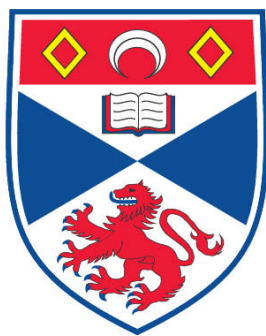


**AN ACCOUNT OF A VALUABLE PHENOMENON FOUND
PRIMARILY IN ART, AFTER COLLINGWOOD**

James Camien McGuiggan

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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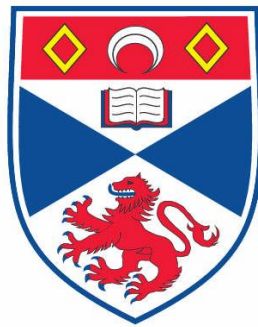
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An Account of a Valuable Phenomenon Found
Primarily in Art, after Collingwood

James Camien McGuiggan



This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
M.Phil.
at the
University of St Andrews

August 30th, 2011

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I, James Camien McGuiggan, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 39,705 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in June, 2010, and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil. in June, 2010; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2009 and 2011.

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Preface

This dissertation is what it is, whatever that may be, through the support, friendship, enthusiasm and acumen of people too numerous to name, in ways too various to quantify. I must rest discontent with giving an unsatisfactory thank you to all those to whom I owe gratitude, and avoiding naming anyone. I make only three exceptions. First, to my primary supervisor, Berys Gaut, and my secondary supervisor, Roger Scruton. Second, to those who gave of their time to read all or part of the dissertation and make always helpful comments: Svenja Gosen, Norman Kreitman, Lisa Jones, Jens Timmerman, Joshua Thorpe, Henry Walton and my supervisors. Third, three friends – Brendan Markey, Konrad Siller and Joshua Thorpe – to whom I owe more than I can capture, and indeed more than I can fathom, and to whom I dedicate this dissertation.

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Abstract

This dissertation enquires into the nature and value of a phenomenon which is typically found in art. Chapter 1 attempts to get clear on what phenomenon is being discussed by considering various thinkers' attempts to talk about it, and by considering artworks which exemplify (or are) it. I call the phenomenon 'art' and roughly characterise it as the expression of emotion. Chapter 2 considers the role of artists' intentions to the meaning of the artworks they create, and more broadly the role of utterers' intentions to the meanings of their utterances. This is done because certain positions regarding the role of intentions to utterances' meanings breaks the communicative link between the utterer of an utterance and the apprehender of the utterance, which link is important to the thesis advanced. Chapter 3 argues for a particular analysis of what I call art in Chapter 1, and briefly argues that it is very valuable.

Introduction

This dissertation is about a phenomenon which many people, myself among them, think to be of central importance to art and to life; but it has no name that can be naturally applied to it without generating controversy, because every term which can be used to name it is more naturally applied to something closely related but different. It is the task of the first chapter of this dissertation to make clear what the phenomenon is. I will do this in a number of ways. I will refer to various thinkers' discussions of the phenomenon, I will give examples of artworks in which the phenomenon is found very prominently, and I will suggest various analyses of it and terms that could be used to refer to it. In a nutshell, the phenomenon is the expression of emotion; but caution is required in understanding these words.

In the second chapter, I engage in a rather technical debate about the importance of the intentions of an artist to the meaning of what she creates. After introducing and considering various authors' arguments for various positions, I will conclude that some of an artist's intentions are partial determinants of the

meaning of any artwork she creates under certain circumstances. As the position is spelled out in the chapter, it becomes more precise and more controversial.

The third chapter is the most important. In it, I argue for an understanding of the phenomenon which is the subject of this dissertation which is in all essentials Collingwood's. I argue that the phenomenon is the expression of an artist's emotions, and that, in apprehending artworks, we apprehend them as being the expression of their artists' emotions. I then further argue that this phenomenon is valuable, and suggest more tentatively that it is one of the most valuable things in the world.

It is worth making some general remarks about the aims of this dissertation. When I started working on this dissertation, I hoped to capture what is so important about art, and justify our sense of its importance. As my research progressed, it became clear that this was, to put it mildly, overly ambitious. In general, in response to this sort of problem, one can either do the same job poorly, or do a small part of this job well. In many ways, I have chosen the former path. Partly this is for unphilosophical reasons such as time constraints. However, some reasons are philosophical. Most important of these is that I think that Collingwood's account of the nature and importance of the phenomenon which is the subject of this dissertation is in all essentials correct, but has been largely neglected by contemporary philosophers. By advancing this account and responding to the various objections that have been levelled against it, I hope to show that there is actually a lot to recommend it, and that the objections levelled against it are either mistaken or ungenerous. In doing so, I have left out much that would have greatly improved this dissertation: I have not discussed any of

the alternatives to Collingwood's account, I have not properly tested the account against relevant findings in psychology or other philosophical disciplines, I have not completely closed off the wilful philistine's ability to deny that he knows what the phenomenon I'm talking about is, I have not engaged with Croce or the other thinkers on whom Collingwood builds, and so on. Such omissions are the cost of doing what I (hopefully) *have* done in the dissertation: namely, sketching out a basically Collingwoodian account of the nature and value of a certain phenomenon, which account is *prima facie* plausible and has withstood those objections against it which I have encountered. I can only hope that the cost is not too high.

Chapter One

On the Phenomenon Which is the Subject of this Dissertation

This dissertation is about a phenomenon for which there is no adequate term. Over the course of the next few chapters, I will analyse the phenomenon and go some way to justify the value people attribute to it. But this task is complicated by the lack of an good name for it. The phenomenon can be found in many different things, but it is most often seen in art – although even in that, it is rarely found to a high degree. Talking about something, for which there is no adequate word, which is found only in some instances of certain types of thing, is difficult enough that I open this dissertation with an attempt to make clear which phenomenon I'm talking about. For despite the difficulty of pointing at the phenomenon publicly, I have not the slightest doubt not only that is it a phenome-

non of which very many people have experience, but that it is one which has deeply interested many of the greatest thinkers in philosophy and art.

I will try to make clear what the phenomenon I am interested in is by means of the 'spaghetti-wall' method. That is, I will use every method I can think up to get it clear, and hope that some of it sticks. The strands of spaghetti will be thrown in the following order. I will give what I take to be the correct analysis of the phenomenon in question in §1. I will also in this section give a term to the phenomenon and explain why I give it the name I do. In §2, I will discuss a number of philosophers' and artists' attempts to capture the phenomenon, which are not really attempts at analysis, but which are nonetheless illuminating. Finally, in §3, I will give examples of things which have the phenomenon in which I am interested and discuss some of these examples in a way which I hope will highlight the phenomenon. §4 briefly sums up.

The main task of this chapter is of course to make clear to the reader what the phenomenon I'm interested in is. But by showing that various philosophers and artists have also been interested in the phenomenon, I will also be showing that the phenomenon is widely experienced, and so, that the analysis of it is a legitimate topic for a public philosophical inquiry.

1. Art as the Expression of Emotion (Analysis and Naming of the Phenomenon)

I think that the best analysis of the phenomenon is that it is, as R. G. Collingwood put it in *The Principles of Art* (1938), the expression of emotion. For this to mean anything, what Collingwood means by 'expression' and 'emotion' has to be cashed out rather precisely. This is largely the task of Ch. 3, but some brief, initial specification can be done here. Aaron Ridley, in 'Congratulations, it's a Tragedy' (2002), glosses the analysis as "the clarification or individualisation of thoughts and feelings" (p. 53), and this is a good gloss. But to be more accurate, we must add that 'expression' is conscious and deliberate (as opposed to a spontaneous cry or something of this sort), and resembles the coming to clearly see a thought, in which the expressed emotion is different to the unexpressed emotion in something like the same way that a clear thought is different to its unclear counterpart. The emotion expressed can be intentional and non-intentional; fleeting, long-lasting and dynamic.

I will refer to the phenomenon by the term 'art'. (I shall use 'artistic' and other such conjugates in the same way.) This is a pretty poor term, which by most reasonable understandings does not refer to what I am using it to refer to: but it is the best term there is, so I will use it this way anyway. I use it for a number of reasons. The main reason is that many people *have* referred to the phenomenon I

am interested in, or to the objects that possess it,¹ as art – I have in mind, for instance, Collingwood, Dewey (1934), Kreitman (2011), Murdoch (1973) and Tolstoy (1896) – and this usage has some acceptance in common parlance. So there is precedent and usage supporting the choice. Second, this phenomenon is found much more in what we typically call art than it is found in anything else (which is not to deny what I take to be true, that it is very rarely found to a high degree even in artworks).

However, the major disadvantage of using ‘art’ is that it might seem that I am suggesting that my use of the term is the best way to use it, and that, if something meets my criteria of art, then it ‘really is’ art; and conversely, that something that doesn’t meet these criteria isn’t ‘actually’ art at all. By my account, some things that are widely acknowledged to be art, such as, perhaps, comic opera, musicals, modern art of the sort that is found in the Tate Modern, hyper-realist paintings, and incidental music and muzak, are not art. Conversely, some things that are, at best, only controversially normally called art, such as certain conversations, folk and popular art, sketches and studies preparatory to artworks and certain other modern artworks of the sort found in the Tate Modern, can be art by my criteria.² Am I being illegitimately prescriptive, then? No. I make no claim to the superiority of my understanding of the term ‘art’, and so this charge has no teeth. What is

¹ ‘Art’ is used to refer to the property some artworks (or whatever) have and to those artworks (or whatever) that have the property. I will use the term in both ways; nothing hangs on this imprecision.

² I am not in the business of saying that whole genres or traditions or media of artworks are or are not art: I mention these as examples of things which seem, *prima facie* or popularly, to typically have or do not have art created in them.

important is the phenomenon, not which term I use to pick it out, which is, to stress, only chosen because it is the least bad one available.

I will have cause, now and then, to refer to whatever it is that art as it is normally understood refers to: roughly speaking, those things found in art galleries and concert halls. I will refer to such things as artworks, again for lack of a better term.

I want to briefly mention some of the alternative terms that might be used to refer to the phenomenon I refer to by art, and briefly argue why they're unsatisfactory. I will not argue further that they are so unsatisfactory that they are worse terms to use to refer to the phenomenon than 'art'; this is because, as I have said, it doesn't really matter which term I use.

One term, used once or twice by Tolstoy, is 'good art' (1896: p. 15). There are advantages to this: as I argue in Ch. 3, if something successfully expresses its creator's emotion, it is going to be valuable in an almost unique, and certainly rare and important, way. So it is good that this term ties the phenomenon to value. But it ties it too closely. On the one hand, something expresses its creator's emotion without being good if, for example, it doesn't do a terribly good job of expressing the emotion, or if it expresses some vicious or uninteresting emotion. On the other hand, an artwork can be good without expressing emotion. I have in mind what Collingwood calls 'amusement', 'magic', 'puzzles', 'instruction', 'advertisement', 'propaganda', 'exhortation' and 'representation'. He lists and de-

scribes these on p. 32 of *The Principles of Art*³: I will expand on just one, 'amusement', which Collingwood himself discusses at length in Ch. III. (He also discusses representation and magic at length, in Chs. III and IV respectively.) As Collingwood describes it on p. 32, amusement is the arousal of an emotion for its own sake; that is, for the sake of the pleasure of feeling the emotion. There are plenty of examples of this kind of thing going by the name of art: it is probably what is going on in a lot of pop music (especially, but by no means exclusively, the more commercial variety), in much of Tom Stoppard's plays, perhaps also in many passages of Douglas Adams's *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* trilogy, and even, perhaps, in the odd passage of Shakespeare. Collingwood, although his tone might lead one to think otherwise, has no objection to amusement art, as he calls artworks that do this sort of thing; and indeed, I see no reason why an artwork which arouses a particularly agreeable emotion particularly well may not be called 'good'. Similar things can be said for magic, puzzles, etc; and of course an artwork may be good in more than one of these ways. But of course, an emotion can be aroused in more than one way: specifically, an emotion aroused by an artwork can also, given a sufficiently advanced pharmacology, be aroused by a drug; and if what gives the artwork its value can be exactly replicated in such a way, then the artwork is, in a sense, dispensable. Such, I take it, could never be the case for what I am calling art; so this 'good art', for all that it may be good or great, is not the focus of this dissertation. I am interested in something which may be found in good artworks, but which is neither necessary nor sufficient for

³ All references to Collingwood in this dissertation are to this work.

some artwork to be good. (I've heard the term 'great art' also being used. This is prey to the same objections.)

Another term that might be used is 'sacred', such that what I am trying to point at would be that in art (as the term is normally understood) which is sacred. It is considered by Matthew Kieran in 'Art and the Limitations of Experience' (2004). It could understandably be used to refer to the phenomenon; but it is deficient. The initial problem with it is how close it ties the phenomenon to specifically religious values. Once this is overcome, we can see how one might say that even humorous artworks that have the property I am trying to point to have an element of the sacred in them (I have in mind Bryan Lee O'Malley's *Scott Pilgrim* graphic-novel series and William Carlos Williams's 'This is Just to Say'). However, I have two reservations about this term. The first is that I am not sure, *pace* Kieran, how easily we can in fact extricate the term from its religious origins. I worry that in doing so, we make it too vague to be of much help. If we specify it, we end up (if we are to accept Kieran's analysis) with something like: something is sacred if destroying it or joking about it is (something like) morally wrong or sacrilegious. But this is not what is important to the phenomenon I am trying to point at. I worry that the term is more liable to confuse than help. My second reservation is that it seems to apply uneasily to some of the things I want to call art: *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, or the music of Devendra Banhart (I have in mind especially 'I Feel Just Like a Child' and 'Chinese Children' on his album *Cripple Crow* (2005)).

A third term is 'profound', used in the same way as 'sacred'. I take it that a similar problem plagues using this term (which Ridley uses in his *The Philosophy of Music* (2004), Ch. 5). We can just about see why one might want to say that there is something of the profound about even light-hearted artworks that have the phenomenon I am trying to point to (consider again *Scott Pilgrim*). But it seems a bit much to say that profundity is a necessary requirement of something's having the property I am trying to point to: consider again 'This is Just to Say', *Pride and Prejudice*, or Devendra Banhart's 'Chinese Children'. Nor is it necessary for something to be profound that it have this property: people say of things that have nothing to do with art – I have in mind maths, facts, nature – that they are profound, and it seems that an artwork can be profound in one of these ways too. So again, I worry that, when understood as more than a vague gesture toward the phenomenon in which I am interested, 'profundity' is not a helpful term, and may confuse the discussion. (Although I am persuaded that there is another phenomenon, accurately called profundity, and analysed along the lines Ridley analyses it.)

