept of imagination emerged in common from theories as diverse as those of Aristotle and Sartre. The imagination's power is both active and passive. Its product- the image- appears to us in experiences ranging from visual perception to the most fantastic dreams. My attempt to link imagination's various activities together was not fruitless: the spectrum model organizes these activities in a way which displays their closeness.

A question to consider at present is the nature of the relationship between imagination as it is used in ordinary experience, underlying the formation of concepts from sense impressions, and imagination in aesthetic experience, in the perception and interpretation of art.[1] It is, I think, clear that the same activities of imagination are used in ordinary and in aesthetic experience. Therefore, the same mental power is at work when we perceive and interpret things in the world and works of art (the latter also being things in the world, but also representing other things, ideas, and fictions).

I believe that there is a difference in the <u>ways</u> in which the activities of imagination are put to use in ordinary and aesthetic experience. Many philosophers hold

the view that imagination's role in ordinary experience is to synthesize sense impressions into ideas for understanding and knowledge. Here imagination is essential to interpreting our perceptual experience, that is, to make objects intelligible. Imagination has the same task when we approach objects aesthetically: we must understand _what_ they are _as_ objects, and this is accomplished with the aid of imagination. I cannot appreciate a painting as a representation until I understand it as a painting-type-object. Imagination is present at two levels of recognition: the recognition of the painting as an object in the world; and the recognition of the painting as a representation. Imagination is therefore essential in _all_ experience at the level of recognition. However, the demands of art require special effort from imagination, and these demands illuminate a difference between the way imagination works in ordinary and aesthetic experience. Such demands will be consistent with the characteristics of aesthetic experience as defined in Chapter 1.

To reiterate my remarks there, the experience of art generally begins with an interest in the sensuous aspects of art characterized by the contemplation and appreciation of such objects in and for themselves, and the pleasure arising from that contemplation. This kind of experience most often demands the concentration of the percipient's interest on the object as an object of

sensuous contemplation rather than an interest in the object's usefulness or function. Generally, I believe that aesthetic experience is marked by a heightening of the senses, or as Kant put it, an "animating" of the mind by our experience of beauty in nature or art. It is this heightening of the senses which, I believe, leads to a feeling in the percipient of pleasure, enjoyment, the sublime, or even horror. However, aesthetic interest often moves beyond the contemplation of the sensuous or formal properties of an object, and this can involve the interpretation of the work, asking questions about it, like why the female figure in the picture is depicted as sullen. In the interpretation of a work imagination is often active, and this heightened activity may sustain the percipient's interest and enjoyment of a work.

Aesthetic experience, then, has two special features which differentiate it from our general experience of objects: (1) the interest in the object is directed to its aesthetic attributes- beauty, ugliness, form, colour- rather than for its function; (2) aesthetic experience is a sensuously heightened state resulting in some kind of feeling like pleasure or wonder. Furthermore, imagination is more potent in aesthetic experience than in ordinary experience. Certainly in the latter we stretch imagination to its limits, for example, in technical invention, but art most often requires an extension of imaginative activity in order to grasp the ideas and

forms presented in works of art. Artists often create works of art with the intention of challenging imagination in this way.

I have argued that imagination is present in ordinary experience at least to the extent that it is used to interpret objects as cats, tables, etc., and that it is apparent that we use imagination to solve problems, invent excuses, or to have daydreams. But the properties of art can often only be grasped through a heightened activity of imagination. The creation and appreciation of art often depends on this special, animated quality of mind which is not always present in ordinary perception. A stronger thesis in this respect would be that in order to experience art properly, that is, to contemplate, interpret, and enjoy art aesthetically, an extension of imaginative power is _essential_. Or succinctly, that this imaginative power is a necessary condition of aesthetic experience. Imagination would then play a constitutive rather than just a central role in the creation and appreciation of art. I do not wish to take my argument this far, since the appreciation of many works of art does not require imagination at all (except to recognize them as objects in the world). For example, it does not take imagination to appreciate the fine composition of Poussin's _The Baptism of Christ_. We can see that the figures wearing colourful cloaks are arranged from right to left before a pool in the immediate foreground, with a

background consisting of a landscape of distant hills on which smaller figures sit.

I do not claim that imagination facilitates the "suspension of disbelief" necessary for understanding fiction. And, as I have said above, the extension of imaginative activity is not a condition of interpreting pictures _as depictions_. In the case of literature and pictorial representation, I think that we can simply understand that these objects represent reality in certain ways for our enjoyment. We do not need to make-believe when we read novels or look at pictures. As I have shown in Chapter 4, Schier's theory of Natural Generativity argues that we have an understanding of pictures as depictions without invoking a special kind of perceptual or imaginative capacity. What I do maintain is that imaginative activity, in particular, can play a central role in the appreciation of art, and that many works of art awaken imagination, requiring it to stretch itself to its limits.

An understanding of imagination's activity in aesthetic experience must transcend the metaphor of its "free rein" in this context. Words like "awakening", "quickening", "animating", and "heightening" come to mind when describing the state of mind of the percipient. These terms can be useful to convey the sense in which art affects the imagination but I believe that they fail to say concretely how we use imagination in particular

ways when creating or contemplating works of art. Perhaps we have been too content to understand imagination in metaphorical terms, and if this is true it may explain the vagueness which is found everywhere in discussions of how imagination pertains to art. In what follows I will examine discussions of imagination and art to establish clearly the connection between them.

6.2 What Does Imagination Have to Do with Art?

Philosophers of the Enlightenment assigned a role to imagination in discussions of aesthetics, though it seemed to be only a power working alongside perception and knowledge rather than a faculty playing a key part in aesthetic experience. Consistent with his doctrine of the "internal senses", Hutcheson placed the "aesthetic senses" ("absolute beauty", "relative beauty", "harmony", "design", and "grandeur" and "novelty") under the heading of the "pleasures of imagination".[2] Following Hutcheson, Addison's Pleasures of Imagination distinguished between "primary pleasures" and "secondary pleasures". "Primary pleasures" refer to the pleasures of objects of sense. "Secondary pleasures" refer to ideas (perhaps images) of objects of sense which are not before the eyes; objects called up in memory; or fictitious objects. So, "primary pleasures" concern only natural beauty while "secondary pleasures" concern the imitative arts, or fine arts.[3]

Kant extended the concept of imagination in aesthetic experience by giving it a special place in reflective judgements, and specifically, in judgements of taste. The importance of imagination to aesthetics reached a peak in Kant's third _Critique_. After Kant, Schiller and Schelling also recognized imagination's connection to the aesthetic. Schiller, closely following Kant, attributed a "free play" of imagination to the artist as opposed to giving it a mere epistemological role. Schelling, who was a direct influence on Coleridge and other Romantics, celebrated imagination as underpinning experience itself and art, thereby dissolving the distinction between nature and art.

Imagination was the key concept for art criticism of the Romantic period, exemplified by Coleridge's theory of creativity, Wordsworth's poetry, and partly by Ruskin's views of painting and architecture. In Romantic thought, imagination was the peculiar power which closed the gap between humanity and nature; in Wordsworth's _Prelude_ it was "reason in her most exalted mood".[4] More recently, imagination enjoyed an important place in Collingwood's _The Principles of Art_. Here, he develops a theory of art _as_ imagination, which has been heavily criticized for, among other things, ignoring artistic medium. Nevertheless, it is significant that Collingwood devotes all of Book II in his text to a theory of imagination, discussing its epistemological role in theories from

Descartes to Kant. Collingwood's effort illustrates perhaps the first attempt after Kant to establish in a deliberate way the connection between imagination and art. Since Collingwood, imagination has been discussed in relation to art in brief moments, some of which I will address in 6.6.

Before examining these views more closely, there remains the question of what is characteristic of imaginative activity in relation to aesthetic experience. At a fundamental level, to experience a work as such often requires an "imaginative leap", and this applies to the full range of the arts. For instance, in the dance, "Swan Lake", to recognize that the dancers represent swans or cygnets, and to see their movements as evoking the graceful movements of swans, may require imagination. An understanding of the story represented through movement and music may be grasped only by understanding the fictional world created by the dancers. The same capacity is used in the recognition of actors as characters playing out actions of another person, living or fictional, from the present or past. In literary fiction, we are asked to make perhaps the greatest leap, i.e. to enter the imaginary world of the story or poem in order to follow the narrative as if it were real. In literary fantasy, we are challenged to imagine the characters and places therein: imagery is the writer's way of "taking us through" the story. In film,

imagination helps us to move from the real world to the unreal world of the film. Such imaginative leaps are not uncommon; it is habit for us in our attention to works of art. When we sit in a theatre, or cinema or enter an art gallery, we often make the switch to an imaginative mode of awareness.[5]

The artist, in creating a work of art, is creating something like a virtual reality or a possible world.[6] It may be a world in which we could live, not differing greatly from our own experience, or it may be an alternative reality in which there are no straight lines or in which there is no light. Imagination has the capacity to envisage alternative possibilities and alternative worlds in non-aesthetic experience, for example, in mechanical inventions. This capacity enables us to be creative, inventive and to think up new ideas and solutions to problems. The creation of imaginary worlds requires the use of imagination by the artist- a use of imagination which is partly responsible for the originality of a work of art. Hence, the capacities of imagination are exploited by the percipient and artist alike, and these capacities belong to the imagination as it operates in both aesthetic and ordinary experience.

Sparshott remarks that "... perception is to the real, imagination to the unreal and the possible."[7] We cannot take his neat formulation as it stands because perception would have to be part of any kind of

imaginative perception, but it does point to the kind of imaginative mode of awareness which characterizes the aesthetic response. We could conclude that if artists create imaginary worlds, then only imagination will enable us to interpret these imaginary worlds. This claim may be questionable since some percipients may claim that they do not use imagination in their interpretation and appreciation of art. In my "Swan Lake" example, one might choose not to imagine the dancers as swans, but to see them only as graceful human figures dressed in white. (Though one could argue that not using imagination here is to fail to grasp what the dancers' movements express.)

Art may not give us challenging stuff for the imagination, but it can at least represent a departure from the normal. Art reaches out to the imagination because it presents what is not immediately part of our perceptual experience. Art sometimes offers us what is familiar, but it has the special capacity to present something other than the familar objects of perception. It is a gateway to the new and unexplored. This is particularly true in the context of paintings. For example, Claude's _Landscape with Psyche at the Palace of Cupid_ (_The Enchanted Castle_) represents another place, another time, and a scene that is not mere imitation but a construct of the painter's imagination based on mythical characters. This Claude landscape is perhaps less inviting than his others: instead of wanting to

explore the glorious scene we may wish to keep a distance from the mysterious castle and the foreboding tinge to Psyche's melancholy. For the spectator, the landscape offers a glimpse into another world, another time and place created by the artist. The images also suggest an emotional background to the picture: a narrative about Cupid and Psyche. Or in the case of a typical classical landscape, the spectator may decide to project him or herself into the depicted scene for an imaginative wander through the green slopes, pausing at the pond and finally entering the gazebo for restful contemplation of his or her surrounds. It is only through the picture's invitation that the spectator is allowed to enjoy the imaginative contemplation which is a departure from the spectator's own situation. Like fiction, paintings are, in my view, particularly suited for imaginative journeying.[8] (This point will be taken up at length in Chapter 7).

In aesthetic experience we are shaken out of passivity into a mode of awareness in which the imagination is reactive and active. Reactive, in responding to cues from the artist which start us on our imaginative journey, and active, in forming images as part of the activity of that journey. I have suggested that the peculiar nature of imaginative activity in aesthetic experience is its freedom from the constraints of practical reason, and that this freedom precipitates

imagination's contemplation of works of art. It is also the challenges of art that unleash imagination to give it free rein, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, in the percipient's aesthetic response. This freedom is often essential not only for interpreting the work, but for the actual enjoyment we take in contemplation. We should allow as much freedom to imagination as maximizes our pleasure in the aesthetic object.

Some works of art require imaginative activity in order to experience them appropriately _and_ to the fullest extent. For instance, the figure looking out the window in Casper David Friedrich's _Woman at a Window_ forces the spectator to imaginatively project him/herself into the position of the figure to "see" what "she" is "looking" at. This imaginative projection involves the spectator with the picture to a greater degree, thus enhancing the overall appreciation of it. But in cases where free imaginative activity is not a prerequisite for an appropriate response, free imaginative activity is not necessary to maximize our enjoyment of the work. It does not require imagination to appreciate the technique, colour or composition of Constable's _Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds_. We do not feel a need to project ourselves into the picture, nor to imagine anything about the landscape in order to appreciate the picture appropriately. We might "take a walk" in the landsacpe, or imagine the feeling of standing below the

great height of the cathedral with its spire reaching into the sky, but these imaginative experiences are not called for by the picture.

Where free imaginative activity is essential, there will be some constraints that the percipient must observe. When the work ceases to be the center of attention, the percipient must control his or her imaginative activity so that it returns to the work of art. We can be "spirited away" by imagination to an indulgent experience of our own in both ordinary and aesthetic experience, and in ways which border on the unpleasant, as in calling up horrible memories. Imaginative activity in the contemplation of works of art leads to an enhancement of the percipient's aesthetic experience through the greater pleasure it brings, but if misused, imagination detracts from the work by impeding our attention to the work itself, and by experiencing the work inappropriately, according to the general response expected by others, including the artist or author. The degree of freedom in our imaginative activity is under the artist's control by way of cues or suggestions in the artist's work. In this way we can know how much imagination to bring to our experience of a work.

Certain characteristics of imagination in aesthetic experience have emerged. Firstly, I claimed that imagination's capacity to see things as otherwise- to envisage possibilities or alternative worlds- enables the

recognition of the unfamiliar presented in art. We are able to make an imaginative leap into the world created by the artist. Secondly, I argued that this capacity of imagination is especially suited to art because it represents a departure from the normal. In other words, once we have made the "leap", imaginative activity in the percipient is catalyzed by the work, so that imagination has a significant role in the aesthetic response. Thirdly, I characterized this activity as free, that is, free from the constraints of practical knowledge, so that imagination in its freedom can grasp anything from horrific fictions to Escher's boggling designs. Finally, I claimed that when imaginative activity is present in aesthetic contemplation, it is partly responsible for our enjoyment of the work of art. So we take pleasure in the free activity of imagination which thus leads to an overall enhancement of our aesthetic experience.

My emphasis on imagination's capacities here helps to establish a coherent connection between imagination and art. I now turn to Kant's Critique of Judgement which will give further import to the role of imagination in the aesthetic response, namely through his assertions about the free play of imagination and the resultant pleasure which underlies aesthetic judgements.

6.3 Kant's Harmonious Free Play of the Faculties

I have argued that the imaginative power at work in aesthetic experience does not differ from that in ordinary experience, but I have also suggested that it is more free in aesthetic experience. I must now establish the character of this freedom.

Kant does not have a theory of imagination as such, but there are key discussions of the power (or faculty) of imagination in both the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Judgement. In the former text, he assigns imagination the role of synthesizing intuitions into ideas for the understanding which reveals the relationship between the two faculties, and it is this relationship which changes in the role assigned to imagination in the Critique of Judgement.

For Kant aesthetic judgements are related to cognitive judgements, despite his claim that aesthetic judgements do not bring objects under concepts while cognitive judgements do. In making any judgement, cognitive or aesthetic, two necessary conditions hold: the application of the categories of time and space. Also, according to Kant, the faculties of imagination and understanding work in harmony with each other but the nature of this harmonious activity differs in the two kinds of judgements. Because aesthetic judgements are related to cognitive judgements, I will first consider

Kant's view of how we acquire knowledge about the world.

We perceive a world of appearances of which we can have knowledge while behind the world of appearances lies a realm of things-in-themselves. In interpreting the world of appearances we are given intuitions of objects through our senses. Imagination serves the understanding by performing a threefold synthesis in which it produces schemata for the categories of the understanding. This consists in the synthesis of the apprehension of intuition, the synthesis of reproduction in imagination and the synthesis of recognition in a concept whereby the understanding's categories subsume an object under a concept. Thus, in acts of cognition, the imagination serves the understanding by "preparing" the manifold of intuitions for the application of concepts by the understanding. Because imagination and understanding mutually assist each other, they are in a harmonious relationship, and it is only through this harmony that we can acquire knowledge about the world. Through it, we can interpret imagination's power as positive but constrained. It is positive in that it facilitates the interpretation of the world, but constrained in that it is subservient to the understanding in this role. It has a particular function for the ends of cognition, one which is harnessed to the laws of the understanding.

Judgements of beauty are not cognitive judgements, and therefore they call for a different relationship

between the imagination and understanding in their harmony (though it must be noted that Kant does say that judgements of taste rest on <u>indeterminate</u> concepts).

> If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the Object by means of understanding with a view to cognition, but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding) we refer the representation to the Subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgement of taste, therefore, is not a cognitive judgement, and so not logical, but is aesthetic.[9]

Aesthetic judgements are characterized by a feeling in the subject rather than the cognition of an object by the subject. That feeling is the pleasure felt by the subject when experiencing an object "disinterestedly" but with an appreciation for its form. Hence, the judgement of taste is subjective- it cannot have objective validity in the sense that cognitive judgements do. Kant argues that, though our judgements of taste are subjective, when we make a judgement about the beauty of an object we assume the agreement of others with our appraisal of the object. In other words, aesthetic judgements claim universal validity. The main thrust of his argument is that there is a particular frame of mind which occurs in persons making aesthetic judgements. He believes that the aesthetic response is grounded in a harmonious free play of the imagination and the understanding. In cognitive judgements the imagination serves the understanding,

presenting objects for the application of concepts. In aesthetic judgements the harmonious activity of the two faculties is "free". Kant's metaphor of "free play" is helpful. We can imagine the two powers being given a looser rein not in the interests of acquiring knowledge but for the free contemplation and enjoyment of an object in and for itself.

Despite the vagueness of "free play", Kant does provide an explanation of his idea which is concrete enough for our purposes here. The freedom of imagination here is freedom from the constraints of the rules of the understanding which are required for cognition. The mental state which underlies cognitive judgements also underlies aesthetic judgements except that in the latter no concept is applied to the object. In Kant's terminology, the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction occur without the synthesis of recognition taking place. So the harmony of the two powers exists such that the general conditions for acquiring knowledge are met, but without the application of a concept.[10] Though an order is imposed on the manifold (which is necessary to grasp an object at all), the understanding's activity is different because it does not complete the role assigned to it in cognition. Kant says:

> The cognitive powers brought into play by this representation are here engaged in a free play, since no definite concept restricts them to a particular rule of

> cognition. Hence the mental state in this representation must be one of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general.[11]

In judgements of beauty, the <u>understanding</u> is subservient to the imagination. Imagination is thus free from the rules of the understanding, that is, free from the "laws of association" which exist in the application of concepts to objects in cognition. We do not need a concept of what a thing is <u>to be</u>, what it is, to appreciate it aesthetically. Schaper suggests that

> 'Imagination considered in its freedom' can be read as stressing the independence of aesthetic appraisals from the rules and criteria that are conditions for the objective validity of empirical judgements.[12]

In aesthetic judgement, imagination's relationship to the understanding is one in which it stands in "free conformity" to its laws, or what Kant calls "conformity to a law without a law".[13] The imaginative activity which underlies judgements of taste is not "reproductive", as it is when subject to the laws of the understanding, but is "productive", "exerting an activity of its own".[14] Many questions are thrown up by Kant's remarks on the freedom of imagination. First, one might ask how an object can affect the mind in such a way as to produce a free play of the faculties rather than the mere harmony which underlies cognitive judgements. Kant's idea of

formal finality presents an answer to this. The finality of an object is its end or purpose according to Kant, and he maintains that there can be finality apart from an end.[15] Objective finality consists in a thing's function or natural purpose while subjective finality is "purposiveness without purpose". The formal finality of an object affects the mind resulting in a feeling of pleasure in persons making judgements of taste. Whereas objective finality is indicated by the correlation of an object's existence and its function, formal finality is indicated by the pleasure felt in response to an object's appearance (form). Something about the appearance of an object activates the imagination and the understanding into a harmonious free play. A new question arises in this context: where in fact does this pleasure "come from"?

While there is a causal relation at work in pleasurable aesthetic judgements, the pleasure is not caused by the form of the object. Though the source is the formal finality of the object itself, the feeling of pleasure is precipitated by the harmonious free play of our mental powers. Hence, the formal finality of the object is a finality which, in Guyer's words, is "nothing more than its disposition to produce the harmony of the faculties".[16] In this respect, then, the unity of the manifold is represented not by a concept but by the feeling of pleasure.[17]

That aesthetic judgements are grounded in a harmony of the faculties which meets the conditions for cognition in general (yet without a concept), is the very reason for our feeling of pleasure; thus the feeling of pleasure is _identified_ with this free harmonious activity. The feeling of pleasure is what gives rise to judgements of taste about an object. We can find evidence for this in the First Introduction of the _Critique of Judgement_, where of the harmony of the faculties Kant says that, "this relation...effects a sensation which is the determining ground of a judgement, and which is therefore termed aesthetic."[18] Guyer makes the valuable point that we should not view this feeling of pleasure as momentous, though it can be, and he puts forward a reasonable interpretation that the harmony of the faculties and feeling of pleasure from it is a "unified but temporally extended psychological state" and therefore an activity, not an act.[19] This interpretation fits with aesthetic contemplation as just that- thoughtful reflection on nature or art which leads to enjoyment and a feeling of pleasure.

The "free play" of the faculties forms the basis of the aesthetic response for Kant: we perceive objects of beauty as having formal finality, take delight in their form, and make aesthetic judgements which reflect the pleasure derived from the peculiar activity of the "free play". Furthermore, this peculiar activity is universal

and therefore provides a foundation for the intersubjective validity of aesthetic judgements.[20] In the Introduction to the Critique of Judgement, Kant says:

> For the ground of this pleasure is found in the universal, though subjective condition of reflective judgements, namely the final harmony of an object (be it a product of nature or of art) with the mutual relation of the faculties of cognition, (imagination and understanding,) which are requisite for every empirical cognition.[21]

The ability to experience aesthetic pleasure is the form of the judgement itself, stripped of conceptual content, and the harmony of the faculties underlies this ability.

In his deduction of pure aesthetic judgement, Kant holds that aesthetic judgements claim agreement from others who make aesthetic judgements about the same object. Agreement between judgements of taste is possible because we are all rational beings; the necessary conditions of rationality hold for all of us. He is not saying that we will all agree in our aesthetic judgements, but that we expect that our judgements about beauty are universally valid. The condition of this universality is what Kant calls the "common sense". This idea will reveal the significance of the harmony of the faculties to Kant's deduction. On this point Guyer maintains that for Kant the feeling of pleasure from the harmony of the faculties as universal is the "deepest condition on aesthetic judgment, the condition of its

possibility as a form of synthetic _a priori_ judgment."[22]

The harmony of the faculties is a condition of all experience for Kant whether it is subjective or objective. It is therefore an _a priori_ condition of knowledge and, as we have learned, the "free play" of imagination and understanding is an _a priori_ condition of aesthetic judgements. We can therefore conclude that aesthetic judgements are dependent on cognitive judgements because the harmony of the faculties underlies both cognitive and aesthetic judgements. Though we do not conceptualize the objects of our judgements of taste, the _general_ conditions of knowledge apply.

Judgements of taste, then, are founded like cognitive judgements on a mental state common to everyone making such judgements. Kant's argument about the "common sense" begins with the assertion that our judgements of taste depend on everyone having a "common sense", and he then asks if we can presuppose it in everyone. He confusingly refers to the common sense as a principle, a feeling (Section 20), and as the _ability_ to make judgements of taste (Section 40).[23] Generally, I think it is safe to think of the common sense as that which facilitates judgements of taste in respect of their subjective universality, this "common sense" being the subjective feeling we have in judging objects aesthetically.

Though his argument for the communicability of feeling in his deduction is troublesome, we can at least

take from it the importance of the concept of "free play". Not only does he claim that aesthetic judgements are grounded in the harmony of the faculties, but it is this harmony which underpins the idea of the "common sense", that is, that which enables us to make judgements of taste in the first place and to ascribe universal validity to them.

The freedom which characterizes the relationship between the imagination and the understanding in aesthetic judgements is a freedom from the conditions of cognitive judgements, specifically a freedom from the application of a concept to an object, without an interest in the end, purpose or function of an object. Schaper provides a clear example of this.

> We have to distinguish between, say, my consciousness of the Acropolis when I make a perceptual claim about it and my consciousness of the same building when I take delight in my perception of it.[24]

Kant's claim about the freedom of imagination need not be obscure if we think of this freedom in contrast to the "task" assigned to imagination in cognitive judgements. We can interpret this simply as the frame of mind we take on when approaching an object aesthetically; where the form of the object "quickens" our imagination and understanding into a free reflection on the object purely in virtue of its aesthetic qualities. According to Kant, "free play" is a necessary condition for the aesthetic

response. In addition, Kant's concept of artistic genius demonstrates imagination's creative power and its indispensibility to the artist.

6.4 The Artist's Imagination and Aesthetic Ideas

Because the beauty of nature figures prominently in Kant's "Analytic of the Beautiful", it could be the case that the concept of "free play" is not applicable to art. On the contrary, I interpret Kant as recognizing nature and art as both stimulating "free play", though with special conditions attached in the case of art.
In Section 51 Kant says:

> Beauty (whether it be of nature or of art) may in general be termed the expression of aesthetic ideas. But the proviso must be added that with beauty of art this idea must be excited through the medium of a concept of the Object, whereas with beauty of nature the bare reflection upon a given intuition, apart from any concept of what the object is intended to be, is sufficient for awakening and communicating the idea of which that Object is regarded as the expression.[25]

In Section 45 Kant does say that art objects also stimulate the "free play" of the faculties through their formal finality. But the special conditions arise from art as an intentional product of human creation. These conditions slightly alter imagination's role such that it is constrained (though still free) by the tasks it will meet in the interpretation of works of art. For example,

though Kant does not say this explicitly, the artist often guides the participant's imagination through the medium whether it is images, words, ideas, or movement.

Artistic genius for Kant is a talent or capacity for producing art "without a trace appearing of the artist having always had the rule present to him and of its having fettered his mental powers."[26] Fine art, the product of artistic genius, is not learned or produced according to a set of rules with a conceptual basis. Rather, it is exemplary, that is, it is an original product, not an imitation. Kant therefore maintains that the "primary property" of fine art is its originality. Artistic genius, then, is contrasted with a talent for imitation. What the artist produces is imaginative and new rather than a copy of something else.

Kant clarifies the difference between taste and genius, claiming that we need _taste_ for making judgements about beautiful objects but _genius_ for producing works of art, though he later shows why even taste is required by the artist.[27] The creativity of artistic genius seems to be blind in that the artist's ideas just come to him or her without an understanding of their source. But there is a creative and critical process in artistic production which requires taste.