2. Various Thinkers' Attempts to Capture the Phenomenon

In this section I will attempt to show that a number of thinkers, and, tentatively, people in general, are interested in the phenomenon that I dub art. By so doing, I

accomplish two tasks. I first demonstrate that the phenomenon I am talking about is not one of which only I have experience, but common to many people. Secondly, I show that I am open to the objection that my analysis of the phenomenon (that it is the expression of emotion) is incorrect, on the grounds that it contradicts in some important way these people's claims about art. I will consider Leo Tolstoy, Iris Murdoch, Roger Scruton, Arnold Schoenberg and Theodor Adorno.

To do the job that I am doing here properly would require an extremely lengthy and detailed analysis of these thinkers' work. To the extent that I have fallen short of this, my argument is weakened; and I have fallen very far short of this. However, I have included some of the weaker evidence anyway, in the hope that the possibility that these thinkers are interested in the phenomenon that I am considering be entertained, and, perhaps, that the lengthy and detailed analysis that I have not done be done.

Tolstoy surely has experience of the phenomenon I am interested in here, as is evinced by his novels, which are among the greatest ever written. In his philosophical work *What is Art?* (1896), I take it that he is interested in the same phenomenon that I am interested in. Vincent Tomas, in his foreword to The Liberal Arts Press edition, makes two attempts to paraphrase Tolstoy's question 'What is art?': first, to "What noble purpose are painting, sculpture, music, literature and the other arts fit to serve in the life of man?"; second, to "what purpose... are they *especially* suited for, such that the importance and dignity we attach to them is justifiable?" (p. xi) Tolstoy's answer, of course, is not Collingwood's; but he

does not consider an account like Collingwood's in rejecting the alternatives, and of the positions he considers, his is by far the closest to Collingwood's: so it is possible that had he thought harder, he would have come to something like Collingwood's answer. How possible? Quite possible, I think: consider how close Tolstoy's answer is to Collingwood's. Both accounts involve emotion, and both involve the artist doing what Collingwood would call expressing emotion. Further, both maintain that art brings people together in community. Tolstoy puts it characteristically strongly: a purported work of art "is not a work of art if it does not evoke that feeling (quite distinct from all other feelings) of joy and of spiritual union with another (the author) and with others (those who are also affected by it)." (p. 139) Collingwood is more precise in his terms, but, as I argue in Ch. 3, he thinks a similar thing to be true. The core of Collingwood's answer is here. The major differences, though significant, are less important: Tolstoy demands that the emotion the artist expresses must be felt by her in a way Collingwood doesn't require, and that the apprehender of the art must feel it in just the way the artist did. And Tolstoy thinks that the proper subject-matter of art is "the infinite, varied and profound religious subject-matter" (p. 71), whilst Collingwood thinks that talk of a 'proper subject-matter' wrong-headed altogether.

Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973) is, under one aspect, an extended meditation on art (which is, conveniently, referred to by this same term). As such, picking out bits that are 'especially' about art is a bit silly. But it is not totally pointless. Of particular relevance are Bradley Pearson's foreword and the editor's postscript, the reflective interlude on pp. 79-82, the profound discussion of *Ham-*

let on pp. 194-200, and, especially, Bradley's brief speech on pp. 199-200. This passage is too long to quote here, but, suffice it to say, what Bradley is highlighting here is *Hamlet's* artistic aspect.

There can be no question, either, that Schoenberg and Adorno are interested in the same phenomenon that I am interested in. The latter's *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1947) can be read profitably as a defence of the importance of art in artworks, in contrast to, to use his example, Stravinsky, who, by Adorno's characterisation (but in Collingwood's language), creates artworks which are more amusement than art. His discussion of the diminished seventh chord on pp. 25-6 is worth focusing on. What is striking about this passage is its moral tone. The chord is "prohibited": not because it doesn't sound nice, but rather because it is 'shabby', "false" and 'exhausted' (p. 25), such that it creates actual discomfort in the listener; it is unusable because it bespeaks a harmonic language which is obsolete, and which cannot be used except in a clichéd or ironic manner. In this, the sound of the chord is of secondary importance: what matters is clearly something more artistic, and of far more moral significance (which we might call artistic integrity, but in this context, the term is less important than the significance). The thought is a reiteration of Schoenberg's, who writes: "[the diminished seventh chord] fell from the higher sphere of art to the lower sphere of entertainment. There it remains, as a sentimental expression of sentimental concerns." (from *Harmonielehre*, quoted in Scruton (1997: p. 343)) As Scruton notes in a brief commentary on this passage, Schoenberg is here talking in moral terms (*ibid.*). He goes on: "Clichés [such as the diminished seventh chord] are not merely to be

avoided: they are false, unserious, destructive of something that we value" (*ibid.*). (Scruton is here both attributing this thought to Schoenberg and himself endorsing it.) This indicates the closeness of these thinkers' thought to my own because, as I will argue in Ch. 3, §3, art's value is a moral one (on a broad understanding of 'moral'), and because its moral import is that of emotional honesty, which is clearly what the thinkers find lacking in using terms such as 'false' and 'clichéd'.

Finally, Scruton has an exceptionally clear idea of the phenomenon at which I am trying to point and of its deep importance, and this comes out in a myriad different ways in very many of his works. He has read Collingwood (as well as Croce, who heavily influenced Collingwood), but he does not, as far as I can tell, see himself as following in Collingwood's footsteps in any way. His *The Aesthetics of Music* (1997) has two chapters (Chs. 12 and 15) explicitly devoted to the art in music, but it is of central importance to the work and surfaces again and again throughout the book. In fact, he rarely discusses artworks except insofar as they are what I call art. An illustration that on some deep or basic level he is interested in the same phenomenon as I am is his discussion of taste on pp. 386-90. Consider, for instance, this remark: "taste in music matters as much as taste in [friends and jokes, etc.,] the education of taste is of primary moral significance, and... the decline in musical taste is just the catastrophe that it seems to be." (p. 386) You might disagree with much of this, but the point I want to take from it is that art is comparable to friends and jokes, in the sense that it is closely related to (or even a part of) morality. Elsewhere, he compares music to sexual preference (pp. 370, 386) and religion (pp. 458-62) in the same respect. I think that he is talk-

ing about art in doing so, for the reasons I gave in discussion of Adorno and Schoenberg.

But he gives a more detailed account of art and its value than this (esp. in Ch. 11), and in doing so is remarkably close to Collingwood. He remarks on p. 387 that “[a] wrong word [in, e.g., a poem] is not just one that sounds wrong, but one that reveals some failure to observe, some insensitivity to the experience conveyed, some emotional ignorance or coldness.” This observation is totally in line with Collingwood’s account. The natural expansion of it is that in poetry (and more broadly, art), we express our emotions; we express how we feel about some state of affairs or whatever. But in this hypothetical bad poem, we fail to do so: we express, if anything, the emotions of some hypothetical poet of whose reality we (*ex hypothesi*) fail to convince the apprehender; and we betray our real emotions. Or consider the following passage: “the expression of art is... important to us [because] art provides us with a means not merely to project our emotions outwards, but also to encounter ourselves *in* them.” (p. 348) Finally, consider the long argument in Ch. 11, but especially on pp. 354-64, which concludes, in totally different language, almost exactly what Collingwood concludes. (The only ‘difference’ is that Scruton’s language is less inclined to make one think that what is expressed in art must be something of the artist’s; but even this is a matter of emphasis, rather than of belief.) Claims such as “the first-person perspective [is] central to music” (p. 365) highlight the similarity between Scruton’s and Collingwood’s views; but of course, the similarity only becomes undeniable on

reading of the entirety of the arguments, which is, obviously, more than I can quote here.

I have mentioned only a small handful of thinkers, but I could, had I the time and space, discuss many more. Croce (e.g., *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* (1902)), Dewey (1934), Ernst Fischer (1970), Foucault (1966), Hegel (e.g., *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (1835)), Heidegger (e.g., 'On the Origin of the Work of Art' (1936)), Norman Kreitman ((2011) and forthcoming), Nietzsche (e.g., 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense' (1873)), Jacques Rancière (e.g., *Le Partage du sensible* (2000)), Sartre (e.g., 'What is Writing?' (1947)), Charles Taylor (*Source of the Self* (1989), esp. the discussion of 'epiphanic art' in, esp., Chs. 23 and 24), Richard Wollheim (e.g., *Painting as an Art* (1987)) and Wittgenstein (various passages in *Culture and Value* (1994)), to list just a few, have experience of the phenomenon I am interested in here and write about it in an illuminating way, even if they capture it in strikingly different ways – which is only to be expected given their disparate interests and methodologies.

However, referring to thinkers who have investigated the phenomenon I am discussing to the point of publishing works about it is somewhat problematic, as one's theory can affect one's intuitions on the matter. For instance: if, in enquiring seriously into art, one finds, at the end of detailed investigation, only amusement and magic, one may very well find that one has lost the sense, even in vague intuition, that there is art, and see only amusement and magic. When

one then goes on to write about art, one may well from the start write about amusement and magic, and there will be no evidence for the reader of one's work that one ever had some intuition that there is art. (Consider by way of analogy the metaphysician who in enquiring into free will finds only determinism and indeterminism and loses even an intuitive sense that a free will seems to neither be determined nor act randomly.) Or, enamoured by Collingwood, one might lose the sense that there is some vague 'art', but only the precise expression of emotion which I have analysed art as. Because of these concerns, it is worth talking to people without any knowledge of this debate, but with only a love of artworks (be they gallery-hung paintings or pop-music songs), and seeing if talk of what I call art finds traction. Such work, to be done properly, is beyond the scope of this dissertation: it is a task for the philosophical community more broadly, and for psychologists. But I have done it informally in the course of writing this dissertation (not to mention the course of my life more generally), and I have found, again and again, that getting people to understand what I am talking about when I talk about art is, very often, incredibly easy: the conclusion that people have experience of the phenomenon I dub art is, to me, totally compelling. For it to be compelling to others, empirical research needs to be done. I mention my own experience here for those readers willing to take my word on such matters as this.

I should note, in concluding this section, that I do not hold or expect that any of the thinkers I have mentioned are in every particular in agreement with Collingwood's account. What I maintain is that, beneath significant differences in

the way they capture the phenomenon, they are in agreement with regard to at least some central claims. Difference beyond this is not *especially* worrying, although it is certainly not a given that such differences are disagreements about the nature of one phenomenon as opposed to compatible claims about different phenomena. This must be the subject of further investigation; in this dissertation, I will simply assume that they are interested in the same phenomenon. In virtue simply of reading the works I only briefly discuss here, my evidence for this assumption is much more extensive than can be captured in this short chapter.

3. Examples of Art

'Art', as I use the term, is not something which something (an artwork, a conversation, etc.) must have entirely or not at all. Something can be, in parts and in certain respects, art, whilst being, in other parts and in other respects, not art. In giving examples of art, then, I cannot simply point to artworks or whatever and say, "This artwork is art": I must point at the parts of artworks that are art, and highlight the respects in which they are art. Sometimes this is not so tricky: artworks such as Beethoven's late string quartets, Bach's 'cello suites, Picasso's *Guernica*, Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, Monet's paintings of haystacks, Miles Davis's 'So What' on *Kind of Blue* (1958), are, if not pure art, art in their most obvious aspect. There is much to be said for listing great artworks like this in order to get clear on what I'm talking about (which is why I have done it). But I want to take another

approach as well: I want to give examples of art in things which are not so purely art. In doing this, I will of necessity give examples with which I am particularly familiar. I will also, because of this constraint but also because doing so will highlight the variety of things in which art can be found and the variety of ways in which it can be found there, give examples of things that are not typically considered artworks.

I will start with such an artwork: the handful of comics in Kate Beaton's *Hark! A Vagrant* webcomic (www.harkavagrant.com) that are about the artist's interaction with her younger self. I could pick almost any comic in this superb webcomic as an example of art: but what she expresses in these 'younger-self' comics is more obviously hers than in most of her comics, the characters in which are typically historical or fictional figures.

This younger self series consist of conversations between Beaton at the age she was at the time of writing the comic and when she was around ten years old (except for #68, in which only Beaton's younger self appears). There is no strong narrative continuity between them: they are each self-standing. Insofar as there is a theme pervading these comics, they are about Beaton's relationship with who she once was and how she has developed and changed: her ten-year old self is portrayed as fascinated by everything (she wants to be an artist (comic #73⁴) and race tigers (#72), and is excited about astronomy (#232), exploring (#75) and pirates (#69)) and is generally very excitable. This is portrayed as good, but it often

⁴ To find a specific comic on the site, go to harkavagrant.com/index.php?id=?, where ? is a placeholder for the comic number. For example, comic #72 is at harkavagrant.com/index.php?id=72; and #4 is at harkavagrant.com/index.php?id=4.

makes her insufferable to the older Beaton (see, e.g., the first panel of #74). By contrast, the older Beaton is calmer, more self-confident and more contented with herself (see, e.g., #73); but she also considers herself to have hardly satisfied the ambitions of her younger self. These younger-self comics are beautiful representations of Beaton's ambiguous relationship with that real counterpart of her younger self which is an aspect of who she is. Is she, as her younger self accuses in #72, ruining her life by allowing it to be mediocre? Or is her younger self just a stupid kid whose opinions and impossible ambitions are not worth considering? Does she like her younger self? No answers are given, of course: her inability to answer this is captured perfectly in the last panel of #75 (figure 1.2); in her facial



Figure 1.1: Hark! A Vagrant #73 (© Kate Beaton 2007)

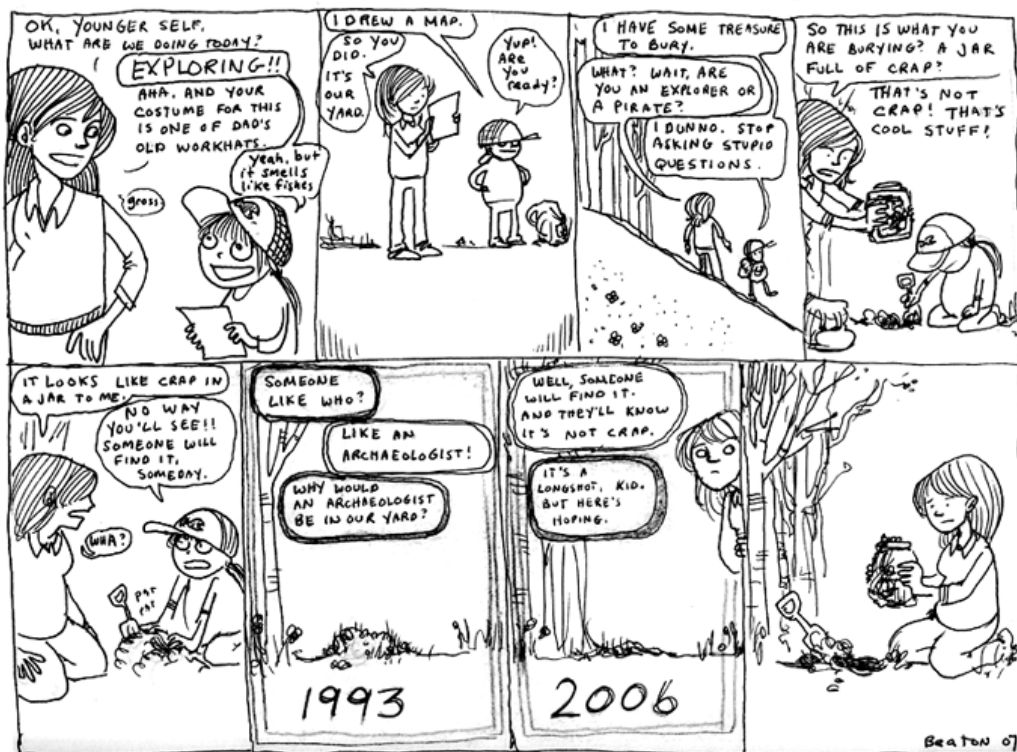


Figure 1.2: Hark! A Vagrant #75 (© Kate Beaton 2007)

expression, the lack of speech, and also of the space above Beaton's head where a speech bubble so easily could have been: implying that she wants to say something but for some reason can't.