> By this the artist, having practised and corrected his taste by a variety of examples from nature or art, controls his work and, after many, and often laborious, attempts to satisfy taste, finds the form which commends itself to him. Hence this

> form is not, as it were, a matter of inspiration, or of a free swing of the mental powers, but rather of a slow and even painful process of improvement, directed to making the form adequate to his thought without prejudice to the freedom in the play of those powers.[28]

Kant goes on to identify the faculties of mind which constitute artistic genius, asserting that "soul" (Geist) is the "animating principle of the mind" which "sets the mental powers into a swing that is final, i.e. into a play...". This turns out to be the imagination or as he puts it, "the faculty of presenting aesthetic ideas."[29] Aesthetic ideas are fundamental to Kant's discussion of fine art. They are counterparts of rational ideas in that they hold the special place of being sensible representations which

> ...strain after something lying out beyond the confines of experience, and so seek to approximate to a presentation of rational concepts the semblance of an objective reality. But, on the other hand, there is this most important reason, that no concept can be wholly adequate to them as internal intuitions.[30]

So, aesthetic ideas can express rational ideas, i.e that which lies beyond sensible experience. The imagination's power to represent aesthetic ideas is used by the artist in the creation of works of art. In this context, Kant recognizes a connection between art and different levels of reality where the artist, facilitated by free imaginative activity, represents a rational idea through

a work of art.

In imagination's productive capacity, at the height of its creative powers, it can create a "second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature" which "affords us entertainment where experience proves too commonplace".[31] Kant says:

> The poet essays the task of interpreting to sense the rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation, etc. Or, again, as to things of which examples occur in experience, e.g. death, envy, and all vices, as also love, fame, and the like, transgressing the limits of experience he attempts with the aid of imagination which emulates the display of reason in its attainment of a maximum, to body them forth to sense with a completeness of which nature affords no parallel; and it is in fact precisely in the poetic art that the faculty of aesthetic ideas can show itself to full advantage.[32]

In this creative activity of the imagination, Kant calls the constituents of aesthetic ideas "aesthetic attributes", which are "secondary representations of the imagination". He illustrates the concept of an aesthetic attribute through the example of Jupiter's eagle as representing the rational idea of the kingdom of heaven. An aesthetic attribute, by expressing a rational idea through a representation

> ...gives imagination an incentive to spread its flight over a whole host of kindred representations that provoke more thought than admits of expression in a concept determined by words.[33]

Aesthetic attributes can be interpreted as the concrete images of poetry or the images of pictures by which the artist expresses the rational ideas which are part of the work itself. For example, in the above quote about the poet, the poet can express the ideas of hell, eternity, death, etc. through the concrete imagery of poetry.

Aesthetic ideas and aesthetic attributes exemplify the imaginative nature of art. Their function is one of "...animating the mind by opening out for it a prospect into a field of kindred representations stretching beyond its ken."[34] In the activity of artistic genius, imagination leaves familiar territory, stretching itself into a creative mode which engenders the originality in fine art.

The nature of artistic creation and that of the aesthetic response is characterized by imaginative activity which is thought-provoking though not for deeply conceptual ends. The artist does have the concept of the artistic object to be created, but the finished work of art does not express a determinate concept, but rather it expresses a rational idea through an aesthetic idea, which thus activates the imagination and understanding into "free play".[35]

Kant is careful to stress imagination's relationship with the understanding here. The imagination's freedom must be "in accordance with the understanding's

conformity to law" because apart from this "lawfulness without a law", imagination is as it were too free.

> For in lawless freedom imagination, with all its wealth, produces nothing but nonsense....Taste, like judgement in general, is the discipline (or corrective) of genius. It severely clips its wings, and makes it orderly or polished; but at the same time it gives it guidance, directing and controlling its flight, so that it may preserve its character of finality.[36]

Here taste could be taken as analogous to understanding's role in the subjective purposiveness of the harmony of the faculties whereby it controls the imagination though only to the extent that it provides a "lawfulness without a law".[37] Kant concludes Section 50 with the requirements for art as imagination, understanding, soul and taste (in that order).

6.5 A Further Interpretation of Kant

In Kant's attempt to discover how aesthetic judgements are possible, a cogent theory of the aesthetic response has emerged. The formal finality of a beautiful object stimulates the mind in such a way as to set the imagination into a free harmonious cooperation with the understanding, a cooperation which resembles the activity of the two faculties in accomplishing the cognition of objects, yet without actually arriving at a cognition. Instead, the activity of the faculties in the experience

of beauty causes a feeling of delight or pleasure in the percipient. This harmony as characteristic of the aesthetic response explains our aesthetic experience of art and nature. It explains how we can approach things aesthetically, that is, apart from the ends to which objects are assigned in cognition.

If the aesthetic response is necessarily marked by the primary role given to imagination's powers in the artist and the percipient, how does imaginative activity show itself in individual experiences? Or, how can we interpret Kant to describe how we use imagination when we interpret works of art? Kant offers some explanation here, but his terminology makes an accurate interpretation tedious.

Imagination frees our minds to look at objects with a view to thinking about them without relevance to their function. To imaginatively approach Ribera's Dream of Jacob is to appreciate the delicate, peaceful image of Jacob asleep and maybe to feel a sense of wonder about the masterly portrayal of Jacob's dream of the heavenly ladder as a golden beam of light above his head. The angels are barely visible so perhaps we must imagine them descending the golden ladder. We can take this idea a step further by referring to aesthetic attributes in order to understand how imagination contributes to both the artist's creation and the spectator's interpretation of what is expressed in a work of art.

In artistic genius, imagination is responsible for the originality characteristic of fine art, as opposed to products of imitation which are created according to an existing set of rules. Imagination in this creative activity breaks these rules by making rules of its own. Also, imagination is the faculty of mind responsible for aesthetic ideas. Works of art are constituted by aesthetic ideas, and therefore the artist's imagination is the source of individual works of art. Aesthetic attributes, as constituents of aesthetic ideas, are the concrete images which express the rational ideas of the work. Imagination is the source of the concrete images in poetry and painting, as illustrated by Kant's examples of Jupiter's eagle and Frederick the Great's poem. In the latter example it becomes clear what Kant means when he says that the soul which animates poetry and rhetoric is founded on their aesthetic attributes, or on the sensible images in them. Aesthetic attributes

> ...give the imagination an impetus to bring more thought into play in the matter, though in an undeveloped manner, than allows of being brought within the embrace of a concept, or, therefore, of being definitely formulated in language.[38]

The concrete images of poetry or rhetoric evoke imaginative reflection on what is generally expressed in the poem or speech, and Kant maintains that it is a kind of free, indefinite, imaginative reflection.[39] In the

thoughtful contemplation of the King's poem Kant says that memories and sensible images come to mind.

> ...he kindles in this way his rational idea of a cosmopolitan sentiment even at the close of life, with the help of an attribute which the imagination (in remembering all the pleasures of a fair summer's day that is over and gone- a memory of which pleasures is suggested by a serene evening) annexes to that representation, and which stirs up a crowd of sensations and secondary representations for which no expression can be found.[40]

On a free interpretation of Kant, I would maintain that he would support the view that the artist's imagination- imaginative thoughts, mental images, memories, memories of dream images, and the like- contributes to the creation of his or her works. Such images may not always hold a central place in the conception of a particular work, but they may be the source of certain works of art. Similarly, and perhaps more commonly, we may be led into a state of imaginative reflection through the images presented in the language of literature or the configurations in a picture. More images may come to mind spawned by the immediate images of the work, and these secondary images could be related to the percipient's memories or own fantasies. Secondary images are directly related to the work (though imaginative reflection which is unrestrained would no longer constitute an appropriate response to the actual work of art).

I am not suggesting that Kant's free harmony of the

faculties provides a model for a typical aesthetic response, but overall I think that we can take from Kant the coherent and positive assertion that imaginative activity underlies both the aesthetic response and the artist's creativity. Thus imagination is the foundation of the creation, appreciation and evaluation of a work of art.

Imagination in aesthetic experience is free, that is, free from the constraints of practical purposes or intentions directed at the accomplishment of a task. It can enjoy this freedom by exploring what a work of art offers to it, and we gain pleasure through this experience. Kant has supplied us with an answer to how imaginative activity can be free, and with his ideas taken on board, we can turn to other philosophers who have valued the imaginative component of artistic activity.

6.6 Imagination in Coleridge, Ruskin, and Collingwood

Coleridge

After Kant, Coleridge, Ruskin and Collingwood made a full-fledged attempt to formulate a coherent theory of imagination in relation to the artist and percipient. Like Kant's theory of imagination, it is necessary to keep in mind that each of their accounts of imagination

are dependent on their own philosophical systems. This, however, will not prevent us from discovering the value of their views, as well as further support for my overall argument concerning the place of imagination in art.

The critical theory of Romanticism reveals its indebtedness to German Idealism, and therefore harkens back to Kant, though Coleridge's ideas differ from Kant's. Blocker notes the continuity and discontinuity between their accounts of imagination.

> Coleridge accepted Kant's theory of the productive, spontaneous, and constructive imagination necessary to all experience, but then went on to apply this concept to a different field of application, the _aesthetic_ apprehension and organization of experience, to which Kant would not have accorded the same objectivity.[41]

Coleridge's recognition of imagination as the power which enables the artist, the poet in particular, to create works is especially relevant to my inquiry. Though his theory of imagination is convoluted by its idealism, it is at least clear that imagination is the prime tool for artistic productivity. Furthermore, Coleridge (as well as Wordsworth and Shelley) regarded imagination as the power replacing reason for understanding nature.

In _Biographia Literaria_ Coleridge creates a system in which imagination is given the role of

> ...unifying or reconciling the self and nature on three different but analogous levels. These three reconciliations are represented by perception, art, and philosophy.[42]

For Coleridge, imagination operates at the level of understanding the world and in the creative activity of the artistic process. He identifies two kinds of imagination, "primary" and "secondary" imagination. "Primary" imagination is the "prime agent of all human Perception" while "secondary" imagination differs from it "only in <u>degree</u>" and is an "echo" of it, "coexisting with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the <u>kind</u> of its agency....It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate."[43] The imagination in its "primary" mode seems to be the power whereby we apprehend nature. But it is the "secondary" mode which is the source of artistic creativity.

A point of central importance in Coleridge's theory of imagination is his distinction between imagination and fancy. He describes fancy in contrast to imagination in that it

> ...has no counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other mode than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical faculty of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.[44]

This view of fancy finds its foundations in David Hartley's associative theory. Discussion of this theory would require a digression into theories of literary

imagination which are not relevant here. But what is significant in Coleridge's distinction is that he gives fancy a role which is inconsistent with most other philosophical views. Fancy is typically associated with a free, light-hearted, and even frivolous exercise of imagination. In this way it is contrasted with the exercise of imagination involved in cognition. However, Coleridge not only seems to associate fancy with an associative power in cognition, but he also separates it entirely from both primary and secondary imagination.

Still, as indicated by M. H. Abrams, fancy is involved in artistic creativity, though Coleridge delegates its role to the lesser of the two modes of poetry. This lesser mode is produced through

> ...particulars of sense and the images of memory, and its production involves only the lower faculties of fancy, 'understanding,' and empirical 'choice'. It is therefore the work of 'talent,' and stands in rank below the highest...[45]

Reason and imagination are involved in the higher , "organic" mode of poetry.

So in Coleridge we find a description of primary and secondary imagination as productive and creative: firstly, in "creating" the world of nature through our apprehension of it and secondly, in creating works of art.[46] Coleridge is never more specific than this, though this is enough, along with an understanding of his forerunners, to capture the fundamental role of

imagination in both the synthesis of intuitions into concepts and as the creative power peculiar to artistic activity. Also, a similarity emerges between the ideas of Kant and Coleridge, namely, that imagination is the source of artistic genius, and thus the source of originality in art.

Ruskin

Ruskin's views are also embedded in his own theory of art criticism, but he had more specific things to say about imagination and art than Coleridge, namely, he attempts to give an account of the modes of imagination involved in the spectator's appreciation of paintings.

In his conclusion to The Stones of Venice he says:

> ...one of the main functions of art, in its service to man, is to rouse the imagination from its palsy, like the angel troubling the Bethesda pool; and the art which does not do this is false to its duty, and degraded in its nature. It is not enough that it be well imagined, it must task the beholder also to imagine well.[47]

Ruskin asserts that there is an imperative on the artist to use imagination. The spectator responds to the imaginative content of works of art; a response which leads to the enjoyment of a work. Ruskin even contends that without the active use of imagination, the spectator will not contemplate the work properly nor even enjoy it. He points out that in this activity the artist must guide

the spectator's imagination through the work for otherwise the imagination may "wander hither and thither". Also in his conclusion he remarks that it is the artist's responsibility to leave just enough to the spectator's imagination to stimulate that activity without leaving everything to the imagination. The idea of the artist guiding the spectator's imagination is also raised by Savile in his discussion of Laocoon (see Chapter 7). It is reasonable to expect the artist to have some control over the spectator's response since the artist is the author of a picture's images. Whether such control is essential is a separate question.

Ruskin formulated his own theory of imagination, focusing on the beholder's share in aesthetic experience. He identifies three "forms" of imagination justified by his view that "art works are reflected on by mind and are modified or coloured by our imagination."[48] The first form of imagination combines images or creates new ones by combining them. The second form, the penetrative imagination, is also active but it seems to be more explorative or adventurous by penetrating the work through perceptual cues from the artist. Ruskin identifies a third form of imagination in which it is in a contemplative mood. It is described as a kind of suspension from the work, yet still active in contemplating the work itself. Here, imagination deprives

> ...the subject of material and bodily shape, and regarding such of its qualities

> only as it chooses for particular purpose, it forges these qualities together in such groups and forms as it desires, and gives to their abstract being consistency and reality, by striking them as it were with the die of an image belonging to other matter...[49]

In all three modes imagination is actively engaged with the work of art through the images provided by the artist.

These "forms" of imagination roughly correspond to the kinds of imaginative activity in the spectrum model discussed in Chapter 5. Imagination appears to play with pictorial images- combining them creatively and maybe forming new ones (what I have called secondary images). At a more active level, the imagination is explorative, freely responding to the images of the picture. By grasping them the spectator can project himself into the world of those images and explore the relations between them or the ideas they express. In its most heightened mode, imagination is inventive, creating its own images to fill out what is already in the picture, and for visualizing, e.g. the movement of horses, the mist of a stormy sea, the cries of victims, or roars of a lion.

There are two more noteworthy points in Ruskin's account of imagination. Firstly, in contrast to Kant and Coleridge, he discusses the spectator's imagination in relation to skill. The imagination of the spectator must be cultivated and improved; we are not simply blessed with the ability to explore paintings imaginatively.

> It is nevertheless evident, that however suggestive the work or picture may be, it cannot have effect unless we are ourselves both watchful of its every hint, and capable of understanding and carrying it out...[50]

This emphasis on the spectator's imaginative skill is valuable because it suggests that we should explore what the artist presents to us, but this might also lead to an overemphasis on the beholder's share, so that we set out to enrich our own experience to the point of selfishness, or hedonistic rather than properly aesthetic pleasure.

Other remarks by Ruskin suggest this possible overemphasis, especially when he places the value of a painting on its power to evoke the spectator's imagination. For example, he compares Fra Angelico's _The Annunciation_ with Tintoretto's painting on the same theme, praising the latter for its imaginative, suggestive power, but of the former he says, "All is exquisite in feeling, but not inventive nor imaginative."[51]

Secondly, Ruskin believes that only some _painters_ possess imaginative power, e.g. Turner and Tintoretto, which enable them to perceive and reveal "Divine essence" through art.[52]

> Now, in all these instances, let it be observed that the virtue of imagination is its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power), a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things.[53]

The relevatory power of the artist's imagination is connected to the penetrative imagination because, "The power of every picture depends on the penetration of the imagination into the TRUE nature of the thing represented...".[54] By contrast, the unimaginative painter only possesses a skill for composition.[55] Though he recognizes the importance of imagination to the artist, he may be guilty of overemphasis in this context as well.

While imagination is not the core of Ruskin's theory of art as it is for Coleridge, he devalues many important works on the basis of lacking imaginative content. This is limiting, and moreover, his account of imagination becomes more difficult to grasp when described in connection with artistic genius. On this point, there are rough similarities between artistic genius in Kant, poetic genius in Coleridge, and the artist's imaginative power in Ruskin.

On the other hand, Ruskin's ideas on imagination illustrate some of the ways in which we exercise imagination in response to paintings, and here his description of imagination's powers is more coherent.

Collingwood

In Book II of Principles of Art Collingwood sets out to define the terms he uses in Book I where he expounds

his view of art as imaginative expression. Here he develops a theory of imagination after considering the background of the concept in philosophers from Descartes to Kant. Briefly, this theory is closely tied to Kant's, and he notes this similarity when he says that imagination "is an 'indispensible function' for our knowledge of the world around us."[56] The main difference between the two accounts lies in the terms Collingwood uses, namely "feeling" to indicate any kind of sensation, and "consciousness" to indicate the power which modifies and converts "crude feelings" (sense impressions) into imaginations (ideas). Imagination forms the idea from the feeling, though to carry this out it is dependent on the power of consciousness, which is an activity of thought. In this sense then, all experience is permeated by imagination.

Because this theory of imagination provides the foundation of Collingwood's view of art as imaginative expression, we should bear in mind that "artistic imagination" has a special meaning for him.

Collingwood puts forward the view that aesthetic experience, artistic activity, is the expression of emotion, and he describes this expression as a "total imaginative activity" which he in turn calls art.[57] This "total imaginative activity" is rooted in his theory of imagination. The following passage illustrates this connection:

> Every imaginative experience is a sensuous experience raised to the imaginative level by an act of consciousness; or, every imaginative experience is a sensuous experience together with a consciousness of the same. Now the aesthetic experience is an imaginative experience. It is wholly and entirely imaginative; it contains no elements that are not imaginative, and the only power which can generate it is the power of the experient's consciousness.[58]

Like Ruskin, Collingwood regards imagination as necessary in the aesthetic response. But Collingwood furthermore maintains that art necessarily depends on the imagination of both the artist and the beholder.

He defines art as a product of imagination when he says that a

> ...work of art need not be what we should call a real thing. It may be what we call an imaginary thing....But a work of art may be completely created when it has been created as a thing whose only place is in the artist's mind.[59]

He goes on to say that "Music does not consist of heard noises, paintings do not consist of seen colours, and so forth."[60] These remarks have tagged Collingwood as an originator (with Croce) of the Ideal Theory which asserts that the creation of an artwork is basically complete in the artist's imaginative conception of it. It is unfortunate that Collingwood took his psychological model of artistic expression so far because there is a variety and richness of ideas in Principles of Art which has

perhaps been neglected. Besides some of the interesting distinctions he makes between art and craft, art and amusement art, and imagination and make-believe, his examples of the imaginative component of artistic activity are revealing.

Some of Collingwood's examples on imaginative activity can be useful for understanding the connection between imagination and art, but they must be bracketed off from some of his more questionable views. In what follows, I will consider his theory of art as imagination and claim that, firstly, it offers insight into how artists use imagination to create works of art, but that it is weakened by a tendency to devalue the critical and often spontaneous process of art-making as it is carried out through a particular medium. Secondly, I argue that Collingwood places artistic activity into a psychological framework which he does not explain sufficiently. The result is a vagueness in his theory stemming from an insufficient connection between imagination and expression. I conclude by asserting that, despite these weaknesses, his ideas support my argument for the connection between art and imagination.

His remarks about music deserve particular attention because his view of art as imagination is, I think, more tenable in respect of this art form. The musician's imagination, in my view, must be a skilled one (which does not mean that musicians require visual imagery, but

that they have the ability to imagine melodies and harmonies). In fact, the orchestrator may have to be even more skilled in order to imagine combinations of sounds and ways in which to arrange them.

But some musicians work step by step, playing every sound on a piano as they hear it, or transcribing that sound each time into notation. Collingwood, by contrast, claims that any tune composed by a musician is fully composed in the musician's mind and complete in that conception. He claims that the notation of a piece is not the music at all, "The actual making of the tune is something that goes on in his head, and nowhere else."[61] He also says that though music is written down in notation that, "...the musician's tune is not there on the paper at all. What is on the paper is not music, it is only musical notation."[62] Collingwood is correct in this because it is only the subsequent playing of the tune from the notation which, as a combination of audible sounds, is a piece of music. However, it can be claimed that musical notation is secondary to the musician's creative process but it does <u>complete</u> the process, making the tune permanent, as it were. Also, it is unlikely that what a musician "hears" as a completed work in his head will match what is written in notation and then played.

Collingwood seems to say that the actual art-making itself is an activity which is carried out by the artist's imagination, and therefore such creation need

not depend on a medium for its completion. However, I do not think that he means to say that the artistic medium is irrelevant and unnecessary to art. Though his ideas are open to the first interpretation, he does at least acknowledge how the imaginative experience and the art-product come together.

> There are two experiences, an inward or imaginative one called seeing and an outward or bodily one called painting, which in the painter's life are inseparable, and form one single indivisible experience, an experience which may be described as painting imaginatively.[63]

But it is not clear just what he means by "painting imaginatively". Elsewhere he describes the artist's experience as "psycho-physical", however this does not entirely clarify the nature of imaginative expression.

Blocker sheds some light on this issue by approaching Collingwood's view as fixed in his theory of imagination. Blocker offers a positive reading, asserting that the merits of his view lie in the insistence on the artist's expression as embodied in and inseparable from the actual work of art. We can thus only grasp this private experience through the external, public medium.[64] Evidence for this can be found in Collingwood's chapter, "The Artist and the Community", where he discusses the difference between merely looking at a subject aesthetically and the act of painting it.

> The painter puts a great deal more into his experience of the subject than a man who

merely looks at it; he puts into it, in addition, the whole consciously performed activity of painting....he records there not the experience of looking at the subject without painting it, but the far richer and in some ways very different experience of looking at it and painting it together.[65]

Collingwood attaches a particular significance to the artistic medium, and here, lifts it out of its role as a mere facility for artistic expression.

But in spite of this, Collingwood perhaps exaggerates the role of imagination and the inner experience of the artist. Returning to music, there is another feature of it which Collingwood overlooks. A complicated tune can exist in one's imagination but the performance of a notated piece is inevitably an <u>interpretation</u> of the composer's original work. If Collingwood used classical music as his model, it is the case that many works are played true to the notation though even here the conductor reads into the piece something more than what is notated. A better example against Collingwood's claim is the case of improvisational jazz in which every performance of a standard piece is a new and original composition in itself. Every improvised performance of "I've Got Rhythm" is therefore an original composition so that it is the performance of it which is the work of art (though based on Gershwin's original tune). Collingwood might have responded that however spontaneous the improvisation, an imaginative idea of the musician's

improvising precedes the actual playing of the instrument. This could be true, however implausible it seems, but the question remains of how we can know whether the musician did have such an imaginative experience; a question even the musician may be unable to answer. By placing the creation of a work in the artist's mind, Collingwood grounds art in a psychological framework of which we can know very little.

My views on the imaginative activity in the aesthetic response are also, to an extent, psychologically based. However, I am not putting forward a psychological model for the aesthetic response, but rather trying to elucidate the ways in which we approach works imaginatively. At least in the case of the beholder, we need not be concerned with questions as to the source of the artist's creativity; whether it is subconscious or not; how the actual conceptual process takes place, etc. The work of art is simply before the beholder, and it is that alone to which the spectator, listener or reader responds. What Collingwood says about the _beholder's_ imagination is for that reason more convincing.

For Collingwood, it is through imagination that we take in works of art in the first place.

> When we listen to a speaker or singer, imagination is constantly supplying articulate sounds which actually our ears do not catch. In looking at a drawing in pen or pencil, we take a series of roughly parallel lines for the tint of a shadow.[66]

On music he says that, "The music to which we listen is not heard sound, but that sound as amended in various ways by the listener's imagination, and so with the other arts."[67] Collingwood is advocating his own version of a theory of imaginative perception, linked to his theory of imagination. Imagination is the tool used by the percipient to first recognize a representation, and then to actively experience it by "always supplementing, correcting and expurgating" what is perceived. (In fact he believes that we use imagination to supplement our perceptions of ordinary objects as well as to supplement our perceptions of art objects.) Works of art are only experienced as a "total imaginative activity" through which both artist and percipient express emotions; hence his idea of art as both imaginative and expressive.[68]

I disagree with Collingwood's claim that all art requires imaginative perception namely because imagination is not necessary to appreciate all works of art. Aside from this, Collingwood's idea of imagination's capacity to supplement our perceptual experience of art works is relevant to the kinds of imaginative activity I have identified above. His theory is perhaps most interesting when it points to specific ways in which we use imagination. In the following quote he describes imaginative "tactile and motor" projection:

> ...what we get from looking at a picture
> is not merely the experiencing of seeing

> and partly imagining, certain visible objects; it is also, and in Mr. Berenson's opinion more importantly, the imaginary experience of certain complicated muscular movements.[69]

The imaginative experience of putting oneself into a picture does amount to imagining oneself moving about a depicted scene. It is an experience in which the "...'plaine' of the picture' disappears...and we go through it...", metaphorically speaking.[70] On poetry he is also specific, describing poetic imagery of sounds, sights, "tactile and motor experiences", and scents which the poem brings before our minds.[71]

Finally, though he may give too much of a role to imagination in aesthetic experience, he understands the way in which imagination can be said to be present to some degree in all experience. I do not advocate the view that imaginative activity is the core of human experience, but I have indicated through my spectrum model that we can assign imagination a role in the synthesis of sense perceptions into knowledge, and recognize a connection between this use and the more active ones such as visualizing, in particular the visualizing we might exercise in response to a work of art. Collingwood's theory brings to the fore the sense in which imagination in artistic expression is rooted in a use of imagination in understanding. The upshot of this

is a continuity between the uses of imagination in aesthetic and non-aesthetic experience.

6.7 Imaginative Experience in Art and Life

In this section, I move from imaginative activity in the aesthetic response to return to the relationship between imagination in aesthetic and ordinary experience. Here I emphasize that there is no fundamental difference between aesthetic and non-aesthetic imagination (though I have asserted that imagination is most free when contemplating objects aesthetically or interpreting works of art). This continuum in our concept and use of imagination reflects a more general continuum between art and life. In the philosophy of both John Dewey and Ronald Hepburn this continuum is at the heart of their aesthetic ideas.

Dewey

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey recognizes this continuity in his criticism of the concept of "disinterestedness" in aesthetics. Though the concept has been misinterpreted in Kant, there is still a tendency in aesthetics to brand aesthetic experience as subjective. Aesthetic experience as subjective is marked mainly by an individual's aesthetic contemplation of an object rather

than an interest in what we can learn from it. Dewey objects to the implications of this portrayal of aesthetic experience, maintaining that it is not disinterested contemplation but "attentive observation" in which we are not detached from the object: "There is no severance of self, no holding it aloof, but fullness of participation."[72] In his treatment of aesthetic interest he integrates aesthetic experience into ordinary experience such that aesthetic experience, though still a heightened sensuous and imaginative experience, is not detached or disinterested.

The continuity between art and life can be explained through the imaginative component of artistic activity. Dewey reveals this continuity in his discussion of how imagination constitutes the "human contribution" (the psychological aspects and elements of aesthetic experience) to art, and how the inventive activity of imagination is responsible for both technical and artistic invention. On the "human contribution" Dewey asserts that

> Possibilities are embodied in works of art that are not elsewhere actualized; this _embodiment_ is the best evidence that can be found of the true nature of imagination.[73]

Imagination presents new possibilities, a departure from the ordinary or habitual, through works of art. For the artist, this means interpreting nature in new and inventive ways through imagination's powers. This is

reminiscent of Kant's idea of imagination's ability to create a "second nature" through works of art.