The last panel of #75 is an excellent example of pure art. But art is found in almost every comic she creates, even though it is sometimes found alongside (or within) jokes. Consider #73 (figure 1.1): the last panel is a self-referential joke, but it also deals with Beaton's insecurities about her artistic talent, her bemusement at people's enjoyment of her comics, and so on. In reading this comic, one sees a lot of who Beaton is. But regardless of whether you accept this specific claim, it is clear that there is art in this comic, and that it is not there simply because the joke in the last panel is very good.

In *Hark! A Vagrant*, the art exists alongside but can be differentiated from humour. Art is also found in this way in, for example, Bryan Lee O'Malley's *Scott Pilgrim* series of graphic novels. In other artworks, art is found alongside virtuosity, of imagination, intellect or technical ability (to give a non-exhaustive list); and we can hopefully see by separating these things in our perception of the artwork what art is (if it is not clear from the discussion of *Hark! A Vagrant*). To this end I will consider Steve Vai's piece 'Tender Surrender' on his 1995 album *Alien Love Secrets*⁵ and Ravel's orchestration of Debussy's 'Danse' from his *Suite bergamasque*; in which art is found alongside, respectively, technical and imaginative virtuosity.

Steve Vai is infamously the most technically competent guitarist alive (whatever that means), and 'Tender Surrender' demonstrates this: although it does not involve much in the way of fast runs of notes, it contains a lot of incredibly subtle effects which require the guitarist to have consummate control of the instrument if she is to replicate them. One can listen to 'Tender Surrender' and be mindful of this, and be astounded by Vai's technique; but there is something wholly different going on in this song, and (as indeed Vai has said in interviews (see, e.g., his interview with Paul Bielatowicz in the July 2005 issue of *Guitar Techniques*)) he plays what he does only in order that he can achieve this other end. It is this other end that I take to be the art in 'Tender Surrender', and which I will now try to point at.

⁵ It can also be found on YouTube (URL: [youtube.com/watch?v=Yw74sDWPH7U&ob=av3e](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yw74sDWPH7U&ob=av3e)), although the audio starts about eight seconds after it starts on the album version: this means that if you want to listen to any of the passages I highlight here, you need to add about eight seconds to all the times I give.

The song is formally as follows. The (rather saccharine) opening section runs until 1'14". This is loosely the basis for the more complicated and dynamic guitar line which constitutes most of the remainder of the song. The song starts simply: the melodies are easy to sing, and the guitar line easy to play; it becomes more difficult and jagged until, at 3'47" (figure 1.3), when the music seems totally unable to convey all the passion Vai is trying to put into it, it suddenly somehow implodes into the opening melody; but the return is not as stable as it seems, and it turns into a bizarre coda from 4'14". Many moments in this piece are hard to see as 'showing off': at 3'06", 3'22", 3'26", there are passages of a few seconds which are not at all hard to play. But what is relevant here are the passages such as, especially, 3'32"-3'45", which are incredibly difficult to play, and so which could be seen as showing off. The passage just highlighted is the final few moments of the main part of the song, and leads back to the opening phrase; it is

(Espressivo (♩=66))

8^{va}-----
 (neck pick-up)
 (distorted tone) * Semi-pinched harmonic

58 *fff* 12 12 11 3

59 12 7 3 | loco 11 4 5 4 5

60 10 10 5

61 10 10 | loco 6 GLISS.

Figure 1.3: Steve Vai, 'Tender Surrender', bb. 58-61, guitar line

the point at which the passion Vai is putting into the guitar line surpasses the line's ability to match it, and it 'implodes'. The music can hardly do this if the guitar line is simple, rhythmic, easy to sing and slow. It must be frantic, too fast, melodically bizarre, and must make less and less sense until it makes none at all, at which point something must give: in this case, the drastic shift to opening melody. This passage can be seen as an amazing show of virtuosity; or it can be seen as the only possible way to have what has come previously in the song to reach its climax and resolution. And it is under this latter aspect that we can see the art in it.

It might be suggested that I am arguing here that what art consists in, if it is found in Vai's ability to lead the body of the song back to the opening melody as well as he does, is something like imaginative or intellectual virtuosity; this would be mistaken. To show this, I will consider Ravel's orchestration of Debussy's 'Danse', the fifth and final movement of his *Suite bergamasque*, and which is sometimes known as 'Tarantelle styrienne', which arrangement is both imaginatively virtuosic and art. Its imaginative virtuosity lies in the peerless sense of acoustic colour apparent in the orchestration. Putting the opening melody on trumpet, and having it counterpoint with pizzicato strings; the French horn and then muted trumpet pedal against harp chords at b. 62 (figure 1.5); the sudden introduction of a lush string texture at b. 224, which texture lasts only a few tantalising bars before the cooler wind texture regains dominance; all these things are undeniably products of a stunning imaginative vision.

62 **Allegretto**

Piano

Figure 1.4: Debussy, 'Danse', from *Suite Bergamasque*, bb. 62-82

62 (Allegretto)

Bassoons

Horns in F

Harp

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

70

Fl. *p*

Cl. 1. solo *p*

Bsn. 1. *p*

Hn. *sf* *p*

Vc. *mf* *pp*

77

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

Bsn. *f*

Hn. *f* *p*

Tpt. *f* mute on 1. *p*

Cym. *p*

Hp. *p*

Vln. I *f* pizz. *p* div. *un.*

Vln. II *f* pizz. *p* *div.*

Vla. *f* arco *p*

Vc. *f* *p*

Cb. *f* *p*

Figure 1.5 (this page and bottom of previous page): Debussy, 'Danse', from *Suite Bergamasque*, bb. 62-82, arranged for orchestra by Ravel

But, despite my garrulity, I am not suggesting that Ravel's imaginativeness is why his orchestration of Debussy's music is art. Indeed, it couldn't be so: because he has to be imaginative in the right way. Putting the opening melody on trumpet works better than putting it on, say, flute or first violins would work; and it is also more imaginative. But it is not better because it is more imaginative. Rather, Ravel's imaginativeness is good because it allows him to see *that* the muted trumpet is a better choice than the alternatives, even though it is less obvious. So there is art in Ravel's orchestration; but this is distinct from his ability to see how to create art, which capacity we might well also admire. (See Kreitman (2011: pp. 476-7).)

4. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with pointing at the phenomenon which it is the task of this dissertation to analyse and discuss, and with demonstrating that this phenomenon is one of which plenty of people have experience. In discussing thinkers who have written about the question, in giving what I take to be the correct analysis of the phenomenon, in considering various terms that used to capture the phenomenon, and in giving examples of it, I hope to have done so. In any case, I now leave this task, and turn to a rather more technical one.

Chapter Two

Intentions and the Meanings of Artworks

In Ch. 3, I will argue that an artist communicates with her audience through her art. This claim relies, in part, on the question of what we do, should do or can do in interpreting art; and on the question of what determines the meaning of some instance of art. It is these two inter-related questions I will consider in this chapter. If putting ourselves on the receiving end of an artist's communication is, can be or should be no part of our interpretative practice, and if the meaning of a piece of art has nothing to do with what the artist put into it, then it makes it very hard, if not impossible, to sustain the position that art involves the artist communicating with those who apprehend her art.

This chapter discusses artworks and utterances, rather than art. But if the argument of this chapter is correct, then it will apply to art as well as artworks and utterances. This is because, if my analysis of art in Ch. 3 is correct, art must be an

artwork or an utterance. I do not discuss it directly simply because by discussing artworks and utterances, I can more easily feed into existing debates.

The debates I will feed into concern what determines the meaning of an artwork, and there are two of them. The first is between intentionalism and anti-intentionalism. This debate is concerned with whether intentions play any role at all in determining the meanings of utterances or of artworks. The main protagonists here are George Dickie, W. Kent Wilson and Noël Carroll. I will engage in this debate in §2, and come down in favour of Carroll. Indeed, I will argue that the debate is somewhat confused, and that Dickie and Wilson in fact accept Carroll's claim that intentions are relevant to an utterance's meaning, appearances of their theory notwithstanding. And indeed, this is to be expected, as, as I argue, denying that intentions have any role in determining an utterance's meaning is totally implausible.

The second debate, between actual intentionalism, hypothetical intentionalism and value-maximisation theory, accepts the relevance of intentions to the meaning of utterances and artworks, and centres on the way, and the extent to which, intentions determine an utterance's or artwork's meaning. One might reasonably think that my interest in the intentionalist debate is exhausted once I have established that intentions are relevant to an artwork's meaning. That there is communication between the artist and his or her audience is established by this, and this is the thesis it is the purpose of this chapter to support. Is it not at best pointless, and at worst stifling, to argue that this communication must take some particular form? No: as we shall see in my discussion of Stephen Davies's value-

maximisation position, there is still room for the determined to break the communicative connection established by the claim that intentions have a role in determining an utterance's meaning. As such, I will argue against Davies's value-maximisation theory.

But one cannot dismiss an account without offering an alternative. The alternatives in this debate are hypothetical intentionalism and actual intentionalism, each of which consists of a number of mutually exclusive positions. I will not give an exhaustive account of these positions, because, first, to do so would make this chapter over-long, and second, I do not need to, as most of them are compatible with my broader claim that art involves a communication between artist and audience similar to the communication involved in quotidian utterances. What I will do is introduce what seems to me the most plausible of these positions - Jerrold Levinson's hypothetical intentionalism - and defend it against various criticisms.

It is worth noting that the literature on this topic deals almost exclusively with the interpretation of literature. This is presumably because it is easiest to talk about: there is already a literature on the meanings of utterances, new papers will want to respond as directly as possible to the tradition, and so on. However, I will argue in §§2.1.1-2.1.2 that at least some non-literary arts have meaning in much the way literary art and linguistic quotidian utterances do, and so, that interpretations can be right or wrong in more or less the same way in these arts.

1. Various Terms Introduced and Clarified

Before going into detailed discussion of the various merits and problems of the various positions on the role of intentions in the meaning of utterances, it is worth clarifying some of the terms that will be used in the discussion.

Intention: This term refers to whatever is in the mind of an artist or utterer when she is creating an artwork or uttering something, and which affects the nature of the artwork or utterance. More specifically, the term can refer to a number of types of intention: categorial intention, semantic intention, programmatic intentions, active intentions, or final intentions.⁶ I am interested in the first two sorts: categorial and semantic intention. Categorial intentions concern what sort of thing is being uttered: what language it is in, whether it is a fiction or a biography, for example. More abstractly, they concern the category in which an utterance is to be interpreted. Semantic intentions concern what the utterer means by her utterance, given certain linguistic and contextual considerations; for example, what she means by uttering 'the cat is on the mat', given such a context. It is quite possible to be an intentionalist regarding only some of these intentions. Indeed, many philosophers in the hypothetical intentionalist/actual intentionalist/value maximisation theory debate are intentionalists with regard to (some) categorial

⁶ Michael Hancher, in 'Three Kinds of Intention' (1972), considers the latter three sorts. Jerrold Levinson, in 'Intention and Interpretation' (1992: pp. 232-3), considers the first two.

intentions, regardless of their views on the relevance of semantic intentions to a work's meaning.

Utterance: I do not have a very specific definition of an utterance; nor, I think, do I need one. I hope it will suffice to say a few brief words about it. An utterance is basically something said or written or typed in Morse code or whatever, typically by a person who has the aim of expressing or communicating something. So 'There is a cat' is an utterance, and is so whether it is spoken or written down. By extension, artworks can be said to be utterances. (Literary utterances are sometimes called, after Levinson, literances.⁷) It is a bit odd to call artworks utterances, I admit; however, as I will argue in §2.1, there is no good reason to think that artworks are something fundamentally different to utterances. As such, I will use the term to refer to them. I take it that interrupted sentences and unfinished artworks can also be utterances. Because of this breadth of scope of 'utterance', I will tend to use it rather than 'artwork', which, I think, applies uneasily to unfinished artworks.⁸

Meaning: Talk of the meaning of an artistic or quotidian utterance can mean many things. It can, for example, refer to the proposition expressed by a sentence, the semantic meaning of the sentence, or to what it implies about the moral life of its utterer. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delve very deeply into questions of meaning, but what I mean by the meaning of an utterance, roughly,

⁷ He coins this term in his 'Intention and Interpretation' (1992), p. 229.

⁸ I am not contradicting myself here. An unfinished artwork is not necessarily an artwork in the way that a yellow car is necessarily a car: the 'unfinished' may qualify the 'artwork' in the manner of 'koala' in 'koala bear' or 'pseudo-' in 'pseudo-intellectual'.

is what someone will have communicated to them in correctly apprehending the utterance, when they are familiar with the language in which it is being uttered, and are familiar with the requisite historical, cultural, etc., context. This is not an uncontroversial understanding. Stephen Davies, for instance, argues that the meaning of an artwork can be affected by its aesthetic merit (2006a). I will argue against Davies in more detail in §2 and §3.1; to foreshadow, I will just say that the definition is plausible with regard to quotidian utterances; and as quotidian and artistic utterances should be understood in the same way, it should be adopted for artistic utterances too.

Interpretation: Interpretation, particularly the interpretation of art, can involve many things. As Stephen Davies puts it,

[s]ome... interpret the [art]work as a symptom of its author's psychology and values or use it primarily to illustrate theories first developed in other connections. Some playfully depart from or deconstruct the work. Some regard authors as dead and the interpreter as free to complete the work as she chooses through the reading she offers. Some reflect on the body of interpretation the work has received and on the significance it has thereby come to hold for later audiences. (2006a: p. 223)

I am not interested in denying that any of these are legitimately called interpretation. However, I do take it that none of them are primarily or directly involved in understanding the meaning of the artwork: they are interested rather in creating exciting meanings that the bare text or paint of the artwork could have had were it produced in a different time or culture, by someone else, or whatever. The

work's actual meaning, I take it, must be more closely tied to the artwork as understood in light of its full historical and cultural context, as all parties to the debates considered here accept; I will more controversially argue that interpretation has to be tied to the artist's intentions too. But of course, none of this is not to hold that such endeavours are illegitimate: they can no doubt be illuminating and entertaining. For simplicity's sake, I will use the word 'interpretation' in this chapter in the narrow sense of 'getting at the utterance's meaning'.