As to the value and effect of putting imagination to use in this way, Dewey says:

> "Revelation" in art is the quickened expansion of experience. Philosophy is said to begin in wonder and end in understanding. Art departs from what has been understood and ends in wonder.[74]

To illustrate Dewey's ideas, consider an artist painting a still life picture. The artist perceives the bowl of fruit as composed of different fruits of various shapes, sizes and colours. When painting the scene the artist might try to capture the essence of the fruit by emphasizing its sensuous characteristics through the paint, transforming an ordinary scene into a sensuous experience for the spectator. As spectators, we see the fruit as a conception arising out of the artist's imaginative and creative powers; a conception which causes us to appreciate an otherwise typical scene in a novel way.

Art objects as well as created objects are products of imagination in the sense that imagination is used by both artist and inventor.

> Some existent material was perceived in the light of relations and possibilities not hitherto realized when the steam engine was invented.[75]

But while this creativity is common to technical and artistic invention, the imaginative component of the latter is the function of the work such that it

> ...operates imaginatively rather than in the realm of physical existences... The formed matter of esthetic experience directly _expresses_, in other words, the meanings that are imaginatively evoked..."[76]

For Dewey, then, imagination is the source of human creativity whether for the ends of art or not. But the special imaginative capacity for approaching things in new and striking ways is that which sets art apart from ordinary objects and allows the percipient to grasp the imaginative content of works of art. For example, an artist might imagine a tree as shaped like a wizard. The artist then paints the tree in a way which suggests this particular shape to the percipient. Through this visual suggestion, the spectator might interpret the tree as a great, cloaked wizard who represents the mystical powers of nature. Dewey, like Kant, Ruskin, and Collingwood, remarks that our imaginative experience must be tied to the object itself so that the experience is "saturated with qualities of the object."[77] In the tree example, the artist provides a visual cue for the imagination, so that the imaginative experience arising from our perception of the picture is directly tied to the picture.

Imagination links art and life through its activity of spiriting us away from the real toward new experiences

which help us to understand our own situation. We can learn something through the imaginative activity which characterizes aesthetic experience. This assertion might provide support for the argument that we should endeavor to explore works of art imaginatively whenever possible in order to discover as much as we can, though this need not relegate the work to a mere prop for knowledge.

Hepburn

In his article "Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity", Hepburn tackles the possibility of truth in art and the relevance of the subjective nature of aesthetic experience to knowledge. In my reading of Hepburn's argument, imagination seems to be the key to our understanding of the "truth" of the work itself.

> The spectator is prompted not only to react, but also (importantly) to act. If he is to appropriate the insight, the 'truth', his mind has to make leaps-leaps from individual episode, painted figure or object, musical phrase, to larger and different realities, and to discern the bearing of one upon the other.[78]

He gives a concrete example of this in the "perceptual leap from smudges and blobs of paint to the depth and brilliance of a sunlit landscape."[79] I interpret this leap of mind as enabled by imagination. If this is true, then imagination enhances our interpretation of a work of

art through its recognitional and explorative activity, thereby revealing something about the subject to us. Hepburn's ideas are reminiscent of Ruskin's relevatory, artistic imagination, and the active participation of the spectator's imagination. Also, the "perceptual leap" echoes Collingwood's perceptual imagination in which it fills out the images we see on the canvas. The concrete images of poems and the symbolic images of paintings stir imagination into this activity.

Our understanding of the meaning of a work extends from the recognition of what the images represent to a revelation of something about the world or about human nature. Through our imaginative concentration we appreciate ideas in the work but we may also learn something new. Kant expressed this in his idea of the expression of rational ideas through aesthetic ideas, though he may not have agreed that we _learn_ from the rational ideas expressed in art. I do not think that we should treat art as a "message-bearer", but art is not always a pretty picture for delightful contemplation. Art undoubtedly challenges the imagination. Through imaginative reflection we can discover the meaning of a work and its relevance to life.

Notes

References to Kant's Critique of Judgement are indicated by a page number in the translation by J.C. Meredith (Oxford University Press, 1952), and by the section and page number in Kant's gesammelte Schriften, vol. 5 (Royal Prussian Academy, now the German Academy of Sciences, Berlin, 1902-).

1 I am primarily concerned with the role of imagination in the appreciation of art rather than in the appreciation of natural beauty.

2 P. Kivy, The Seventh Sense (Burt Franklin, 1976), 86.

3 Kivy, 28.

4 J. Engell, The Creative Imagination (Harvard University Press, 1981), ix.

5 I do not interpret this mode as make-believe in the way that Kendall Walton characterizes the experience of the representational arts (see his recent Mimesis as Make-Believe). I distinguish my view from his by questioning his claim that we approach works of art as imaginary objects, "props" for our own games of make-believe which he classifies as a kind of imagining.

6 F. Sparshott, Theory of the Arts (Princeton University Press, 1982), 140.

7 Sparshott, 139.

8 The view stated here is directly opposed to Formalism. Any imaginative contemplation or indeed any kind of contemplation which reaches beyond an appreciation of a picture's formal properties- colour, form, composition- is considered to be an inappropriate response by Clive Bell.

9 I. Kant, The Critique of Judgement, trans. J.C. Meredith (Oxford University Press, 1952), 41 (Ak. 1, 203).

10 P. Guyer, Kant and the Claims of Taste (Harvard University Press, 1979), 86.

11 Kant, 58 (Ak. 9, 217).

12 E. Schaper, Studies in Kant's Aesthetics (Edinburgh University Press, 1979), 73.

[13] Kant, 86 (Ak. General Remark, 240).

[14] Kant, 86 (Ak. General Remark, 241).

[15] Kant, 62 (Ak. 10, 220).

[16] Guyer, 88.

[17] Guyer, 90.

[18] Guyer, 106 (from the *First Introduction* of the *Critique of Judgement*, VIII, Ak., 224).

[19] Guyer, 94.

[20] Schaper, 66.

[21] Kant, 32 (Ak. Introduction, 191).

[22] Guyer, 279.

[23] Guyer, 280.

[24] Schaper, 57.

[25] Kant, 184 (Ak. 51, 320).

[26] Kant, 167 (Ak. 45, 307).

[27] Kant, 172 (Ak. 48, 311).

[28] Kant, 174 (Ak. 48, 312).

[29] Kant, 175 (Ak. 49, 312).

[30] Kant, 176 (Ak. 49, 314).

[31] Kant, 176 (Ak. 49, 314).

[32] Kant, 176-7 (Ak. 49, 314).

[33] Kant, 177 (Ak. 49, 315).

[34] Kant, 177-8 (Ak. 49, 315).

[35] Kant, 180 (Ak. 49, 317).

[36] Kant, 183 (Ak. 50, 319).

37. H.G. Blocker, "Kant's Theory of the Relationship of Imagination and Understanding in Aesthetic Judgements" *British Journal of Aesthetics* 5 (1): 37-45, January 1965, p. 44.

[38] Kant, 178 (Ak. 49, 315).

[39] Blocker, 42.

[40] Kant, 178 (Ak. 49, 316).

[41] H.G. Blocker, "Another Look at Aesthetic Imagination" Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 30 (4): 529-36, Summer 1972, p. 535.

[42] S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, I, in J. Engell and W.J. Bate (eds.), The Collected Works of Samual Taylor Coleridge, 7 (Princeton University Press, 1983), lxxii.

[43] Coleridge, 304.

[44] Coleridge, 305.

[45] M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (Oxford University Press, 1960), 176.

[46] R. Kearney, The Wake of Imagination (Hutchinson, 1988), 184.

[47] J. Ruskin, The Stones of Venice, ed. J. Morris (Faber and Faber, 1981), 233.

[48] J. Ruskin, Modern Painters, ed. D. Barrie (Andre Deutsch, 1987), 242.

[49] Modern Painters, 269-70.

[50] Modern Painters, 259.

[51] Modern Painters, 259.

[52] P. Fuller, Theoria: Art and the Absence of Grace (Chatto & Windus, 1988), 44.

[53] Modern Painters, 266.

[54] Modern Painters, 266.

[55] Modern Painters, 251.

[56] R.G. Collingwood, Principles of Art, (Clarendon Press, 1938), 275.

[57] Collingwood, 275.

[58] Collingwood, 306.

[59] Collingwood, 130.

[60] Collingwood, 141.

[61] Collingwood, 134.

[62] Collingwood, 135.

[63] Collingwood, 304-5.

[64] "Another Look at Aesthetic Imagination", 532.

[65] Collingwood, 308.

[66] Collingwood, 142.

[67] Collingwood, 143.

[68] Collingwood, 151.

[69] Collingwood, 147.

[70] Collingwood, 145.

[71] Collingwood, 147.

[72] M. Rader and B. Jessup, Art and Human Values (Prentice-Hall, 1976), 69.

[73] J. Dewey, Art as Experience (Milton, Balch, 1934), 268.

[74] Dewey, 270.

[75] Dewey, 273.

[76] Dewey, 273.

[77] Dewey, 276.

[78] R.W. Hepburn, "Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity" Journal of Aesthetic Education, 24 (2): 185-98, 1990, p. 186.

[79] Hepburn, 186.

CHAPTER 7: IMAGINATION AND PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION

7.1 Elliott and Savile on the Imaginative Response

Few aesthetic theories would deny the place of imagination in the experience of art. Many artists expect the spectator to use imagination in contemplating a work, and many artworks evoke an imaginative response from the spectator. I have explained the role of imagination in aesthetic experience in Chapter 6, but in this chapter I would like to focus on the role of imagination in pictorial representation. Specifically, I will examine the operations of the imagination in the spectator's response to pictures, and to what extent imagination adds to or enhances the spectator's appreciation of pictures. My explanation of the role of the imagination for understanding, interpreting, and appreciating pictures includes an argument for the relevance of imagination to the spectator's response. The ideas of both R.K. Elliott and Anthony Savile are particularly useful in defending the place of imagination in pictorial experience.

In Chapter 3, I argued that Wollheim's theory of pictorial representation, "seeing-in", does not provide an adequate explanation of how pictures represent their subjects, nor how we experience pictures. The concept of "twofoldness" which defines the experience of "seeing-in", while plausible, is not explained fully enough by

Wollheim to elucidate the nature of pictorial representation. I claimed that we cannot understand pictorial representation as merely a visual experience, which is the primary way in which Wollheim explains pictorial experience. Though Wollheim does acknowledge the use of imagination in the spectator's response, he limits the use of imagination to a few kinds of pictures by particular artists (since they are, he claims, created with the intention of evoking imaginative activity in the spectator). His "central" and "acentral" imagining are useful terms for explaining what it means to imagine "from within" a picture and "from without", but his discussion of imagination in this context generally sets parameters for the use of imagination. Instead of explaining the various ways in which imagination is often essential to our very understanding of many kinds of pictures, Wollheim restricts its use, in case the free rein of imagination detracts from our appreciation of the work itself.

R.K. Elliott's article, "Imagination in the Experience of Art" and Anthony Savile's book, _Aesthetic Reconstructions_, both present strong arguments for the relevance of imagination to the experience of art. They concentrate on the imagination's engagement with paintings, and to what extent it is free in its engagement. While it remains a separate question whether or not the spectator can control his or her imaginative

experience or set imagination free at will, it is undeniable that we do use imagination to some degree in the contemplation of artworks. Both Elliott and Savile hold this view, but Elliott calls for complete freedom of the imagination, even to the extent of fantastic imaginings. On the other hand, Savile argues that an imaginative response is only appropriate when it is under the control or, in a sense, directed by the artist.

Elliott

While Elliott's view is appealing for the possibilities it offers to the spectator's imaginative involvement and enjoyment of a painting, a sense of the work itself may be lost. On the other hand, limiting imaginative experience to the expectations of the artist may be unrealistic and may repress the imaginative activity which can enhance the spectator's overall aesthetic experience of the work.

Elliott sets out to prove that the aesthetic objectivist's argument against imagination in the experience of art is unfounded. The objectivist argues that the spectator should only be concerned with the objective features of the work and nothing external to that. In a painting this will consist almost exclusively of its formal features like lines and colours. On this view, attention to what is not grasped in the perception

of the picture leads to a private experience which is not related to what is depicted by the artist. The imagination is the culprit, according to the objectivist, because its activity may distract the spectator's attention away from the images perceived in the picture. Elliott argues that perception and imagination work together in the spectator's experience of a painting. In response to Chagall's The Falling Angel, he writes

> An image of movement comes momentarily into contact with the depicted angel, but he [the spectator] cannot hold it there long enough to be quite sure that it was ever present at all. Imaginal attention has involved him in the ecstasies of the represented time, but he is still bound by perception to a static object. A sort of struggle ensues between the real and the imaginal for possession of the visual impression.[1]

"Imaginal attention" involves both perception and imagination. The spectator must continue perception of the picture while allowing the imagination freedom to experience the images. Throughout this experience, visual attention is continuous so that the spectator continues concentrating on what the picture rather than daydreaming. This point becomes more important when Elliott suggests that the spectator may even allow him/herself to be "spirited away" which is to be involved with the picture without identifying with anything actually depicted in it. Through intense concentration on the picture, the spectator can conjure up further images

which enhance the depicted images. The new images are not depicted, they exist only for the individual, yet they are related to what is perceived in the picture. For example, one can imagine the action following what is depicted in Grünewald's The Buffeting (also called The Mocking of Christ). The figure of Christ is about to be dealt a heavy blow by a figure whose arm is raised with his hand in a fist. The action of fists falling on the helpless figure can be imagined with little effort.

Furthermore, Elliott claims that the spectator's "imaginal self" projects itself into the picture's world wherein the spectator identifies with the figure about to strike Christ.[2] Here imaginative projection involves the spectator in an activity which extends beyond visual perception. Elliott's explanation of how visual perception and imagination work together is succinct. The spectator's visual attention remains on the figures in the picture while he or she imaginatively identifies with the action therein.