2. Intentionalism and Anti-Intentionalism

In this section, I will argue for two claims: first (in §2.1), that there is no binary difference between artistic and quotidian utterances, and that, following from this, we should not interpret them in totally different ways. The second claim I will argue for (in §2.2) is that the way in which we should interpret utterances necessarily involves implicit or explicit, assumed or argued-for, reference to the utterer's intention. Otherwise put, the meaning of an utterance is determined in part by the intention of its utterer.

2.1 Artistic and Quotidian Communication

Some anti-intentionalists have argued that it is no virtue of intentionalism that it explains literary and quotidian uses of language in the same way, because literary and quotidian uses of language are very different. Roland Barthes and Monroe Beardsley are perhaps the most famous advocates of this position; Stephen Davies (2006a) and George Dickie (2006) are more recent advocates.

I will not discuss Barthes's and Beardsley's arguments, as I find the objections levelled against them by Carroll (1992: pp. 102-12) and Dutton (1987) conclusive, and because space prohibits arguing against everyone. I will consider Davies's and Dickie's arguments in §2.1.3 and §2.1.4 respectively. First, though, it is worth arguing *for* the claim that we should interpret quotidian and artistic utterances in the same way. By doing this, my rejection of Dickie's and Davies's attempts to separate them will not leave us simply unable to decide whether or not to separate them. I will consider Noël Carroll's attempt to argue this (in §2.1.1), and then (in §2.1.2) advance an argument of my own. In each case, the argument only establishes that the kind of communication going on in artistic utterances is the same as the one that goes on in quotidian utterances; that we ought to treat like things alike is not further argued for.

2.1.1 Noël Carroll's Argument that We Should Understand Artistic and Quotidian Utterances in the Same Way

Carroll argues that “just as an ordinary conversation gives us a stake in understanding our interlocutor, so does interaction with an artwork” (1992: p. 117). He argues for the analogous nature of our understanding of quotidian and artistic utterances by, first, assuming that in “what, for want of a better term, we might call serious conversation” (p. 118), or might also call ‘deep’ conversation, we are interested in large (“constitutive” (*ibid.*)) part in “the prospect of community” (*ibid.*). In other words, when we interpret an interlocutor’s utterances, we do so with a mind to understanding what he said: not with a mind to understanding him in the most aesthetically (or cognitively, or morally, or whatever) rewarding way. Were we not to do so, we would not be engaging with *him* at all, but some figment of our own imagination. “A conversation that left us with only our own clever construals or educated guesses, no matter how aesthetically rich, would leave us with the sense that something was missing. That we had neither communed nor communicated.” (*ibid.*)

Carroll then argues that a similar thing goes on in art. “An important part of why we are interested in art is that it affords not only an opportunity to reap aesthetic satisfaction but is an opportunity to exercise our interpretive abilities in the context of a genuine conversation. Clever construals, even if aesthetically dazzling, do not necessarily serve our desire to commune or communicate with an-

other person." (*ibid.*) I will consider Carroll's arguments for this in Ch. 3. For now I want only to say that Carroll's observations here are quite on the mark; *prima facie*, utterances and literances should be interpreted in the same way.

2.1.2 A Second Argument that We Should Understand Artistic and Quotidian Utterances in the Same Way

There is one more consideration I want to mention that supports the claim that we should interpret quotidian and artistic utterances in the same way. It is that literary and quotidian utterances are on a continuum with each other; and so it is unclear when, if ever, we should change our manner of interpretation. (This is somewhat like a Sorites paradox, but this is not a problem because it is not uncontroversial, in this debate, that there is *ever* a mountain of sand.) To take the example of literature, consider the below attempt to sketch out a rich continuum from quotidian to literary utterance.

On the far-quotidian side of the scale, imagine a simple statement of one's emotion: Fiona utters, "I feel very cheerful today." Now suppose she wants to elaborate a bit more, in order that she be better understood. "I feel very cheerful today, because I punched a policeman in the face yesterday, and got away with it", she says. But suppose you look at her blankly, and she realises that you don't see how she could believe that punching policemen is a virtuous activity, and so

that you don't understand what particular species of cheer she feels. So she elaborates some more:

I feel very cheerful today, because I punched a policeman in the face and got away with it; and I bloody hate policemen. They are in my experience deeply unpleasant characters, authoritarian and holier-than-thou. I was at a protest yesterday, and the policeman in question had been particularly rough toward some other protestors.

Already this is looking a bit, if not much, like a story, and like a literance. But suppose now that Fiona is speaking at a dinner party, over post-dinner drinks, and that her tongue is a bit looser. She might now tell a much longer story, describing in greater detail what the protest was about, the policemen she'd known in the past, exactly how she felt when running away from the policeman she'd just clobbered, and so on. We can imagine further that she's a great story-teller, and that everyone is thoroughly enjoying the story, which is told with great panache. Perhaps one of the reasons that she is so admired is her wonderful sense of apposite simile and metaphor; perhaps she has a reputation for relating her stories to the current political atmosphere, or interjects the stories with philosophical musings. We can imagine further that she is such a good story-teller that people invite her around to dinner parties just so they can hear her famous stories; and further that she is eventually convinced to write them down for circulation among friends, or, via a publishing house, for sale in bookshops. (A real-life example of this might be Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which,

as I understand, were originally told by Carroll to a child-friend on a boat, and were later written down for her amusement, and only later, on the urging of friends of Carroll, published. The fictional novel Bradley Pearson recounts in Murdoch's *The Black Prince* is also interesting in this regard.)

By now, it looks very much like Fiona's utterances are literances; but at what point have they become so? When it stops being the case that she's explaining why she is cheerful, and becomes the case that she's telling a story? But at what point is that? The recounting I have put in a block quotation seems to be ambiguous between a story and an explanation of her cheer; and if one disagrees, one can add and remove sentences and clauses till one arrives at something that one does consider ambiguous between explanation and story. Perhaps, then, Fiona's story becomes a literance when it is written down? But this has the consequence that diary entries and shopping lists are literances. Perhaps it becomes a literance when it is written down for replication and distribution, then? But this has the consequence (as does the previous option) that if some literance, such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* or Homer's poems, had never been written down in this way, but only recounted, it would not be a literance. And this is hardly plausible. It looks, then, like quotidian and literary utterances are on a continuum, and should not be understood in binarily different ways.

I want briefly to argue that at least some non-linguistic artworks are also on a continuum with quotidian utterances. When Fiona says that she punched the policeman, she will no doubt consciously and unconsciously use sundry expressive devices to underline various aspects of her telling. As she tells of the punch she

might re-enact it; she might sketch the policeman's surprised face on a piece of paper if there is one to hand; her face will adopt various expressions; and so on. If she were visually minded, we could imagine that she would spend more time drawing a more evocative image of what the policeman's expression looked like after being punched; and we can make it more and more evocative, and have it require more and more time, until we have arrived at something undeniably artistic rather than quotidian. Similar things can be done for dance – suppose she were to consider much more carefully her mimicking of how she punched the policeman – or, I take it, any other art. (Telling a story about how it can get from the obviously quotidian utterance to music is perhaps more difficult; but then, if music is 'the most abstract of the arts', perhaps this is just as it should be.)

This, then, gives us *prima facie* reason to interpret artistic and quotidian utterances in the same way. I will now consider Davies's and Dickie's attempts to break this analogy, starting with Davies's.

2.1.3 Stephen Davies's Attempt to Separate Quotidian and Artistic Utterances

On p. 228 of 'Authors' Intentions, Literary Interpretation, and Literary Value' (2006a), Davies says that "when [an] utterer misspeaks we... attend to what she means rather than to what she says", but that in interpreting art, we attend to

what the artwork says rather than what its artist meant.⁹ If this is so, it is a disanalogy between artistic and quotidian utterances on which one might found the claim that they should be interpreted differently. However, the observation is inaccurate on two counts. It both wrongly assumes that we always attend to what is meant in quotidian contexts and neglects that we often attend to what an artist meant her artwork to say rather than to what the artist of an artwork actually says in it.

On the first point, consider philosophy as practiced in journals and seminars. (I take it that our use of language in such contexts counts as quotidian.) We often attend solely to the meaning of what was said without concerning ourselves with what the utterer meant. If someone says something that is ambiguous between a number of different claims, we might respond to them by saying something like: “What you said was ambiguous. You could have meant *a*, *b* or *c* by it. If you meant *a*, then... [etc.]”. We may well say this even though we have a good hunch as to which of *a*, *b* or *c* they meant. I think that we would only ever take them as saying one of these claims if it was very clear that that’s what they meant.

To the second inaccuracy. Every novel is sent to a proofreader. The proofreader corrects mistakes: that is, attends to what she reckons the author meant, and alters the text so that it corresponds thereto. If the proofreader isn’t very good, the novel might remain riddled with typos; in such cases, the reader will attend to what the author meant, rather than to what the work says. In notated music, similar things happen. In music, missing accidentals are filled in, expres-

⁹ Levinson also makes this point in his ‘Intentions and Interpretations’ (1992), pp. 240-2.

sion markings standardised, etc. And again, people who touch up paintings will attend to what the artist meant, not what the now-faded work actually 'says', in deciding how to restore it.

I take it that the principle determining whether we attend to the work's or the artist's meaning is the same as that which determines whether we attend to the utterer's or the utterance's meaning: we attend to the intended meaning when it is clear what they meant. But consider the finale of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony, of which it is said that it doesn't 'take off' like Bruckner intended it to; but even though we know what it should have done, we attend to the work's meaning. Is this a counter-example? No: it seems quite plausible to me that we attend to the work's meaning because we do not know exactly what Bruckner meant. We are reasonably certain he intended it to 'take off'; but we don't know *exactly* what he wanted it to do; and as art is so much about capturing a particular emotion, to know 'roughly' what Bruckner meant is not good enough. It seems, then, that Davies's attempt to separate artistic from quotidian utterances has not succeeded.

2.1.4 George Dickie's attempt to separate quotidian and artistic utterances

In his 'Intentions: Conversations and Art' (2006), George Dickie argues for three disanalogies between quotidian utterances and literances (and so artistic utterances more broadly). The first, which he takes from W. Kent Wilson's 'Confes-

sion of a Weak Anti-Intentionalist: Exposing Myself' (1997) and develops, is that art is monological, whereas conversation is dialogical. The second is that conversation involves the use of conventional meanings to a much larger extent than artworks. The third is that conversations, unlike artworks, have no definite endings.

The first thing to note is that whilst Davies is arguing that there is a disanalogy between quotidian and artistic communication, Dickie is arguing that there is a disanalogy between conversational and artistic communication. Dickie is probably right that the similarities between conversation and artworks are not especially thick. However, this does not much help Dickie, as we interpret what is said to us in conversation in much the way we interpret many other forms of quotidian communication, such as lectures, weblogs, and referees' comments on our academic offerings, which bear closer resemblances to literances. To be sure, conversations and artworks are quite distant as ways of communicating go; but that is no reason for dealing with them binarily differently, as anti-intentionalists such as Dickie suggest. Further, there are counter-examples to each of Dickie's purported forms of disanalogy; I will consider these now.

I accept that conversations are always dialogical. But artworks are most certainly not always monological. There are many counter-examples to this claim. First, computer games and other forms of interactive media involve, obviously, interaction between the audience and the artwork. In some cases (although these, to my knowledge, are rare) this will involve an interaction between the audience and the artist more directly. Second, a good theatre actor or musician will be re-

ceptive to her audience's mood, and alter her performance appropriately. This can range from playing an encore of a middle movement of a symphony, to changing the delivery of one's lines, to adding or removing lines, to how one moves one's body. Third, rock and pop musicians will often get their audience to sing or clap along to their music. Fourth, artists often respond to public reaction to earlier works in later works. So, for example, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony was a reply to the severe government censure he received in response to his Fourth, and indeed was called a 'reply' by at least one newspaper.

There are two very strong if rare counter-examples I also want to mention: first, I once attended a play (if that is the best term for it) in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe called *Six Women Standing in Front of a White Wall*. In this play, six actors stood in front of a wall, but did nothing unless 'prompted' by the audience. This prompting consisted of members of the audience voluntarily climbing onto the stage and physically interacting with the actors: hugging them and touching fingers and such. The actors responded in kind. Importantly, they responded to the particular attention they received: if someone hugged an actor, she would hug him back, not generically, but in response to the particular sort of hug she received. This play was entirely dialogical: if none of the audience instigated interaction, the actors would have remained standing motionless. (It is worth noting also that this play was so powerful that quite a few members of the audience were moved to tears: to deny that this play was art is to bite a particularly lead-heavy bullet.) A second example is of Bobby McFerrin's concerts, in which he involves the audience in ways varying from having the entire congregation hum a

simple well-known melody, to having them repeat short phrases of his spontaneous invention, to going down among the seats and singing brief duets with audience members, to calling to the stage an impromptu four-part choir with which he then sings. Often it's more plausible to call this kind of thing participation: McFerrin and his 'interlocutor' can be said to be collaboratively creating an artwork, not throwing artistic utterances back and forth. But often this is not a natural interpretation of what is going on, which is enough for my argument.

The similarity between conversational and artistic communication survives, then, this assault. I will now consider Dickie's argument that conversation is "typically carried on in a natural language and [is] accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, and the like, all of which have conventional meanings. The experiences of paintings, dances, musical pieces, and the like involve some, although few, conventional meanings." (2006: p. 80) The first thing to note here is that literature *does* involve conventional meanings to a huge extent, and, if anything, uses them to a greater extent than conversation, because the author does not have as many extra-linguistic devices at his disposal with which he might make clear unconventional uses of language, such as hand movement and facial expression. The English stand-up comedian Michael McIntyre has demonstrated that with the right tone of voice, one can communicate that one was on the preceding night very drunk with the phrase, "I was X last night", with X replaced with almost any past-tense verb (or noun turned into a past-tense verb, as in McIntyre's example, 'bungaloed'). The literary author has a tougher time making that phrase mean that the character in the novel (or whatever) speaking it was

drunk on the previous night; to the extent that this is so, she is more tied to conventional meanings.

Dickie is not explicitly arguing for a disanalogy between literary and conversational communication with this point, of course: he is explicitly arguing for a disanalogy between, on the one hand, “paintings, dances, musical pieces and the like”, and on the other, conversation. But as he thinks we interpret these and literary arts in the same way, I don’t think it improper to find counter-examples in literature. I have done so because counter-examples are easier to come by here; however, this said, there are some conventional meanings in non-linguistic arts (which is, I take it, what unites the arts Dickie mentions). In music, most strikingly, various intervals have conventional meanings.¹⁰ A rising fourth, going from a weak to a strong beat, played *forte* and by a solo brass instrument, for example, has a very definite conventional meaning (something like triumph or defiance, although translating it to English is beyond my capacities), and the meaning can only be upset if subverted in a way very close to the way conventional linguistic meanings can be subverted: by irony, quotation and suchlike.¹¹ Again, in painting, certain things conventionally mean certain things (a dog in a painting of the Italian Renaissance is a symbol of loyalty, for example). Dickie concedes this in saying that art uses such devices rarely. But how does the qualification ‘rarely’ help him create a disanalogy? Neither Carroll nor I are arguing that conversational and artistic communication are identical: just that they are not

¹⁰ Although this is a complicated and contested claim. See Scruton’s *The Aesthetics of Music* (1997), Ch. 7, esp. pp. 203-8.