> In some sense an image of a blow came into contact with what was seen, but it was achieved by adding to it an imaginal dimension of inwardness, thus circumventing the need to get a change into the visual impression.[3]

Imagining can coincide with visual attention, in fact both are often dependent on each other for their success.

While this kind of response is natural (we might react similarly if faced with such impending action in

real life), Elliott takes the imaginative response a step further wherein the spectator actually creates new images. These new images are relevant to what is depicted since they originate in the spectator's intense concentration on the picture, yielding a richer experience. The experience may be enhanced by the imagination's activity, but it is unlikely, I think, that direct attention to the picture itself will continue. The spectator may still be concentrating, but probably on images which may no longer be related (and only causally connected) to the picture. The implication of being "spirited away" would seem to be just that: spirited *away* from the picture. Elliott is right in claiming that concentration may coincide with an imaginative response. However, while he acknowledges the possibility of concentration shifting away from the picture itself, he does not sufficiently address this problem. It is argued that the spectator attends to the picture even in a state of rapture:

> ...the state of rapture is not a progressive drifting away from the work. It seems to have a double movement: an expansive moving out from the work along the lines of relevance, and a turning back upon the work which concentrates the additional ideas and images around it like a nimbus.[4]

A state of rapture can be a relevant response to a painting, and the work should be judged accordingly. If the spectator interprets a painting and responds to its

images to such an extreme, the painting has at least engaged the spectator's attention and moved him/her. But, I think, the most that can be said about the connection between the depicted images and the state of the spectator is that the images _affected_ the response. Whether or not the state of rapture is appropriate depends on how intimately related this state is to the picture- however, this relationship is not easily defined. In any case, Elliott thinks that this kind of response is appropriate because he claims that imagination obeys a rule of relevance. In particular, it is the fanciful imagination which is "orderly" so as not to detract from the work.[5]

So on Elliott's view the imagination may enhance our appreciation of the picture without diminishing our aesthetic experience. In fact, imagining which is related to the work can result in _more_ concentration, hence more interest in the work.[6] It is the spectator's responsibility to control the imaginative response, but even if under control, can he or she also allow it the freedom required to reach the state of rapture or the spiriting away that Elliott refers to? As long as such control is determined by the spectator, there is a conflict between keeping imagination in check and giving it free rein.

Savile

By contrast, Savile suggests that the imagination may be given free rein as long as it is under the _artist's_ control. The artist controls the spectator's response through the images presented, which Savile argues are created with an intention that we can guess and sometimes know. This limits the role of fantasy in the imaginative response so that when a spectator becomes involved in a fantasy, it enhances the experience only if the artist requires this for a proper interpretation of the picture. The fantasy is an appropriate response as long as it does not lead the spectator away from the work and into a private experience irrelevant to the represented or unrepresented content of the picture.

Savile comments on fantasy in his analysis of Gotthold Lessing's _Laocoon_ or _On the limits of Painting and Poetry_. Lessing argues that an imaginative response to pictures should be cultivated because it keeps the art alive for us; the imagination makes the work fresh for the spectator even after repeated viewings of the same picture. Lessing believes that the imagination is engaged by paintings when, for example

> We tremble beforehand, about to see Medea at her cruel deed, and our imagination goes out far beyond everything that the painter could show us at this terrible moment.[7]

Lessing is concerned with the emotional appeal of

pictures, and it is the images that the spectator sees which have the power to engage the imagination. Of painting he writes:

> Now that alone is significant and fruitful which gives free play to the imagination. The more we see, the more must we be able to add by thinking. The more we add thereto by thinking, so much more can we believe ourselves to see.[8]

On the premise that works of art evoke imaginative activity, Savile describes how the imagination works at different levels in its interaction with a painting. The purpose of his description is to explain what he thinks Lessing means by the use of imagination by the spectator. Through his examination of Lessing's views, he provides a clear and detailed explanation of the role of imagination in the spectator's response. The context of Lessing's work to which Savile is responding is narrative art, in particular, paintings. Therefore, on his view, these modes of imagination may only be applicable to narrative pictures, but I will argue that much of what he says can be applied to other types of paintings as well.

Savile is careful to emphasize two features of the spectator's imagination at each level of its interaction with a picture. In its activity, the imagination must be checked while at the same time allowed the freedom required for a full experience of the work, and he recognizes the paradox between control and freedom of the imagination, taking control to be the more important

activity. Fantasy can lead to an inappropriate response to a picture so imagination must coexist with attention to the work. It must resist (through the spectator's will) becoming so free that it actually detracts from the work, perhaps causing a misunderstanding of the representation. By contrast, when applied prudently its activity can add to our overall appreciation of the work. Savile is sceptical of responses involving fantasy:

> ...where phantasy is encouraged by a work of art and is of the kind controlled by the artist, it is not something that speaks in favour of the work qua art. We think it too weak at a certain point to hold our attention in its own right, or else we see it as implicitly abandoning pretensions to artistic consideration altogether, and serving some more dubious end. In either case we regard the invitation to this exercise of imagination as a defect and not a strength.[9]

While I agree with Savile, I am also sympathetic to Elliott's view. Pictures will not always evoke fantasy and fantasy will not be the appropriate response to all pictures, but a response which involves fantasy need not detract from the work qua art. Also, however, the problem remains of how to distinguish clearly an appropriate response from one which is not directly concerned with the picture's content. I will turn to Savile's description of imaginative activity before addressing that question.

Savile sketches out three levels or modes of imagination in its interaction with a painting- the

exploratory, projective and ampliative levels. At these levels, the imagination is "fantasy-resistant", yet more freedom is allowed at each of the different levels. Different kinds of narrative pictures call for different levels, and it depends on the picture as to which level will be used by the spectator. Savile emphasizes that not all pictures will evoke imaginative activity, and it is often only at the artist's (intentional) invitation that a picture will evoke (and sometimes require) the role of imagination.

7.2 Exploratory Imagination

The exploratory imagination facilitates the spectator's initial recognition and interpretation of the images in the picture. The spectator explores the images on the canvas in order to understand what they represent and how they come together to make up a unified composition. Savile offers the example of the exploratory imagination as it is applied to Goya's picture of a monk with a garrotte around his neck. It is not immediately apparent to the spectator that the garrotte is just that, but by exploring the image of the band around the neck together with the figure, we come to see that the monk is in fact dead, and the horrid nature of what is represented then dawns. Savile says:

> The shock we experience is delayed, and delayed because imagination (or less

> comittally, thought) has had to explore the possibilities in making sense of the signs, and had to travel beyond what it directly and immediately recognized.[10]

Here exploratory imagination is an important ingredient in our contemplation of the picture; without it we would not see the picture as representing a dead monk and would therefore have an incomplete understanding of the picture (we might even misread the picture altogether).

It is essential for the understanding of some pictures that we imaginatively explore what the images might represent- like putting together the pieces of a puzzle. Narrative pictures seem to be particularly suited for such explorative activity. In epic scenes such as Poussin's *The Triumph of David* and *The Plague at Ashdod*, we must both visually and imaginatively explore the various figures and their actions in order to piece together the story portrayed and how it relates to the literary sources which have inspired these paintings. Some pictures (besides the narrative pictures with which Savile is primarily concerned) demand imagination for us to see even what the images are of, and then how they are related to the other images in the picture. We can imagine obvious examples, such as surrealist pictures whose meaning is not evident until one is able to see how the wierd images represent or symbolize things we can recognize. For example, almost any of Magritte's pictures take some figuring out in order to appreciate them

properly. Examples in more traditionally representational works are also numerous. The red blobs of paint in many of Constable's landscapes are unrecognizable as depicting anything at all, but with the help of imagination we can understand these red patches to represent clothing on a small figure in the picture.

What operates in these instances is not simply keen visual attention. It may not be enough just to see the red patch: <u>seeing</u> the patch is essential to the explorative imagination's task, but seeing the red patch only facilitates the task, it does not complete it. We may make an unconscious interpretation, but often we have to reflect imaginatively on what that red patch could be, and that involves coming up with different possibilities. In the Poussin examples, we imagine what the represented figures are doing, and in this reflective activity we may also understand their actions according to the narrative represented through the whole composition. This is the sense in which recognizing the images is like putting together a puzzle; by understanding the parts of the picture, we can come to an understanding of the whole.

We may more easily grasp explorative imagination by comparing it to a real life situation in which our imagination aids our understanding of things we see. For example, if I come upon a man holding a knife and leaning over what appears to be a murder victim, at first I take the leaning figure to be the murderer but on closer

inspection I realize that he is crying and that he resembles the victim. I consider the possibility that the crying man is a guilt-stricken murderer, but decide this is probably not the case and therefore conclude that he is probably a relative of the victim, perhaps his brother. The meaning of the event before me has become clear after some imaginative reflection on it. Here, as well as in the Constable example, the imagination is active in coming up with possibilities to solve the problem at hand.

Savile does not think that exploratory imagination adds to the represented content of a picture, rather it just helps us to discover what the artist has depicted. The artist controls the spectator's imagination through the images on the canvas.

> Once its aim is described as finding a full and rich account of what the painter has depicted, the result of our exploration is bound to the signs that the artist lays down.[11]

This kind of imaginative activity, while free in order to explore the images given, is tethered to the images that are there, so any additional images which are conjured up may not be appropriate to our interpretation of a picture. For example, when considering Constable's red patch, it would be a misreading of the picture to visualize my own modern, red jersey instead of imagining what the red jersey worn by the depicted figure might

look like. Constable would not have intended for me to imagine my own clothing and indeed it would have little to do with his representation. Savile is clear on this point: what we see in the picture guides the imagination's activity at this level. However, he does not sufficiently address the fact that we respond to pictures differently, imagining what we will. In fact, one might argue that my image of _my_ red jersey actually contributes to recognizing the red patch as a piece of clothing, and this in turn facilitates my recognition of the red and brown patch as a figure in the painting. Savile does recognize that different spectators bring their own individual cognitive stock to each particular picture they approach. This is a significant point to remember since we cannot expect the same response from every spectator.

Savile does not consider a serious objection to his claims about the artist's control. It is true that the artist can control the spectator's imagination to the extent that the artist's images evoke it in the first place. So, naturally, what the spectator imagines will be connected to the picture. However, the artist cannot control the spectator who thinks of her own red jersey, nor the spectator who uses a portrait with a likeness of her mother to give her the opportunity to indulge in a reminiscence. Savile has responded to this objection in a roundabout way. He has set limits for what imaginative

activity is relevant and what imaginative activity is not. If we use imagination in its exploratory mode to understand the picture according to the artist's intention, and we are successful in this goal, then not only has imagination been relevant, but it may have even facilitated our very understanding of the picture.

This problem remains for Savile: even if certain imaginative experiences can be identified as irrelevant to a picture, as spectators we may be unable to prevent irrelevant responses if the imagination is allowed freedom. Here we might return to Elliott's view that it is the spectator's responsibility to check the imagination so that it never moves too far away from and always returns to the represented or unrepresented content of the work.

7.3 Projective Imagination

At the projective level, the spectator can imagine what is not depicted but is otherwise represented in the picture. We use imagination in this way to project ourselves into the picture in order to get a sense of what is happening in the depicted events. Wollheim refers to this imaginative activity as becoming an "internal spectator". By projecting oneself into the picture, the spectator may play the role of an internal spectator, and even play the part of participant, as for example, the

soldier about to strike Christ in <u>The Buffeting</u>. In the latter case, the spectator imaginatively experiences the movement of raised fists as they follow through into blows. Here Savile cites Elliott's example, remarking that in identifying with the soldier, we imaginatively feel his pleasure. Furthermore, the projective imagination <u>adds</u> to our understanding and enjoyment of the work. By becoming participants in the action as it were, we add this experience to what we take in when we comtemplate the picture. Hence we come to understand the meaning of the images more fully and that in turn enriches our appreciation of the work.

Here the picture's images merely suggest a particular scenario, rather than depicting the action as such. It is left to the spectator's imagination to respond to the visual suggestion and to enter the picture's world. Savile claims that in this mode the projective imagination remains within the artist's control, and he argues that this response is allowable because such a response is both common and predictable.[12] Imagination is unspontaneous in this mode because we cannot help but respond to the picture by projecting ourselves into the scene in some capacity. Also, he claims that imagination is in a passive state because it only operates in response to cues in the form of the artist's images.

> ...it is relatively passive in its operation in that it has little choice in regard to its actual content up to the point at which predictability ends....As I

> have put it, the events that encourage projective imagination are in the clearest cases those which the mind is inclined to think through to its term.[13]

It is true that we will respond according to the artist's pictorial suggestions. This is certainly the case with Caspar David Friedrich's *Rückenfigur* paintings, those which typically depict a single figure (sometimes two or more) in a natural scene. Here there is usually a figure with his or her back turned to the viewer so that the figure in the picture is a spectator of the landscape, seascape, forest, or other scene. This positioning of the figure invites the external spectator to identify with it. Koerner, in his excellent book on Friedrich, writes:

> Carus cites the motif of a beholder *in* the picture: 'a solitary figure, lost in his contemplation of a silent landscape, will excite the viewer of the painting to think himself into the figure's place'. In this vision of staffage as a surrogate for the viewer, or as bridge between our world and the painted image, we can discern one obvious interpretation of Friedrich's *Rückenfigur*. Where classical staffage aspires to humanize landscape, inscribing it into a plot and determining its value according to an artificial hierarchy of types, the halted traveller works to naturalize us as viewers, enabling us to enter more fully into the landscape.[14]

Friedrich's *Woman before the Setting Sun* draws the spectator into the very position of the woman with her back turned and her arms stretched forward, beholding the splendour of the setting sun which throws a warm orange glow across the landscape. Here we simply project

ourselves into the place of the passive figure where we take part in no "action", just mere contemplation of the depicted scene. In this way we come to appreciate both the figure's point of view and are invited to contemplate the natural scene from a point of view different from that of external spectator.