¹¹ Scruton gives other examples, albeit in discussions with different primary focuses: the turn (*ibid.*, pp. 482-5) and the diminished seventh chord (*ibid.*, pp. 286-94).

radically different, such that we should interpret them in binarily different ways. It seems, then, that this attempt to create a disanalogy also fails.

To the third respect in which Dickie claims artistic and conversational communication are disanalogous. He writes: “conversations never [officially] end... Artworks, in contrast, are almost always officially terminated.” (2006: p. 80)

Again, Dickie acknowledges by his “*almost always*” that there are instances of artworks that don’t have an official end, and so, that the disanalogy is not hard and fast; and so, it will remain hard for him to impose a binary difference on how we should interpret quotidian and artistic utterances. However, it is worth indicating how frequently artworks have an indeterminate end, and that conversations can end determinately, as he underestimates the extent to which these things occur. If we expand the scope of ‘artistic utterance’ beyond what’s found in canonical and gallery- and concert-hall-housed art, it becomes clear that unofficially-ended artistic utterances are at least very common, and possibly the norm. A rehearsal of a jazz piece can fall apart as the saxophonist stops to ask the bassist to keep better time; it can start again, or not; in the latter case, does the piece end when the saxophonist stops playing to chastise the bassist, or when the pianist belatedly notices that everyone else has stopped and herself stops playing, or when it becomes clear that the piece won’t be resumed? If it starts again, for how long after its initial stopping can a resuming of the piece said to be the same performance? This is surely indeterminate just as the starting and ending conditions of conversations are. One can easily deny that this rehearsal is an artwork; but if it’s to be only either a quotidian or an artistic utterance, there can be

little doubt that it is the latter. More radically, one might consider John Cage's *4'33"*, or rather, one of the many versions of it he said he performed while walking along forest paths. One can well imagine (although I do not know if Cage approached the piece in this way) interrupting the performance to make a phone call, only to resume it when the call is finished; and one can imagine doing this after an interval of weeks or years, too. Similarly, I see no conceptual problem – although I concede that it is extremely rare – with improvising a melody, playing with it for a few minutes, putting down one's instrument on being distracted, and then returning to it at another time and consider oneself to be playing the same piece. Further, the rarity of artworks without determinate endings could be the result of the nature of the institutions of music performance that are currently dominant: I mean CDs, which have a fixed length; concerts, which are things one attends in the evenings for an hour; the fact that most music we, as a culture, remember is notated (this being a particularly efficient way to remember something), and that music with indeterminate length is harder to notate than music with determinate length. Of course, the rarity of music of indeterminate length could equally have caused the dominance of such institutions. But it is uncertain enough to cast serious doubt on Dickie's claim that artistic and quotidian utterances are strongly disanalogous.

I take it that similar things can be said for other temporally-extended arts: theatre, dance, story-telling, etc. Dickie's case is stronger when it comes to atemporal arts: I am not sure that a painting could be interrupted and resumed like a conversation without becoming a different sort of artwork; but even then, I am

reminded of the surrealist collaborative paintings, and I wonder if some variation on this idea could be a conversation in painting.

Dickie's attempt to break the analogy can also be questioned by arguing that conversations can have determinate endings. Dickie plausibly suggests that interrupted conversations can be resumed later on, and be the same conversation. But this is always so. If you and I were to have a conversation in a certain social or institutional context, it may be impossible to resume that conversation. For example, suppose we are heads of state conversing in an international forum for climate change. Suppose then that, a few days thereafter, with the forum finished, I want to talk to you informally about some unresolved issues that have been nagging at me. If I do talk to you, do we resume the conversation we had started in the forum, or do we start a new conversation? I am inclined to think that the conversation we had in the forum, representing our respective states, is one that could easily have been ensconced in such procedure and protocol and so on that it could not be resumed in this manner. At least, this looks possible; and if it is, Dickie's purported disanalogy looks more unlikely. Even if it is not, however, the disanalogy is already significantly weakened by the considerations of the temporal indeterminacy of some artistic utterances.

There is one more general point to make about Dickie's attempts to create a disanalogy between quotidian and artistic utterances: even if he can argue that there is a sharp distinction to be made, he has still to show why this difference merits a difference in interpretive approach. Dickie makes no attempt to do this; and, indeed, I am not sure how he could do so.

2.1.5 Summary

If the forgoing arguments have been good, I will have so far shown that there is no reason to believe that there is a sharp distinction between artistic and quotidian communication, and that there is some reason to believe that there is no such distinction. If so, it is strange to think that there is, on the one hand, one way (or many ways) in which we do or should interpret artistic utterances, and, on the other, a (or some) binarily different way (or ways) in which we do or should interpret quotidian utterances. However, I have made no attempt to show that there cannot be a binary difference which cuts differently. For example, it could be argued that we should interpret most or many artworks in one way, and should also interpret some quotidian utterances in this way; and that we should interpret many or most quotidian utterances in another way, and should also interpret some artistic utterances in this way. There is some plausibility to this approach; but it is the proper subject of another section, and, if I may give a spoiler, it doesn't give my opponents anything like enough to make the kind of general claims they want to make. In any case, I will discuss it in §3.1.

Second, I have not said anything about how we do or should interpret either quotidian or literary utterances. I have only argued that whatever the best model of interpretation is applies to both sorts of utterance equally. In order for the above to help the intentionalist, she has to argue that we interpret quotidian utterances in an intentionalist way. This claim is challenged by Dickie and W.

Kent Wilson's 'The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley' (1995); I will now consider their arguments and the debate that has developed out of this paper: Carroll's 'The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Myself' (1997), and Dickie's 'Intentions: Conversations and Art' (2006).

2.2 Are Quotidian Utterances Understood Intentionally?

Dickie and Wilson argue that it is only in exceptional cases that we aim to understand what an utterer intended their utterance to mean, and that, in the normal course of events, we rest content with understanding the utterance's meaning (1995: pp. 245-6). Carroll appears to reject this: "intentionalist considerations go into the typical comprehension of our fellow conversationalists... in the normal case" (1997: p. 308). However, Carroll understands 'intentionalist considerations' more broadly than Dickie and Wilson. This comes out in Dickie's 'Intentions' (2006): in response to Carroll's claim that intentionalist *assumptions* are a necessary ingredient in all conversational exchanges, Dickie accedes (p. 72). However, he disagrees with the claim that *figuring out* what a speaker intends is a standard feature of conversations (pp. 72-3).

We can grant Dickie and Wilson this without undermining the thought that drives Carroll to write the papers he wrote. It is clear from reading Carroll's papers, including his 'Art, Intention and Conversation' (1992), that his main con-

cern is to establish the relevance to the meaning of an artwork of its artist's intentions. Whether this means we must be constrained by assumptions about the artist's intentions, or whether it means we must actively endeavour to discover them, is irrelevant to this question of whether they are relevant. He writes: "interpretations of artworks should be constrained by our knowledge of the biography of the historical artist and our best hypotheses about the artist's actual intentions concerning the artworks in question" (1997: p. 305). (As he sees no principled distinction between artistic and quotidian utterances (*ibid.*), the same can be said for these latter.) A brief analogy shows the compatibility of these two closely-related claims with Dickie's belief that actively trying to figure out intentions is a rare phenomenon. Many people's understanding of football is constrained by beliefs about object permanence, but only in a small minority of cases will people do more than assume these beliefs' truth. The assumptive nature of our beliefs does nothing to undermine the claim that beliefs about object permanence constrain our understanding of football. Similarly, object-permanence is, as far as I am aware, our best hypothesis regarding objects' tendency to reappear so reliably after disappearing from our perception; that this hypothesis is tacit does nothing to undermine the claim that it constrains our understanding of football.

So far, then, we have seen that both intentionalists and ostensible anti-intentionalists such as Dickie and Wilson agree that facts about intentions are relevant to our interpretation of quotidian utterances (§2.2) and that we should interpret quotidian and artistic utterances in the same way (§2.1). It follows from

this that facts about an artist's intentions should affect how we interpret the art he produces; that is, that we should be intentionalists about art.

But there is more to be said, and another debate to be had. There are different sorts of intentions, which relate to utterances in different ways; and as such, different versions of intentionalism, some of which are even called anti-intentionalist. Although most philosophers now agree that intentions are in some way relevant to an utterance's meaning, the extent to which this is so, and the way in which it is so, is a matter of dispute.

3. On the Manner in and Extent to which Intentions Determine Utterance Meaning

The question of the manner in which intentions determine utterance meaning, and the extent to which it is so, is best answered by first distinguishing between different sorts of intention. As we have seen in §1, Jerrold Levinson helpfully distinguishes categorical and semantic intentions. Categorical intentions basically concern in which category an utterance is to be understood. So the word 'formidable' can be understood in the category of French or of English, and its meaning is different in each category. Similarly, a literature can be understood in the category of biography or allegory, and be understood very differently under each interpretation; and, famously, we can understand *Guernica* in the category that

we normally see it in (paintings? expressivist paintings? anti-war art?), or in the category of *guernicas*: versions of *Guernica* in various bas-relief dimensions.¹² Semantic intentions, on the other hand, concern more narrowly what some utterance means. So, if, with the categorial intention to speak English I utter 'My sister is formidable', intending formidable to mean more or less what the French *formidable* means, then this intention is a semantic intention. (Of course, it is also the case that if I were to mean the word to mean what it means in English my intention would be semantic: but the French example has categorial and semantic intentions pulling apart, and so highlights more clearly their difference to each other.)

We have, then, two questions: Do the utterer's categorial intentions affect the meaning of her utterance? and: Do the utterer's semantic intentions affect the meaning of her utterance? There are proponents and opponents of each position. Regarding the first question, philosophers such as Levinson argue that the category in which an utterance is to be judged is determined by an ideal audience, and philosophers such as Tolhurst argue that the category in which it is to be judged is determined by the audience by whom the utterer of the utterance intends it to be apprehended. The second question leads to more complicated positions; most philosophers in the debate believe that conventional meanings play a large role, but beyond that, some, such as Stephen Davies, think that aesthetic considerations can play a major determining role, whilst others, such as Robert Stecker, think that the utterer's actual intentions play a more important role.

¹² See Walton's 'Categories of Art' (1970) for a discussion of categories of art, and pp. 347-8 of that article for the *guernicas* thought-experiment.

The most radical defenders of the claim that semantic intentions are relevant to the meaning of an utterance are E. D. Hirsch, Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, who claim that – in Hirsch’s words – “a text means what its author meant” (1967: p. 1), or – in Knapp and Michaels’s words – “what a text means and what its author intends it to mean are identical” (1982/1987: p. 52). These views are not seriously considered by contemporary philosophers, who reject them for their absurd consequence of ‘Humpty-Dumpty-ism’: that, like Humpty Dumpty, we can mean whatever we want by an utterance just by willing it.¹³ And indeed, these theories cannot, so far as I can see, accommodate the distinction between an utterance’s meaning and what its utterer intended it to mean, which is something we surely all want to do: it is needed to account for the fact that we can fail to say what we mean.

This strong intentionalist position can be said to occupy the far right of the available positions. The far left – that semantic intentions do not at all determine the meaning of an utterance – is much more populous. Dickie and Wilson (1995), Stephen Davies (2006a), Robinson (*Deeper than Reason* (2005), esp. Ch. 9), Levinson (e.g., ‘Intention and Interpretation’ (1992) and ‘Hypothetical Intentionalism’ (2002)) and Nathan (e.g., ‘Irony and the Artist’s Intentions’ (1982) and ‘Art, Meaning and the Artist’s Meaning’ (2006)), to list just a few philosophers, all accept it. I do not intend to argue against this position: it is compatible with the

¹³ Hirsch, on the one hand, and Knapp and Michaels, on the other, have different positions: Hirsch holds that an utterance means what its utterer intended it to, whilst Knapp and Michaels hold that the utterance’s meaning just *is* the intended meaning. I discuss them together as they both entail Humpty-Dumpty-ism. A discussion of the difference between the two can be found in Gary Iseminger’s ‘An Intentional Demonstration?’ (1992), pp. 87-91.

claim that artistic utterances involve the expression of emotion and communication between the artist and the apprehender. What I will take issue with is what some of the above-listed philosophers say *does* determine the meaning of an utterance. Specifically, I take issue with Davies's claims on this point, which I will discuss now. I will then (in §3.2) consider Jerrold Levinson's theory, which better answers the question of what determines utterances' meaning. I will consider various criticisms levelled against the theory, and argue that it survives them with superficial emendation.

3.1 Stephen Davies and Value-Maximisation

Stephen Davies argues in 'Authors' Intentions, Literary Interpretation, and Literary Value' (2006a) that what an artwork means is determined, first and most generally, by the artist's categorial intentions; and second, by what meaning is the aesthetically superior.

The most obvious objection to this, given what's been said so far in this chapter, is that if this is how we interpret artistic utterances, and artistic and quotidian utterances are to be understood in the same way, then the meaning of quotidian utterances is always the possible meaning which is aesthetically superior, given categorial constraints. This looks to me like a *reductio ad absurdum*. To engage in a conversation, not with a mind to getting at what one's interlocutor is trying to

convey to you, but to what gives you the most aesthetic pleasure, is not to engage in any conversation worth the name. Kierkegaard, in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, considers the case of a man who is engaged in a conversation with someone who is, unbeknownst to this man, drunk. The man takes the drunk's ramblings to be coherent; in so doing, he is doubtless getting more pleasure than he would were he to take the ramblings as ramblings, but the cost of this is that he is not actually engaging with the other man. To do this knowingly, as Davies's position so far seems to entail, is bizarre.¹⁴

Davies has responses open to him, of course. The first is the denial that we should interpret artistic and quotidian utterances in the same way. The second is that his theory doesn't have such counter-intuitive consequences as the one just suggested, because categorial considerations constrain the scope of legitimate interpretation too tightly.

Taking the first response first: Davies writes: "The 'once upon a time...' that explicitly or implicitly prefaces fictional works of literature¹⁵ signals that the interpretive game that is called for differs from the one most appropriate to 'let me tell you what I think...'" (2006a: p. 242) He goes on that the interpretive game signalled by the former is one in which we are after "what the work could mean rather than [as in the interpretive game signalled by the latter] what was meant by it." (*ibid.*) Now, as I have argued in §2.1, I do not see any good reason to

¹⁴ Carroll uses this example to make a slightly different point in 'Art, Intention and Conversation' (1992), p. 121. Kierkegaard's thought is from p. 466 of the 1941 Princeton University Press edition of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

¹⁵ As Davies talks about literature here, so will I. However, as I argued in §2.1.2, I think that most of this applies to non-linguistic arts as well.

sharply distinguish artistic and quotidian utterances. If Davies is here trying to argue that the difference is which one of these two prefaces is used or implied, then I am no more convinced: *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, 1984, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and countless others, are fictional works of literature in which we discover what their authors thought as surely and as clearly as any quotidian utterance with the explicit preface of 'let me tell you what I think'.

However, Davies may be making a somewhat different point here, one which I suggested is possible in §2.1.5: Perhaps he is saying that the 'once upon a time...' that prefaces those fictional works of literature (and perhaps quotidian utterances) *which it prefaces* signals a different interpretive game than those works of literature and quotidian utterances which are prefaced by 'let me tell you what I think...' There are two points to be made about this interpretation of Davies's claim. First, it is not likely that this is what Davies meant. Throughout the article, he seems to be distinguishing all fictional literature from all quotidian utterances. Second, more substantially, it is unlikely that many works of literature are prefaced by just one of 'once upon a time...' or 'let me tell you what I think...' *Moby Dick*, for example, seems to alternate on a chapter-by-chapter basis between the two. Although it is generally more subtle, I expect similar things can be said of most literature. This consequence is especially important, because Levinson has argued that it can't be the case that works of literature switch between implied prefaces in this manner, on pain of "the minimal unity of voice or narrational

identity necessary to construe the texts as wholes disappear[ing].”¹⁶ If Levinson is right on this point, then we have to either abandon one of the prefaces, saying instead that it is always subsumed under the other, more fundamental preface; or say that some works are prefaced by ‘once upon a time...’, and others by ‘let me tell you what I think...’, and that everything in the works are to be understood as being prefaced by their respective preface. If we take the first route, it will surely be the case that the preface we abandon will be ‘once upon a time...’: whichever one we abandon we abandon for quotidian utterances as well, and it is not one bit plausible that all quotidian utterances have an implied ‘once upon a time...’ preface. It is far more reasonable to claim that all artistic utterances have an implied ‘let me tell you what I think...’ preface. (Which is not to say that it’s reasonable: just that there’s less lead in the bullet.) If we take the second route, we are faced with the task of finding works which are more plausibly interpreted as being entirely prefaced by ‘once upon a time...’ than by ‘let me tell you what I think...’.

In any case, let us see if this interpretation of Davies’s position surmounts the objection I levelled against his theory: namely, that it leads to the absurd consequence that the semantic meaning of quotidian utterances is what is most aesthetically rewarding of the possible semantic meanings of the utterances. For it to do so, Davies first has to accept that some works are entirely prefaced by ‘once upon a time...’, and then, in order that his account doesn’t correctly apply to an empty set of entities, he has to find some (that is, respond to Levinson’s objection

¹⁶ The argument is in his ‘Intention and Interpretation’ (1992), pp. 244-6. The quotation is on p. 246.

by taking the second route). I confess that I find it very difficult to come up with any uncontroversial examples. I think that most literances are only very implausibly said to be entirely prefaced by 'once upon a time...'. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* initially might be thought of as being so prefaced: there is certainly none of the explicit moralising of Dickens or Terry Pratchett in it. But that there is no explicit moralising is quite a way away from what Davies wants, which is that there is no determinate meaning at all except that which we determine by aesthetically comparing the work as understood under different interpretations. It seems to me more likely that what's going on in *Huck Finn* is a *denial* of multiple exciting esoteric meanings; and that there is a determinate meaning, and the meaning is *just* that Huck and Jim are rafting down a river, having various adventures. Of course, I may misunderstand this novel: perhaps Twain is satirising racism. But if he is doing this, then *Huck Finn* is *definitely* prefaced by 'let me tell you what I think...' rather than 'once upon a time...', so this is no help to Davies.

Davies's thesis becomes more plausible with regard to modernist and post-modernist art. Murdoch's *The Black Prince* is arguably an instance of this: it is told in the first person by (what may be) an unreliable narrator. I think it more plausible to interpret this as Murdoch telling us what she thinks *via* the narrator, not least because the narrator is, like Murdoch, halfway between philosophy and art (indeed, literary art), and the extended musings on the nature of art and love are very plausibly seen as expressing Murdoch's own opinions. However, I am not sure of myself here. Similarly, *Ulysses* is arguably a 'once upon a time...' work, although one might very plausibly interpret Joyce to be telling us what he thinks:

what he thinks being that language is beautiful and fun, and so on. Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* – to move from literary art – could also be suggested; but again, I am inclined to consider them to be a commentary on the artworld, rather than an open work: Warhol, I take it, is saying something like 'here's what I think: isn't it strange how easily something can become an artwork?' Davies's account might also be plausibly applied to manufactured pop music and the sort of poetry that comes out of software which creates poems by algorithmic procedures.

What the foregoing hopefully suggests is that there is not much literature that can be said to be prefaced by 'once upon a time...' with any plausibility. What all this means is that Davies's theory has gone from a theory about the interpretation of literature to the interpretation of some modernist and postmodernist literature. But there is more to be said still: what if categorial intentions are less determining of an utterance's meaning than I have been assuming them to be? Perhaps categorial intentions are pervasive enough that they determine whether, for example, *Huck Finn* is a satire on racism, but that, within these confines, the finer meaning is determined by what is most aesthetically rewarding. Perhaps there will be a sentence here and there which could be interpreted, for example, either as a simple claim about the strength of the river-flow, or a sly comment on political activism; and both of these interpretations are compatible with the sort of work *Huck Finn* is. For Davies to make this move, he can either say that all utterances, literary or quotidian, are to be interpreted in this way; or he can say that it is only utterances prefaced by 'once upon a time...' that are to be so interpreted. If he takes the former route, he still has to surmount the objection that his view entails that

we should sometimes converse with a drunk as if he were sober. (Although the examples will be less striking than this, the problem remains). By the latter route, he arrives at a position weaker than the one we've just granted him; as such, there is no profit in exploring it, and so I will not do so.

It seems, then, that the least problematic version of Davies's theory is that the meaning of an utterance is, when prefaced implicitly or explicitly by 'once upon a time...' - that is, by a preface which signals that we are interested in what the utterance could mean rather than in what was meant by it - the meaning is that which is the most aesthetically rewarding. Perhaps this is true of such utterances; whether there are any is a matter of debate. Perhaps some modernist and post-modernist artworks are examples of such utterances; but I am not especially persuaded by any ostensible examples. In any case, although I have shown that there are some problems with Davies's actual position, it could yet be the most plausible account of utterance meaning if there are no viable alternatives. In the next section I will consider one such alternative, the hypothetical intentionalism of Jerrold Levinson.

3.2 Jerrold Levinson and Hypothetical Intentionalism

Levinson's version of hypothetical intentionalism¹⁷ holds that the meaning of an utterance is "roughly... what an appropriate hearer would most reasonably take a speaker to be trying to convey in employing a given verbal vehicle in the given communicative-context." ('Hypothetical Intentionalism' (2002), p. 302) Levinson thinks that hypothetical intentionalism is true in both quotidian and artistic contexts. He applies hypothetical intentionalism to literature thus: "the core meaning of a literary work is given by the best hypothesis, from the position of an appropriately informed, sympathetic, and discriminating reader, of authorial intent to convey such and such to an audience through the text in question." (*ibid.*) In this section, I will consider two objections to Levinson's theory. I will first consider Stephen Davies's criticism that hypothetical intentionalism collapses into value-maximisation theory. I will argue that it does not do so. I will then dispute that the audience whose artistic-intention hypothesis determines an utterance's meaning is necessarily "an appropriately informed, sympathetic, and discriminating" one. This criticism, which I will argue to be on the mark, does not, however, affect the overall plausibility of Levinson's theory, and, rather, merely serves as an emendation. My discussion here will not entail that hypothetical intentionalism is the best account of what determines utterance meaning; to do that, I would have to compare it to, for example, Stecker's moderate actual intentionalism. But

¹⁷ There are other versions of the theory which have quite different strengths and weaknesses. However, as I will not discuss them here, I will refer to Levinson's hypothetical intentionalism as 'hypothetical intentionalism' *simpliciter*.

both Stecker's and Levinson's accounts are compatible with my broader thesis, which is that artworks involve communication between the artist and his or her audience. What the discussion will entail, however, is that Levinson's account is not susceptible to any of the objections I have considered, which, as far as I am aware, are the most threatening.

3.2.1 On Whether Hypothetical Intentionalism Collapses into Value-Maximisation Theory

To Davies's objection first. Levinson allows in 'Intention and Interpretation' (1992: pp. 224-5) that aesthetic considerations can, in crunch cases in which two interpretations have equal likelihood of being correct given only non-evaluative considerations, play a role in determining the meaning of an utterance, in accord with a principle of charity. Davies seizes on this, arguing that evaluative considerations themselves determine the likelihood of an interpretation being correct, at least in the case of art (2006a: p. 241). This is because we must hypothesise that the artist, in creating an artwork, is interested in making it good. This is reasonable enough: in any case, we can grant it without granting Davies's conclusion that hypothetical intentionalism collapses into value-maximisation theory. This is Levinson's tack in 'Defending Hypothetical Intentionalism' (2010: pp. 141-2). He distinguishes between the general sense in which artists want their art to be good; and the narrow sense in which artists can see that their artwork can be

made good in some respect, and make it good in this way for this reason. That the latter is the case is far less clear: only the greatest, if any, artists are perspicacious enough that we can automatically assume that the most aesthetically rewarding interpretation is the one they intended.

In a co-authored paper ('The Hypothetical Intentionalist's Dilemma' (2010)), Stecker and Davies counter-respond. As far as I can make out, the response (on pp. 308-9) is two-fold: the first strategy seems simply to consist of asserting that the meaning of an utterance is the most aesthetically rewarding one unless there is "very strong evidence" (p. 309) that the aesthetically inferior one is what was meant. If this is what is happening, it does not succeed in converting me to Davies's position. As there is no argument, I cannot discuss it further. The second strategy is an argument that the hypothetical intentionalist does "not have to be committed to taking all aspects of an author's public persona at face value" (*ibid.*), and so, in cases such as one in which a Christian author writes something which could have been an aesthetically wonderful anti-Christianity text, but which was most likely simply an aesthetically inferior description of an authoritarian father, we can legitimately understand the text to be a criticism of Christianity, and say that the author was lying about her religion.

To be sure, we can do this: but if we do, it will not be on the grounds that aesthetic value can determine semantic utterance meaning, which is what Stecker and Davies want to say¹⁸ is the case: it will be because we believe that it is most

¹⁸ Sometimes, at any rate. On the following page (p. 310), they write, "it is not clear to us that aesthetic considerations can legitimately determine semantic meaning", by which

likely that the author intended the meaning, given, for example, our knowledge that she was ambivalent toward her religion, prone to generalisation, and so on. The hypothetical intentionalist may well consider a more aesthetically rewarding interpretation to be more likely to be the real meaning, but this consideration will only affect the meaning of the utterance indirectly: it will only affect it via what it is most likely the author intended to mean.

In sum, then, Davies's argument that hypothetical intentionalism collapses into value-maximisation theory fails, because it is quite conceivable that what the artist most likely intended to mean by an utterance is not the aesthetically most valuable. Davies's, and Davies and Stecker's, arguments to the contrary do nothing to unseat this.

3.2.2 On what determines the categorial meaning of an utterance

I will now consider how we are to determine the category into which we say an utterance falls. When I utter 'formidable', what makes it that I am speaking French or English? William Tolhurst, the first advocate of hypothetical intentionalism, thought that the answer was found in determining who the appropriate audience of the utterance is (see 'On What a Text is and How it Means' (1979)). Tolhurst also thought that the appropriate audience is the one the utterer in-

they mean, I think, that they think that aesthetic considerations cannot affect semantic meaning. I expect that there is some confusion here, resulting from the paper being co-written by an actual intentionalist and a value-maximisation theorist.

tended would apprehend the utterance. Levinson, on foot of various criticisms of this proposal, argues instead that it is an ideal audience. However, both of these accounts have problems. I will now discuss and reject them. I will then supplant them with my own proposal: The utterer determines the category in which her utterance is to be understood by determining the language in which she is uttering.

I will first consider Tolhurst's proposal. It is susceptible to a number of criticisms. I will mention two of them. The first is by Dickie and Wilson (1995: p. 244). They point out that there is no intended audience of a speech being rehearsed in an empty room: but yet, we still want to say that it has meaning, and that we are in a position to evaluate it (so long as it consists of grammatical English (or whatever language) and so on, of course). I am not aware of any response to this criticism; in any case, there is another problem. It is raised by Robert Stecker, in his 'The Role of Intention and Convention in Interpreting Artworks' (1993). His objection is that "we sometimes think that, even if a writer is addressing her contemporaries, later generations of readers can discover facts about the work's meaning not available to the intended audience." (p. 480) The broader impact of this criticism can be seen by taking an example. Suppose two un-self-acknowledged racists, in conversation with only each other, note the relatively low educational standards of the members of the ethnic group toward which they harbour racist sentiment, and infer from it the lower intellectual potential of the members of this group. Suppose then that someone else overhears this conversation, but knows that, in fact, the reason for the lower educational standard

is some complex of socio-economic factors. Further, suppose that for various educational and cultural reasons, this interpretation of the data is beyond the reach of the racists. It seems quite reasonable to say that the eavesdropper is in a position to understand the racists' utterances' meaning. This is a related criticism, inasmuch as the problem is with unintended apprehenders' seeming ability to legitimately evaluate the reasonableness of an utterance. Again, I am not aware of any response, and am not sure how one could be made.

It seems reasonable, in light of these problems, to turn from talk of intended audience to talk of an ideal audience. This is Levinson's proposal: the meaning of an utterance is determined by the meaning an ideal audience would take it to have. He profiles, roughly, the ideal reader¹⁹ "as one versed in and cognisant of the tradition out of which the work arises, acquainted with the rest of the author's oeuvre, and perhaps familiar as well with the author's public literary and intellectual identity or persona." (1992: p. 228) He also stipulates that this ideal reader will not have access to the author's private diaries and other such 'external sources' (p. 224, n. 8), and that aesthetic considerations can have a small role in determining semantic meaning (p. 224-5). However, as he says (p. 224, n. 8), there is no clear criterion telling us what exactly the ideal apprehender has access to. This is a problem with the thought that semantic meaning is determined by what an ideal audience would take it to mean: it is unclear what exactly the determinant of meaning is, and unclear even how exactly we might find it. This is not necessarily a massive problem - explanations have to end somewhere - but if

¹⁹ This quotation is from a discussion of literary meaning, thus 'reader', but I take it the point generalises to any apprehender of any utterance.

there is an alternative account of what determines meaning which does so more elegantly, then we have good reason to prefer it. I think the proposal that semantic meaning is determined by the conventions of the language being spoken, and that which language is being spoken is determined by the utterer's intention in that regard, is such a one. (On how I differentiate languages, see §3.2.3 below.)