With Friedrich's pictures we are passive spectators inside and outside of the picture, but this is not always the case when the projective imagination operates. In his account of this level of imagination Savile is open to the objection that despite the guidance of imagination through the artist's images, the free imagination may wander away from identification with the picture's characters (though this may not happen in the initial projective experience). In the Grünewald example, though it would be inappropriate to the representation to do so, I might imagine what happens after the blows are dealt, i.e. <u>even after</u> I have already added to my experience of the picture my imaginings of the action of the fists falling on Christ. I would agree with Savile that it would only be relevant to imagine the action as it follows through, but it might be natural, once projectively fixed in the scene, to imagine what happens next. We might even take part in the future events that we imagine will occur in the picture.

My point here is not that this would be the right way to respond to the picture, but only that this kind of

fantasy-response is both possible and unpredictable on the part of the artist. Savile justifies the projective imaginative response of The Buffeting by claiming that such a response is "sufficiently common and predictable".[15] But by extending that imaginative response, I have cited a possible imaginative experience which shows that the projective imagination is not "fantasy-resistant". This shows that the artist is not in complete control, so the spectator has a responsibility to check imagination's activity.

Also, at the projective level imagination is allowed more freedom and therefore becomes more active. Unlike Savile, I believe that the imagination is always active, some pictures causing it to become active to some degree, and some spectators controlling the imaginative response more or less than other spectators. By active I mean explorative and/or inventive as in the Constable example above. The imagination does not merely follow visual clues set out in the representation, making an automatic interpretation; it entertains possibilities for what is depicted.

7.4 Ampliative Imagination

According to Savile, the imagination is most free at the ampliative level. The ampliative imagination shares characteristics with the projective imagination, namely

that it is in the artist's control and is "fantasy-resistant", but it is active and enjoys more "inventive freedom" than the projective imagination. It is active in its capacity to control and intensify its activity depending on the images in the picture, but it is also active in imagining what is not shown in the picture. In other words, the spectator imagines things that are suggested by but not depicted in the picture. While this activity is also characteristic of projective imagination, the ampliative imagination does not place the spectator as passive or active participant in the picture.[16] Savile refers to Laocoon itself where the spectator imagines how the scene depicted in the picture came about. Savile argues that even this mode is in the artist's control, despite its spontaneous and inventive nature at this level.

> Ampliative imagination and thought is on a free rein within boundaries that the artist sets, and as its detailed elaboration is felt to enrich the work, so the working out of what those details should be within the imposed limits inevitably calls back the viewer to the canvas from which he started out.[17]

The spectator returns to the picture afterall, not distracted by the new images he or she experiences.

Ampliative imagination is particularly suited for narrative pictures and vice versa, but non-narrative pictures might also evoke this imaginative mode. A portrait of Napoleon on a horse looking courageous and

proud might lead the spectator to visualize Napoleon going bravely into battle on that very horse. One might continue visualizing Napoleon fighting, then emerging triumphant. This response, while freely imaginative, would be appropriate since imagining such deeds would be relevant to the stature of Napoleon presented in that particular portrait. Similarly, a picture of Napoleon after his defeat at Waterloo might conjure up images of a gruelling battle in which he emerges not as a hero, but as a dejected man. Here the images sparked by the particular portrayal of Napoleon help the spectator to see him in a certain light. In fact, this kind of response would fit in well with the artist's expectations.

Savile remarks that ampliative imagination is not evoked by all pictures, nor is it necessary to use it in order to understand every picture's content. However, he argues that there are instances in which it is all important to use this mode of imagination. Namely, in narrative works of art in which the story is "common knowledge" for spectators, it will be natural to use ampliative imagination to place the depicted scene into the story that is familiar. In this respect we appreciate the picture all the more because we can understand how it fits into the story. If the picture makes no sense in relation to this familiar story, then we may judge the representation to have failed in its task to tell us part

of a story. Savile's own example of Fra Angelico's _Annunciation_ illustrates this point. Part of the picture shows the Archangel forcing Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Savile suggests that

> It would probably be ground common to Lessing and the modern viewer to say that the presence of the Expulsion in the scene brings sharply to our mind a question that few other Annunciations do: "Why is it that man needs the promise of redemption that the angel brings to Mary?" Now _Lessing_ might go on...so we think of Eve's original acceptance and eating of the apple, of Cain's murder of his brother, of the adoration of the calf and so on, as we know them in the story, and thus imagination works graphically beyond the represented scene to enrich Angelico's painting as it presents itself to us.[18]

Following up this remark about how ampliative imagination adds to our appreciation of the work, Savile argues (I strongly agree with him on this point) that the use of imagination in this way (whether graphically or not) takes the spectator beyond the appearance of the picture to understanding its content in a deeper way. The understanding of a picture only begins with the visual experience of its surface; pictorial experience includes the activities of visual perception, thought, _and_ imagination.

At all three levels the imagination is free but Savile assumes that we can know what kind of response the artist expects, and that there is a correct response which matches the artist's intention, but it is unclear

how the spectator is kept in the artist's control. While the actual images in a picture determine imagination's own images in response to it, e.g. projective images, they may also cause an experience unrelated to the picture.

Besides this problem, Savile's view suggests a one-sided conception of art. The artist creates an artwork which is influenced by his or her cognitive stock. But although an artwork is created sometimes with a specific intention or a purpose related to the artist's expectations of the spectator, the spectator also brings his or her own cognitive stock and emotional state into the experience of a particular artwork. Savile suggests that an "informed spectator" will respond to a picture in a way which the artist expects. "Informed" here means that the spectator will have at least some knowledge of the narrative which forms the backdrop for the picture's images. But not all spectators are so informed. We cannot be certain that a picture's images wholly direct the spectator's response because the factors affecting it are so variable. With respect to this, Susan Feagin remarks that readers actively engage in imaging in response to literature, but that the author is at the "mercy" of them because the nature of their imaging is not entirely predictable.[19] What Savile requires of the spectator may therefore be unrealistic.

Furthermore, Savile implies that there is a correct

response to any particular picture. This view is problematic. Firstly, it is difficult if not impossible to identify the exact nature of the artist's intention. Even if we could ask the artist, he or she may not always be sure what the intention is. He may also fail to fulfil it or it may be inadequately described. Suppose for example that we decide to rely on a simplistic notion of the artist's intention, e.g. "to depict realistically a seascape in a storm". Are we then to expect that the spectator's experience will consist only in recognizing a seascape in a storm and that everything beyond this is is incorrect? Identifying a response as "correct" can be misleading, though we do notice mistaken interpretations. It is not a matter of a right or wrong response, but of a variation of responses which would be considered appropriate to the particular picture. Narrative paintings such as those with biblical or mythical allegories, paintings with action scenes, and paintings depicting fantastic fictional worlds such as those by Bosch, are all more likely to evoke imagination. By contrast, portraits, scenes of domestic life, and natural scenes are less likely to evoke imagination, though even these types of pictures can stir the spectator's imagination. Not all pictures will evoke any or all levels of imagination, but some will evoke one level, two levels, or we may use all three levels in our contemplation of a picture.[20]

7.5 The Relevance of Imagination in Pictorial Experience

In this section, I will examine some examples of relevant imaginative responses to discover whether or not limits must be set on them. Both Elliott and Savile have tried to tackle this problem. Both base their views on the belief that the imagination does interact with artworks and that its use can enhance the spectator's experience. The imagination must be free to add to this experience, but how free?

Elliott has tried to show what counts as an imaginative response, but he does not spell out how the imagination is to "work along lines of relevance". On Savile's view, the artist's images determine what the spectator experiences so in a sense the artist is responsible for it. Savile's exploratory, projective, and ampliative modes of the imagination explain various ways of engaging with pictures, but it is still uncertain which responses he would allow, apart from finding fantasy ill-suited for appreciating artworks. He does, however, put forward a valuable general guideline: imaginative activity is permitted in so far as it supplements the spectator's experience in a way that contributes to either a basic understanding of the images or to a further interpretation of them.

I agree with this, especially because it <u>justifies</u>

both the artist's appeal to the spectator's imagination and the use of free imaginative activity when viewing pictures. However, I think that further explanation is required for determining which responses are relevant to particular pictures.

It is difficult to pin down exactly when an imaginative response changes from appropriate to inappropriate, since there may be a grey area between the two. Though Feagin is concerned with imaging in response to literature, her remarks on the problem of relevance are applicable here.

> There are restrictions on what imaginings are appropriate but they do not include a unique identification of what is imaged: the written text makes it determinable though not determinate what imagings are relevant.[21]

Thus, we can possibly identify conditions under which an imaginative response would be relevant but there are no necessary conditions governing this response. As laid out by Savile, the imagination can move from a basic level of recognition to interpretation and a more active state in which it becomes inventive. My description of imaginative responses follows a similar line. There appears to be a range of responses reaching from a weaker to a stronger play of imagination. Various factors determine this range, including the artist's intention, the cognitive stock of the artist and spectator, and the type and subject-matter of the picture (e.g. stick figure,

naturalistic landscape, impressionist still life, narrative scene, portrait, etc.) Also, not all spectators imagine well or vividly, just as not all paintings evoke an imaginative response.

The basic interpretation of the images given may require little imagination in naturalistic or, alternatively, simple pictures. The simplest kind of picture to interpret might be a stick-figure, a house and a sun above.[22] But this is not to say that simple or even naturalistic pictures always require less imagination than, say, a surreal painting might. Beyond mere recognition, a still life painting may cause a stirring of imaginary sensations- smelling the citric aroma of a depicted orange or the taste of biting into a succulent peach. These responses are certainly appropriate because still life paintings, in addition to being an exercise in composition, tempt the spectator through realistic depiction.

At another level, the imagination may be required to decipher the activity in a picture (like Savile's explorative imagination). We may not <u>see</u> children playing in a village square if we cannot "see" a ball being thrown back and forth or caught (having been depicted as in mid-air). The spectator may also fill out the images perceived, for example, imagining what lies beyond the frame- where a river flows to in a landscape, or what the rest of a satin gown looks like in the portrait of a

seated woman. We place images on the edges of what is given and complete the picture for ourselves. This is a common reaction to a picture and can also be a conscious exercise by the spectator. It is to be encouraged as long as it supplements the painting's images with images which might have existed had the artist chosen to depict more.

Imagining what is happening in a picture is, I think, the most common active use of imagination. On seeing a Degas painting, one might imagine the movement of ballerinas and the sound of soft ballet shoes on a wooden floor. We often imagine the atmosphere- the feeling of mist and darkness in a Turner seascape. We can animate the busy activity in a painting of a market, village square or city street: the images come alive as we imagine the movement of passers-by, livestock, or the sounds of traffic.[23]

Also, we can imaginatively project ourselves into a picture. Recall the example of Las Meninas referred to in Chapter 3. While some pictures do strongly suggest such projection (Friedrich's pictures come to mind), others do not, but I believe that it is still acceptable to engage in this kind of exercise. For example, one might want to "enter" and explore the classical landscapes of Poussin or Lorrain. On the other hand, there are classical scenes which do not, in my view, engage much imagination if any. Some of Titian's pictures are possible examples. His The

Three Ages of Man is a study in composition, and the meaning of the images is clear from simple reflection on them. Understanding the images as depicting man at different times in his life may, however, require the use of explorative imagination.

It is worth noting the imaginative response of remembrance. Is it appropriate to treat a painting like a photograph; to inspire nostalgic recollections of a person, place or event in one's life? A portrait of an unknown subject might remind the spectator of a long lost love. This is often a natural response, and if the picture is appreciated for itself and at the same time acts as a catalyst for reflection, the response would not seem inappropriate. But if the spectator became completely detached, her attention shifting entirely to the painful recollection of a part of her life she spent years trying to forget, this would be inappropriate. Even if her attention returned to the portrait, part of her experience in viewing it could be considered irrelevant to the picture itself simply because she was thinking about someone not depicted by the artist. For example, she might be unable to see the unknown face as anyone other than her long lost love: she automatically projects this face onto the face in the picture. Such daydreaming should have no proper role in an imaginative response. On the other hand, some pictures, such as an English landscape, are meant to be nostalgic; an emotional

response, even if personal, can be relevant nonetheless.

Some pictures are suggestive of a sequence of events, suggestion being a cue for the imagination. The spectator is invited to complete the story (Savile's ampliative imagination). Who will be the victor in pictures of goddesses fighting wild beasts? The spectator may indeed become so engaged with the picture that it recreates all aspects of the fight- how it started, terrifying sounds, the climax, and the kill. We may empathize with the sufferers, feeling their fear and pain. The relevance of this response is clear since the imagination, though experiencing a kind of fantasy, is still involved in an interpretation of the images depicted in the picture; it grasps and plays with them.

The relevant imaginative responses which I have discussed range from the imagination as it is used for the basic interpretation of a picture to the spectator's imaginative projection into a scene. In fact, we respond to what we see in real life in much the same way as we do to pictures. What we see in real life prepares us for what we see in pictures and what we see in pictures prepares us for what we see in real life. We may, for example, use our imagination to make sense of what could have happened in a near accident, or perhaps a face in the crowd evokes images of another time and place. In this respect the imaginative response to pictures is both natural and common.

But what is the place of imagination in aesthetic experience? I would say that it is a tool, the use of which can lead to a more pleasurable experience and a positive judgement of the work itself. It adds to the visual experience and interpretation of pictures, and furthermore, in some cases, it be essential to grasping the meaning of a group of images. In general, it increases the spectator's involvement with the artwork.