This proposal has two aspects. The first is that as regards what the language being uttered in is, it is committed to actual intentionalism. The second is that as regards what the utterance's semantic meaning, it is committed to anti-intentionalism.²⁰ Of course, as regards semantic intentions, one can be either a

²⁰ This second aspect – whether we should be intentionalists or anti-intentionalists with regard to semantic meaning – is not relevant to this discussion, because I don't see how being an intentionalist could sever the communicative link between the utterer and the apprehender, and Stephen Davies's value-maximisation theory – which would sever the link – has already been substantially rejected. However, although I am discussing here a position that is exclusive of actual intentionalism, I am not doing this because I believe actual intentionalism to be mistaken: it is just easier to defend one theory than two simultaneously.

I want to say a brief word about why I am advocating hypothetical intentionalism rather than actual intentionalism. It seems to me that the really important difference between these positions is that hypothetical intentionalism holds that utterance meaning is determined by what ideal apprehenders would take the utterance to mean, whilst actual intentionalism holds that the meaning is determined, at least in some situations, by what was actually intended. If the hypothetical intentionalist allows all evidence to be considered in determining what is the most likely meaning (which, I take it, is what ideal apprehenders would take the meaning to be), then in practice, she will always agree with the actual intentionalist with regard to an utterance's meaning. The accounts can still differ on a formal level: for example, it could turn out to be incoherent to say, with the actual intentionalist, that intended meanings sometimes determine semantic meaning; or hypothetical intentionalism can be judged to be superior because more unified. I choose to defend hypothetical intentionalism because I am tentatively convinced of the validity of these criticisms.

However, if one thinks that what really divides hypothetical from actual intentionalism is the sort of evidence of an utterer's intention that is admissible, then one might well think that the hypothetical intentionalist cannot be serious about communicating with the author if she disallows private diaries and so on. There are good responses to this objection (see Stecker (1993) for one; also Levinson's considerations about how artists 'play the game' of art in creating art, a game which, according to Levinson, only allows public evidence of intention to determine an artwork's meaning (1992)). However, they may well not be good enough. If I took this to be the key distinction, I probably would not be de-

hypothetical intentionalist or a value-maximisation theorist. I have abandoned value-maximisation theory above, so I will assume in the below that hypothetical intentionalism offers the best account of semantic meaning: that is, that semantic meaning is what a fully competent, discriminating, informed, and so on, audience would take it to mean. (This formula may have to be complicated, but I will not attempt this here.)

I am not aware of any attempts to criticise the first aspect of the proposal, which is what I am interested in defending here. However, it can meet all the objections raised against intended- and ideal-audience accounts of how categorial meaning is determined. I will discuss four of these in the next section. I will then discuss two further objections that dispute the second aspect of hypothetical intentionalism.

3.2.3 Objections to Hypothetical Intentionalism

First, let us consider Dickie and Wilson's objection that private speech has meaning. According to this account, private speech does have meaning, unless one can somehow intend to utter various English-language sentences, mean by them what they mean in English, but not intend to speak English. But for this to be a

fending hypothetical intentionalism here. But – and this is why this discussion is all in a footnote – were actual intentionalism the superior theory, the main argument of this chapter would be just as plausible. This is because, to repeat, both accounts keep the communicative connection between artist and audience.

possibility, one would have to have a very conscious and narrow understanding of intention, such that one only intends *X* if one explicitly says to oneself “I intend *X*; but I do not see any reason to adopt such an understanding. And to take Stecker’s objection that unintended audiences can often understand utterances: Eavesdroppers can have access to the meanings of utterances of which they are not the intended audience, so long as, and to the extent that, they can understand the language being spoken (and have relevant contextual information).

I will now consider three further criticisms that have been levelled against intended-audience accounts of categorial meaning of utterances, and show that my proposal is immune to them. The first, which is very much like a direct criticism of my position, is that of Daniel O. Nathan. The second, that the account leaves us in a terrible epistemic position, is by Robert Stecker. The third, that my position doesn’t allow for a wide enough scope of legitimate interpretation, is by Stephen Davies.

Nathan’s criticism is in ‘Irony and the Artist’s Intentions’ (1982), and rests on the ground that the position leads to the possibility that an utterer “may be speaking a language the meaning of which is known only to himself and his family” (p. 250). But as which language we are speaking is a private matter, so is the meaning of what we say. But to say that semantic meaning is indirectly determined by the artist’s intentions (i.e., via their categorial intention of what the language they’re speaking is) is no better than to say that it is directly determined by

their intentions, as the actual intentionalist says.²¹ But I must confess that I do not share Nathan's intuition here. It certainly seems strange that merely by willing it, I can (*à la* Humpty-Dumpty) make it that when I utter the English word 'glory', it means 'a nice knock-down argument', for the reason commonly adduced: the meanings of English words and sentences are determined by convention. But it seems entirely plausible that merely by willing it I can choose to speak English_{glory}, a language identical to English in every respect except that the word 'glory' means 'a nice knock-down argument'. Of course, I can't expect anyone to understand me; but if I make explicit to them that this is what I'm doing, then they will normally interpret what I'm saying as spoken in English_{glory}, and the conversation will continue easily. Indeed, this, I take it, is what goes on every time a philosopher stipulates the meaning of a term for clarity's sake when its meaning in normal English is ambiguous; and it's what goes on every time a new slang word is invented.²²

There are examples that support this in art and art criticism, too. In art: Joanna Newsom's song 'Swansea' (on *The Milk-Eyed Mender* (2004)) has lyrics that are largely incomprehensible, and incomprehensible because deeply private. My natural reaction to the lyrics, on hearing the song, is not what Nathan thinks it should be – that their meaning is very different to what she intended them to be – but that I don't understand them. I take it that this is because she is speaking to

²¹ I take it that Stecker makes the same criticism in 'The Role of Intention and Convention in Interpreting Artworks' (1993), pp. 479-80.

²² I also think that this is what drives Knapp and Michaels to say that an utterance's meaning is just its utterer's meaning (1982/1987); their discussions of the phenomenon of someone saying 'go' when he means 'stop' (pp. 59-61) is very easily seen as an argument that we can freely choose which language we speak.

some particular person (a lover, perhaps), and speaking to him or her in a language they share. In art criticism: We can perhaps – although this is not obvious – understand art critics, in their rifling through artists' private communications and diaries, their attempting to understand the *Zeitgeist* of their culture, and so on, as trying to find out exactly which language they were speaking.

I will now consider a criticism briefly canvassed by Stecker, in 'The Role of Intention and Convention in Interpreting Artworks' (1993), pp. 479-80. It is that "it will often be impossible to know which of numerous possible intended audiences, the author actually intended to address." (p. 480) Translated to a criticism of my position, it is that it will often be impossible to know exactly which language is being spoken. Unless we are told, that is, we cannot know whether someone is speaking, for example, English or English_{glory}. This is true: knowledge is rare. But, first, it is a problem that also affects Levinson's proposal – how do we know who an ideal audience is? – and Stecker's actual intentionalism, which is also concerned with utterers' meaning. Second, it is fairly clear in most circumstances what language an utterer intends to speak. If she is in conversation with me, I can expect her to be speaking a language that I will understand. As I noted above, it is a waste of everyone's time to talk to someone in a language they don't understand, and, except in very rare cases, people won't do it. If an utterer is writing a novel in English, I can expect her to be speaking whatever language understood by whatever sort of person she deems is likely to pick up the book. If she is writing some music for musical experts, I can expect her to be using whatever sophisticated musical language they will understand. And so on. Working

out what language one is using will often be a very manageable task. Of course, what the language is will not always be apparent, and may sometimes require in-depth literary, biographical and historical analysis. But then, this is hardly a criticism of my position: for clearly people think such analysis really is necessary, or they wouldn't undertake it.

Finally, Davies's objection (2006a: p. 231), modified from an objection against actual intentionalism, is that hypothetical intentionalism is inconsistent with there being multiple and conflicting legitimate interpretations of an artwork, which position is widely held. Briefly, the response is that artists don't know exactly in which language they are speaking, and to the extent that they don't know this, the meaning of their art is ambiguous.

But what is a language, such that we can be unsure about which language we are speaking in? Well, I understand languages very finely: I take it that, for example, late-twentieth-century Irish teenagers' slang and early-twenty-first-century Irish teenagers' slang are different languages. This, of course, is an incredibly finely-grained understanding (and it can be much finer than this: families and friends may have their own languages). But I do not mean to stir up controversy by understanding language in this way: I understand language in this way only as a convenience (perhaps I could talk of 'dialects'). Languages as closely related to each other as the two I've mentioned are going to be identical in almost every respect. They may even be identical as regards what definitions various words have in them; if this is so, they can differ only in how easily, and in what ways, certain allusions can be made in them. For instance, 'terrorism' has

become a very different word in post-9/11 English, although the definition of the term has not changed. The point, then, is this: an author can write in a way that is ambiguous between different languages, and there can be no way to disambiguate this (if we are hypothetical intentionalists, this will be because even an ideal audience will not be able to disambiguate the literance). Insofar as this is true, the meaning of the literance is indeterminate, and there is room for multiple and conflicting legitimate interpretations of the work. Note that I do not say that we have established that there are such interpretations: more needs to be said before we can say that. But I say that there is room for them. This is enough to save hypothetical intentionalism from Davies's objection.

It is worth noting that this position does not allow for a very wide scope of legitimate interpretation. An author can write ambiguously between two different contemporary languages, but she can't write ambiguously between a contemporary language and a language which only arose after her death. In fact, the scope of legitimate interpretation is not qualitatively different to the scope of legitimate interpretation of quotidian utterances. This is because its ambiguity stems from the same place: the inability of an ideal audience to reduce the ambiguity. (This is Collingwood's point on p. 311 of *The Principles of Art*.) If we want to interpret a literance very widely, we will have to do so on grounds such as I have suggested in §3.1: we must say that there is a game being played according to the rules of which we may interpret very freely, with equal legitimacy granted to a larger variety of interpretations. But even in these cases, the meaning of the artwork, as I

understand it, must be understood narrowly. It is just that, in these cases, we don't care about this meaning.

In sum, then: Both the thesis that in what language an utterance is uttered is determined by the utterer's intention and the thesis that the semantic meaning is determined by what an ideal apprehender would take it to mean have withstood the criticisms levelled against them; hypothetical intentionalism, thus, looks pretty good.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show that in getting at the meaning of an utterance, some sort of implicit or explicit reference to its utterer's intentions in uttering it is ineliminable. By arguing that there is no way in which artistic utterances are binarily different from quotidian utterances, and by arguing for the necessity to knowledge of an utterance's meaning of knowledge of its utterer's intentions, I have also attempted to show that getting at the meaning of an artwork – or more broadly an artistic utterance – ineliminably involves reference to the artist's intentions in creating it. I have allowed that some utterances do not involve necessary reference to its utterer's intentions: but such utterances are rare, if there are any at all.

I have also spelled out the way in which the utterer's intentions determine the meaning of her utterance. I have argued that it is her categorial intentions regarding the language he or she speaks that determine the utterance's meaning. Beyond this, the meaning of the utterance means what someone with a proper knowledge of the language and whatever contextual facts are relevant would understand the utterance to mean. (So, for example, if the utterance is to be understood in the category of 'late-18th-century Parisian French', the meaning is determined by what someone with a proper knowledge of the French language, late-18th-century Parisian politics and culture, and so on, would understand the utterance to mean.)²³ In cases in which the meaning would be unclear to such a person (or in cases in which two such people would disagree about the meaning), the meaning of the utterances is to that extent indeterminate.

I have done all this in order to support the claim that art involves a communication between the artist and his or her audience in the fairly direct way in which quotidian communication does so. This claim in turn supports the overall claim of this dissertation, which is that art involves the expressing of the artist's emotion, which in sympathetic apprehenders elicits an analogous emotion, and that, by this happening, the artist and those who apprehend his or her work commune with each other. In the next chapter, I will expand and defend these claims.

²³ I have not considered whether other categorial intentions can determine an utterance's meaning: for example, can one's categorial intention to write a novel (rather than a poem, say) determine whether what you write is a novel, even if it looks frightfully like a poem? My inclination is to say no: but why does the utterer's linguistic-category intention determine meaning, but not her type-of-literature intention? This interesting and perhaps important question merits discussion, but it is not requisite here.

Chapter Three

Expression in Art

In Ch. 1, I said that the correct understanding of the phenomenon I am calling art is that it is the expression of emotion. The task of this chapter is to explain what I mean by this analysis – for the meaning is not the obvious one – and defend this understanding against various objections. In explicating the understanding, I will hew very closely to Collingwood’s account, formulated in his *The Principles of Art*. This will be done in §1.1 and §1.2. This groundwork laid, I will, in §1.3 and §1.4, turn to the more centrally philosophical questions of expression. §1.3 asks *what it is* to see something as expressive, and §1.4 asks why it is that *certain things* strike us as expressive. The very brief §2 distinguishes between transitive and intransitive expression. §3 builds on the analysis of these foregoing sections by arguing that the expression of emotion, when found in art, is a large part of what gives art its particular and irreplaceable value. Another part of this particular

value lies in its closely related capacity to force us to see ourselves, each other and our society in a way that is also more emotionally honest.

Objections will be considered and responded to in the course of these three sections. However, not all the objections that have been raised to the account offered have found a narratively incongruous home there. §4 is devoted to considering these objections. §5 concludes.

1. Emotion and the Expression of Emotion

In this section, I will inquire into the phenomenon of the expression of emotion in general, and give an account of what it is to express an emotion. I will first explain what I mean by the terms ‘emotion’ (§1.1) and ‘expression’ (§1.2). I will argue, with Collingwood, that there are different sorts of expression, and that linguistic (or artistic) expression – that is, the individualisation or clarification of emotion – is the one most relevant to this dissertation. I will, in §1.3 and §1.4, turn to questions of expression which are relatively analytic, as opposed to expository. §1.3 asks the question, “What is it to see something as expressive of some emotion?” The answer I give, Richard Wollheim’s, is that it is to see the expression as ‘of a piece’ with some emotion; but in order for this seeing of expression to be the seeing of expression rather than mere ‘projection’, there must be a standard of rightness and wrongness. §1.4 asks the question, “Why do certain things strike us as expressive of emotion?” The answer I give is that, on one level,

certain things strike us as expressive for sundry cultural, personal-historical and biological reasons. On another level, certain things – such as artworks – can strike us as expressive because in imagining creating them we find ourselves also imagining having an emotion of which the expression is of a piece; we then take the artwork or whatever to express that which is of a piece with the emotion.