Moreover, many paintings clearly invite the spectator to fantasize. Bosch depicted creatures and happenings that could only exist in our wildest dreams. Here, freeing the imagination to allow for fantasy has a definite purpose for the work. But although the use of a Bosch picture for indulging in horrific fantasies might relate the horror of the picture's world, such a fantasy might be more disturbing than the spectator would have expected. The imagination has interfered with the aesthetic experience by throwing the spectator into a nightmare. Those spectators who realize the power of their own imagination might turn away from Bosch's pictures. A free imagination has its dangers.[24]

The paradox remains then of how much freedom the imagination should be allowed. It is fair to say in response to Savile that fantasy can be part of a fruitful pictorial experience, and in response to Elliott, I have argued that the spectator must keep irrelevant imaginings in check wherever possible. An imagination unleashed

could lead to a misunderstanding of a work, and/or a response which leaves aesthetic considerations behind.

Notes

[1] R.K. Elliott, "Imagination in the Experience of Art" Philosophy and the Arts: Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, vol. 6., 1971-1972, (Macmillan, 1973), 89.

[2] Savile takes up the Grünewald example when he discusses the projective mode of imagination (see 7.3).

[3] Elliott, 90.

[4] Elliott, 101.

[5] Elliott, 101.

[6] Feagin cites Elliott on the value of imagination for increasing the involvement of the recipient with the work. (See S. Feagin, "Some Pleasures of Imagination" Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism XLIII: 41-55, Fall 1984.)

[7] G. Lessing, "Laocoon" in H.B. Nisbet, (ed.), German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Schiller, Goethe (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 68.

[8] Lessing, 67.

[9] Savile, 88.

[10] Savile, 71.

[11] Savile, 72.

[12] Savile, 77.

[13] Savile, 78.

[14] J. Koerner, Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape (Reaktion Books, 1990), 211.

[15] Savile, 77.

[16] Savile, 82.

[17] Savile, 88.

[18] Savile, 85.

[19] Feagin, 53.

[20] To emphasize a previous point, I think that all pictures require the use of imagination to grasp them as objects in the world. However the recognition and interpretation of a picture's images may not always require imagination to appreciate them properly.

[21] Feagin, 46.

[22] This idea, that imagination may not be evoked by such simple pictures, is similar to Walton's in Mimesis as Make-Believe (p. 296).

[23] Here I use the term "animating" to describe the act of imagining movement in still images. Elliott refers to the "Animistic Imagination" which can make us see, for example, St. Albans cathedral as a living animal: "The cathedral seems to acquire a bodily posture, life, and intelligence of some sort, august and brooding." (see "Imagination in the Experience of Art", p. 92).

[24] I do not make a sharp distinction between imagination and fantasy with the view that the imaginative response is relevant while fantasy is not. I regard fantasy as the most active and inventive mode of imagination. Taking this into account, some fantastic imaginings can be relevant while others can go too far.

CHAPTER 8: THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION

8.1 Introduction

I have argued that imagination has a role in the appreciation of art and have attempted to unravel the complexities involved in the imaginative response to pictures. The relevance of this activity has been questioned and evaluated by others as well as myself. In this chapter my argument will extend beyond a treatment of imaginative activity to an argument for the cultivation of the imaginative response. Not only do we use imagination when appreciating art, but we should use it to the best of our abilities where appropriate. I have already shown the value of this activity in Chapters 6 and 7, but some additional remarks are required in order to justify the development of our imaginative capacities in relation to art, namely pictures.

Pictorial experience cannot be defined by identifying a unique feature of it. Some necessary conditions might hold, such as seeing the picture under normal viewing conditions, but it is unrealistic to expect the spectator to respond to every picture using a prescribed set of "pictorial skills". It is my view that "seeing-in" and "seeing-as" cannot define nor even explain the nature of pictorial experience. The spectator's response consists in seeing the images in the picture, thinking about them,

and imagining things about the images. But imagination, while a significant part of many responses, is also not a necessary condition for appreciating pictures. Particular pictures are intended for imaginative exploration while others are not. Some may evoke the spectator's imagination without that intention, and the use of imagination would nevertheless be justifiable. Similarly, many spectators will choose to use only their perceptual capacities to read the picture, leaving aside thoughts or imaginings which are not required for interpreting it.

Moreover, the taste of the spectator may dictate which capacities are put to use. A spectator who dislikes a particular artist or genre will pass by these pictures, affording them little beyond a cursory glance; a bad painting might cause the same result. Unappealing pictures will fail to evoke the kind of perceptual curiosity necessary for a sustained contemplation of a work. It follows that pictures which interest spectators are more likely to evoke the thoughts and imaginings that lend themselves to a fuller interpretation of the work.

8.2 Justifying the Imaginative Response

With these factors continually effecting pictorial experience, can we ever prescribe the use of certain capacities for any particular picture? There are three related reasons that show when and why we should use

imagination for appreciating pictures: (1) some pictures are clearly intended for imagination; (2) imagination is essential to the "correct" interpretation of some pictures; (3) the use of imagination with any or all works increases the spectator's involvement with them.

Firstly, while we cannot always know what kind of response is expected by the artist, the images in a picture themselves can indicate how a spectator is expected to perceive a picture and the kinds of things he or she might say about it. The nature and composition of the images in a picture will also determine the way in which the spectator's imagination is evoked (if at all). Secondly, this imaginative activity may be essential to understanding the images as images of particular things. Although some pictures can generate different but equally valid interpretations, others generate only one interpretation which is appropriate (the David picture of the monk exemplifies this). In this capacity imagination need not exercise its power of imaging, for the picture may only require the spectator to imagine possibilities of what the images represent; to be imaginative in the effort to understand what the picture is about.

Thirdly, the use of imagination necessarily increases the spectator's concentration on the images of a picture. In the activity of interpretation, or even in a playful response, imagination increases the spectator's involvement with the work. While a free imagination can

sometimes exceed the limits of a relevant exploration of the picture, this risk is worth the deeper appreciation which results.

The upshot of the imaginative response is not just a deeper appreciation of every picture, but an experience which is more satisfying. That is, the imaginative response can partly account for the pleasure (or shock, etc.) we have in our appreciation of a picture. I do not want to make the stronger claim that an imaginative response categorically leads to a more pleasurable experience. Rather, because of the greater involvement imagination affords, such an experience is more likely.

This pleasure is not the result of a personal fantasy, but is due to imaginings which are tied to the representation itself, and our imaginings are pleasurable in themselves. Although Feagin only argues that imaging in relation to literature is pleasurable in itself[1], I believe that this argument can be extended to include all types of imaginings in relation to pictures (and the other arts for that matter).

In the course of her argument she defends imaging against the view that it is a substitute for sensing, i.e. that imagination "makes the absent present". She identifies this confusion as follows:

> ...instead of asserting something about whatever qualities imaging has in common with sensing, it is understood to assert that the pleasurableness of imaging is due to the degree to which we would take pleasure in what is imaged if it were

sensed.[2]

In this respect it is wrong to explain the imaginative response to pictures in terms of a quasi-sensation of the objects depicted by the images. The pleasure we take in our imaginings related to pictures is due to the artist's creative work- the subject-matter of the work, choice of colours, style, and the nature of depiction. My argument here is similar to that against the Illusion Theory. Pictures are not meant to be experienced as illusions of real objects, but as original, creative representations of them. It follows from this that an imaginative response which is part of the activity of interpreting a picture is not a response to the actual objects the artist sets out to depict, but rather to the images. Hence, the pleasure is from imaginings connected to the images themselves. This point is crucial for justifying the use of imagination for the appreciation of pictures.

Furthermore, that the pleasure of imagination arises from the images rather than from the spectator's personal desires gives credence to the view that for art's sake we should cultivate and develop the imaginative response. If the imaginative response enriches the appreciation of pictures, and the <u>pleasure</u> of that appreciation is partly due to the imaginative component of pictorial experience, then such a response is valuable.

8.3 The Value of Imagination

It could be argued that literature enlivens the percipient's imagination more than pictorial works of art because the images are given in pictures whereas they are suggested through words and stories, thus giving the reader more imaginative freedom. In reading a story we freely visualize the faces of characters, their environment; in reading poetry the image of a lamenting figure flashes through our mind. However, pictures can supply an equal amount of suggestion for the imagination: in a way no picture leaves absolutely nothing to imagination.[3] Artists deliberately use suggestive images, images which are designed to direct the imagination to a further meaning and to enlarge the interpretation of the work. Hepburn aptly describes this skill.

> From the one-word metaphor to the allegorical epic, the indirectness of communication is no device of artistic coyness or evasiveness, but the most powerful means of not simply communicating a propositional content but of achieving a concomitant, perhaps abrupt, reorientation of perception and thought.[4]

Imagination enables the spectator to grasp not only the images in a picture, but also those ideas which are suggested by them. The hidden meanings disclosed by imagination may be key to understanding the artist's overall message.

This returns us to the point made at the end of

Chapter 6. Without treating art as a mere message-bearer, the human condition can be better understood through imaginative reflection on the expressions and representations of it in works of art. In this respect imagination is not opposed to truth and knowledge.[5] In fact, the search for truth in a representation can be facilitated by imaginative engagement with the work, such activity increasing the spectator's concentration, with the aforementioned benefits resulting.

My underlying assumption here is that art contributes to life enhancement. Because this view is not unpopular, an argument for it is, I think, unnecessary for the points I wish to make regarding the value of imagination for the appreciation of art. However, Beardsley's observations are particularly relevant here.

Regarding the inherent value of aesthetic experience, he makes two remarks which suggest the value of imagination. He first refers to Bertrand Russell's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, paraphrasing the point that Russell makes about invention and artistic discovery: the excitement connected with creating a work of art and the discovery involved in exploring a "new complex work of art are two of the highest, purest, and most satisfying types of excitement."[6] As I have argued, imagination underlies this creativity and discovery. Secondly, Beardsley points to the development of imagination through aesthetic experience. In aesthetic experience we

are often forced to be open and receptive to the "new qualities and new forms" presented in art. This serves to exercise imagination, to "train" us to be creative and to think of new possibilities.

> ...to think of original scientific hypotheses, to find new ways out of practical dilemmas, to understand more quickly what is going on in other people's minds.[7]

To add to this point, I think that imagination can facilitate the appreciation of new kinds of art, so imagination itself develops and changes alongside the concept of art. Generally, Beardsley sees the imaginative response to art as a training ground for life because through it, "We may become more flexible in our responses, better able to adjust to novel situations and unexpected contingencies."[8]

Imagination, then, would seem to be a skill worth developing in both aesthetic and ordinary experience. Although my primary aim in this dissertation has been to argue for the importance of pictorial experience in explaining the nature of pictorial representation (particularly the role of imagination), the overall merits of imaginative activity have become apparent. This activity has been shown to be relevant to the interpretation and appreciation of pictures, so by way of conclusion I will bring together my analysis of pictorial

experience with the theory of depiction supported in Chapter 4, Natural Generativity.

8.4 Conclusion

Natural Generativity offers the most convincing account of depiction at present. Its particular strength lies in its no-nonsense explanation of how we understand pictorial representation as such. Other philosophers have tried to define pictorial representation by identifying a single feature such as a particular kind of visual perception (e.g. "seeing-in") or a particular kind of experience (e.g. illusion), but Schier concentrates on how we make pictorial interpretations, defining the structure of pictorial experience accordingly. On approaching each new picture we take it to be a representation, a process which is automatic as long as the conditions of Natural Generativity are met. With this basic understanding, we can then proceed to interpret the content of the representation. We require no special perception to arrive at this conclusion, and rarely, if ever, do we see the picture as an illusion of reality.

The weakness of Schier's theory, like the others I have examined, is that it lacks a full account of pictorial experience, but I have maintained that it serves as an excellent starting point. Whereas "seeing-in" virtually disallows the imaginative response, Natural

Generativity sets no limitations on the nature of pictorial experience. This flexibility is realistic: it welcomes our various responses to pictures.

Pictorial experience itself is indeterminate, yet it is possible to say that the spectator always exercises his or her perceptual capacities, which typically includes visually exploring the picture and having thoughts about it. In addition, the spectator often uses imagination, both in a sensory way, by visualizing or imaging in relation to the images, and/or in a non-sensory way, by imaginatively thinking about the images. The imaginative response is a neglected feature of pictorial experience, hence I have focused on the nature and relevance of it.

This neglect probably stems from the the vagueness of the concept of imagination in addition to the "dangers" it poses to the disinterested character of aesthetic experience. In Chapter 5, having found definitions of imagination inadequate, I turned to the history of philosophy to discover which activities have been attributed to the imagination. The varied activities which fall under this concept are related more closely than a family resemblance model suggests, yet imagination is indefinable in terms of a common characteristic. The spectrum model best outlines the proximity and variety of imagination's powers.

A clearer notion of how we use imagination in

ordinary experience helps to elucidate the ways in which it can be applied in the appreciation of art. While the value of imagination in this context has been recognized by such philosophers as Kant and Dewey, it is Savile and Elliott who demonstrate the actual application of imagination to pictures. We do use imagination to interpret the complexities of form, colour, composition and content which pictures present to us, and we take pleasure in this activity.

The significance of the role of imagination in pictorial experience cannot be disputed, and I have attempted to support this also with reference to the pleasure arising from imagination and the value of imaginative activity to art and life. Imagination is central to a theory of pictorial representation because it helps to elucidate how we experience pictures in comparison to the objects they depict.

Notes

[1] S. Feagin, "Some Pleasures of Imagination" Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism XLIII: 41-55, Fall 1984, p. 45.

[2] Feagin, 52.

[3] E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion, 5th Edition (Phaidon Press, 1977), 181.

[4] R. W. Hepburn, "Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity" Journal of Aesthetic Education 24 (2): 185-198, 1990, p. 187.

[5] Hepburn, 194.

[6] M. Beardsley, Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism, 2nd Edition (Hackett Publishing Co., 1988), 574.

[7] Beardsley, 574-5.

[8] Beardsley, 575.

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