1.1 Emotion

In current philosophical terminology, ‘emotion’ is typically understood rather narrowly, and is distinguished from related terms such as ‘feeling’, ‘attitude’ and ‘mood’.²⁴ This is fine, as these terms thus used do indeed pick out different phenomena: but Collingwood does not understand ‘emotion’ as alternative to these phenomena. And ‘emotion’, thus used, does not, I think, get at what we are typically trying to get at when we say that art involves the expression of emotion.²⁵

²⁴ See, e.g., Kemp (1995: p. 121); Levinson (2006: p. 193); Robinson (2005: Ch. 1); Zangwill (2004: p. 31). Some, such as Stephen Davies (2006b), seem to share Collingwood’s notion of ‘emotion’ (although Davies does not have an explicit position on the matter).

²⁵ The psychological legwork of showing this is not part of this dissertation. I will make only two points to advance its plausibility. First, I personally find Collingwood’s understanding of ‘emotion’ much closer to my own intuitive understanding than its meaning in the current literature. Second, as I will show, that art is the expression of emotion when emotion is understood in the way it is currently understood is an implausible thesis; when it is understood as Collingwood understands it, it is plausible. If you think the principle of charity is relevant here, this is some evidence that emotion in Collingwood’s sense better captures what we are trying to capture by use of the term in saying that art involves the expression of emotion.

The reason I include the sentence to which this footnote is appended at all is that Gordon Graham (2005: pp. 141) argues that Collingwood’s account of ‘emotion’ takes us too far from ‘everyday expressivism’ (which I take it is the claim that art expresses emotion where ‘emotion’ is understood as it is within current philosophy) to really be considered expressivism. I want to dampen the force of this objection by pointing out that it is

Collingwood never gives a strict definition of 'emotion', but it is clear that it is very broadly understood, such that it pervades all of experience, and can refer to what we would refer to as feelings, attitudes and moods; they are also processes. I now turn to defence of these exegetical claims, in order to help demonstrate the closeness of the account I hereafter develop to Collingwood's position.

The term 'feeling' has many different uses. One can feel anger and contentment,²⁶ but one can also feel cold, softness, and so on. This latter sort of feeling, which is clearly distinct from the feeling of pain, love, anxiety, and so on, is not of interest to Collingwood (p. 160). But the former sort is. Evidence that emotions as Collingwood understands them include feelings in this sense is quite simply found: he explicitly calls feelings emotions on p. 160. (On p. 164 he explicitly restricts the scope of the term 'feeling' to psychological emotions (on meaning of which term, see later in this section): so emotions are not always feelings.)

Evidence that emotions as Collingwood understands them include moods as we understand them – i.e., non-intentional mental states that can last through relatively superficial emotional changes (consider a melancholy mood that lasts days or years and persists through, but may colour, happinesses in jokes in conversations and such) – is less incontrovertible. But it is found, for example, on pp. 65-9, where he discusses (what he calls) magic. For example, he suggests (in a way that makes it fairly clear that he thinks that it is so) that magic the ostensible

not obvious that this 'everyday expressivism' is the expressivism that is actually closest to people's intuitions, as Graham seems to think.

²⁶ Obviously, we cannot feel anger or contentment as such; we can only feel specific varieties of these phenomena. But for the sake of convenience I will speak as if we can feel these emotions as such.

function (or purpose) of which is to avert earthquakes or floods has as its true function the production in people of “an emotional state of willingness to bear [earthquakes or floods] with fortitude and hope.” (p. 68) It is plausible to think that Collingwood means by fortitude here something which colours the grief and hardship that accompanies and follows an earthquake or a flood; something which makes these things more bearable. Similarly, when one’s beloved dies, or one’s crops fail, it is plausible that one does not (only) feel both desolate and hopeful; but that one, in addition to feeling these two separate things as separate things, feels a desolation that feels less terrible because of a hopeful mood one has which ‘lies beneath’ this desolation.

Further, ‘emotions’ are processes; as such, Collingwood is in agreement with modern psychology, which takes emotions to not be the kinds of things which can be adequately understood as states of mind at certain times, but rather can be understood only as temporally extended (see Robinson (2005: Ch. 3)). He writes: “[e]very emotion, dynamically considered, has two phases in its existence: charge or excitation, and discharge. The discharge of an emotion is some act done at the prompting of that emotion, by doing which we work the emotion off and relieve ourselves of the tension which, until thus discharged, it imposes on us.” (p. 78) Collingwood does not mean by this that every emotion is ‘worked off’ in the sense that we work off anger till we feel contented once more (or whatever); the notion is broader than that, as we will see in §1.2, and can mean just the clarification of the anger such that one knows more fully and precisely what it is, against whom (if anyone) it is directed, and so on. This will all be discussed below; the

point for the moment is that Collingwood is not saying that there are different emotions, one which lies before, and one which lies, after, its discharge: there is one emotion.

Finally, there are different sorts of emotion: there are psychical emotions and emotions of consciousness (or conscious emotions). The latter are the only ones which admit of 'linguistic expression' (p. 230 ff.). Psychical emotions are the emotional charges corresponding to *sensa*²⁷ (pp. 160-4). Emotions of consciousness, by contrast, take place at any level of awareness that involves an awareness of self. A good way of differentiating the two sorts of emotion is by considering what kinds of thing can bring them about. Psychical emotions have as their objects *sensa* such as shocks, stabs or sudden sounds. Emotions of consciousness have as their objects things the acknowledgement of which require consciousness of self. Collingwood gives a number of examples of this sort of emotion: hatred, love, anger, and shame. To expand on just one: "Love is a feeling towards something with which we feel our own existence to be bound up, so that a benefit or injury to it is a benefit or injury to ourselves." (p. 232) There is no question that, when we get a shock, we will have some emotion-feeling in response. We may call it pain or surprise or we may have no adequate name for it, but we will feel something. But we can feel this without having any consciousness of self. By con-

²⁷ This is the term (of which the singular is 'sensum') Collingwood uses to refer to the 'raw' sense-input that constitutes our experiences. The term is an abstraction: Collingwood thinks that there is probably no *sensum* without a corresponding emotional charge (p. 162), and that only together do these things constitute an experience. (As Collingwood concedes, this is hard to verify. However, it need not be true for me to establish what I want to establish in this dissertation, so I will not discuss it further. Dewey agrees with Collingwood: see his *Art as Experience* (1934), pp. 99-105.)

trast, we cannot feel hatred or love without some such self-consciousness; and this is what distinguishes emotions of consciousness from psychical emotions. (Collingwood's discussion of this runs from pp. 231-5.) Collingwood draws a very sharp distinction between psychical emotions and emotions of consciousness, but nothing important in his account depends on the non-existence of emotions which are not clearly either one.

It is important to appreciate the scope of Collingwood's understanding of the term 'emotion', because it leads to a dramatically different theory than the narrower understanding of the term, and one which is vastly more plausible. By way of illustration of this: understanding Bach's *The Art of the Fugue* – say the first fugue – as an expression of some gladness or sadness (or whatever) Bach felt in response to some particular event or object is a more challenging task than I am willing to undertake; but if we allow that what is expressed can be a non-intentional mood or attitude, it seems much more plausible that this first fugue expresses an emotion: some emotion impossible to capture in English, of course, but something like a serious and weighty serenity. But of course, much more needs to be said before this actually becomes plausible: about, particularly, expression, to which I now turn.

1.2 Expression

Aaron Ridley nicely glosses Collingwood's notion of expression when he says that "expression means the clarification or individualisation of thoughts and feelings" (2002: p. 53). But useful though this gloss is for getting a preliminary grasp on Collingwood's understanding of the term (and adequate though it is in the context in which Ridley employs it), we need to go into more detail here.

Collingwood considers two senses of 'expression': linguistic expression and psychical expression. Psychical expression is achieved by means of the "involuntary and perhaps even wholly unconscious bodily acts" that accompany a felt emotion and its *sensa* (pp. 228-32). The shaking of one's limbs and heart, due to nervousness, one feels prior to performing a concert; or the butterflies in one's stomach one feels on peering down into a vast canyon, are examples of psychical expressions of emotion. This sort of expression is logically, though not temporally, subsequent to the emotion it expresses (pp. 161, 229). This sense of 'expression' is not of particular interest to Collingwood. When used in the context of artistic expression, he thinks it is in fact an "improper sense" of the term (pp. 121-2). This is because, by his understanding of the term, "[t]he characteristic mark of expression proper is lucidity or intelligibility; a person who expresses something thereby becomes conscious of what it is that he is expressing" (p. 122); but psychical expression cannot, directly at least, have such a consequence (*ibid.*). Given its irrelevance to the current project, then, I will only discuss it further insofar as it sheds light on more relevant aspects of Collingwood's account.

There is another phenomenon that goes under the name 'expression' in which Collingwood is not interested: it is what he calls 'description'. If I say, "I am happy", without smiling or anything of this sort, then it could be said that I am expressing my happiness; but in Collingwood's terminology, this is a description of one's emotion. I will not discuss it further.

On the other side of the distinction lies linguistic expression. It should be noted straight away that the term 'linguistic expression' is pretty abysmal, as it appears to be attempting to pick out a phenomenon it is not attempting to pick out at all. It is best to see the term as almost entirely stipulative (although it is not quite so stipulative in the context of Collingwood's broader philosophy²⁸). Possibly, a more helpful term is 'artistic expression'. But whatever we call the phenomenon – and I will stick with linguistic expression for the sake of keeping close to Collingwood's terminology – it is logically, primarily a personal act: it is the clarifying to oneself of a psychical emotion one feels.²⁹ As he puts it, emotions of consciousness are psychical emotions 'converted' by clarification into emotions on the level of consciousness. When thus clarified, they are still the same emotions, but felt differently. Collingwood explains this thus: "Formally, [an emotion of consciousness] is something quite new and unique, capable of being described

²⁸ Collingwood's understanding of 'language' and 'linguistic expression' is, in one sense, very broad, and in another, very narrow. It is broad because in that it includes "any activity of any organ which is expressive in the same way that speech is expressive." (p. 235) Italian peasants' hand movements are linguistic (p. 242), as is all art. It is narrow in that clichéd language, and language used as 'craft' is not actually language (see, e.g., p. 276). What such things *are* is never discussed, as they are of no interest to Collingwood.

²⁹ That it is the expression of psychical emotions does not mean that psychical emotions cannot express emotions about intellectual matters; consider Collingwood's example on p. 267 of Archimedes' cry of "Eureka!" (see Ch. XIII, §3), or the heart-flutter of discovering an argumentative move.

only in terms of itself. Materially, it is only a certain new arrangement of psychical experiences." (*ibid.*) This is a very tricky thought. I think the best way to understand it is Ridley's.³⁰ His explanation is confusing in one respect: Collingwood uses 'thought' in a specific sense, which Ridley ignores. However, if we understand 'unclear thoughts' to mean 'psychical emotions', and 'clear thoughts' to be 'emotions of consciousness', the explanation is very illuminating.

A clear thought is not merely an unclear one dolled up; or to put it another way, a muddle clarified isn't just another sort of muddle: it is no sort of muddle at all. To clarify is, in that sense, to transform... The work... Collingwood is interested in, then, is the work of getting clear about one's own thoughts and feelings, of transforming muddle into clarity[.] (1998: p. 6)

We all know what it is to think or feel something vaguely, to then clarify this thought or emotion into something coherent and understood, and to see that these two thoughts are in some sense the same. Similarly, we all know what it is to think or feel something vaguely, to then attempt but fail to clarify this thought or emotion, and end up with an expression which is of a thought or emotion not ours. Consider an example: we might find that we have some notion of liberty in our mind and try to capture it by talking about some strange mix of positive and

³⁰ Scruton (1997: p. 348) offers a third way to understand it: "Emotions *become* what they essentially are, through the process of their public expression. They are formed and amended in dialogue with others; through their 'realization' in an objective order the subject himself is also realised, as an object of his own awareness and decision-making. Hence the expressing of emotion is also a creating of emotion." As Scruton immediately goes on to say, "[these] thoughts are difficult to state with precision".

negative liberty, and know that this is not a perfect way to capture the idea in our mind; and we may then read Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty' and find that it is only when we talk in terms of (say) positive liberty that the muddle in our head is clarified. Before we have read 'Two Concepts of Liberty', we are in the situation in which what we say expresses thoughts or emotions not our own; thereafter, we will be in the position where the muddle in our head is clarified, and what we say will express these thoughts or emotions. I will discuss this important point in more depth, and consider its implications for the value of art, in §3.

Emotions of consciousness, unlike psychical emotions, are emotions that are expressed 'linguistically', to use Collingwood's term (they can also be expressed psychically); that is, they are expressed consciously and deliberately. So, to summarise: a psychical emotion is one that *is* expressed psychically; it *can* be expressed linguistically, in which case it becomes an emotion of consciousness, which *is* expressed linguistically (and possibly also psychically).

So what does it mean to express an emotion consciously and deliberately? These are quite complicated phenomena, but we can get a rough understanding of what is meant. We are familiar with doing things deliberately: it is to do something 'on purpose'; to do it because one, in some sense, wants to do it. It is opposed to what Collingwood calls accidental or compelled doing, in which, respectively, one does something inadvertently, in the course of doing something else; or one does something because one's actions are physically constrained by an external power. To do something consciously, for Collingwood, is to do something from an awareness of self. Taking the limiting case of linguistic expression,

Collingwood considers a type of infant's cry, and a very similar sort of cry that is psychical expression (p. 236). The latter is the spontaneous cry of hunger or tiredness or whatever; the former is "the self-conscious cry which seems (through a certain exaggeration on the listener's part) deliberately uttered in order to call attention to [the infant's] needs and to scold the person to whom it seems addressed for not attending to them." (*ibid.*) The exaggeration, I take it, is in attributing to the infant such complex mental states as an awareness that the infant, a person, can, by crying, make it that another person, the care-giver, fulfils the infant's desire for food or sleep or whatever; and that this other person is blameworthy for not having already fulfilled this desire, and that the infant can, by crying, scold this person for that reason. This is all exaggeration: but what *is* true, and what is enough to differentiate what is going on here from the simple spontaneous cry, is that the infant is *aware* that if *it* cries, something may happen such that whatever it dimly perceives as wrong with the world will be rectified; and that it cries because of this. This, then, is what Collingwood means when he says that some expression is conscious: it involves an awareness of self. (Dewey (1934: p. 62) uses an almost identical example to make an almost identical point.)³¹

³¹ A tempting criticism to make here is: 'What is your evidence that this is what goes on in the mental life of an infant?' But this would be to miss the point of Collingwood's discussion here. Although Collingwood does refer to infants' mental lives in explicating the distinction between psychical and linguistic expression, it need not be the case that infants' cries are ever linguistic expressions. All Collingwood is *really* trying to do here is clarify the distinction between psychical and linguistic expression by taking an example of linguistic expression which is as close as this manner of expression can be to psychical expression, and which has as little as possible of the properties (such as grammar) of normal linguistic expression (such as speech) which might distract us from the key difference between psychical and linguistic expression.

It is worth noting that although linguistic expression is a clarification *to oneself* of some emotion one feels, the act of expression is not necessarily directed toward anyone, oneself included (p. 247). However, as, even in the case of undirected linguistic expression, one is aware that one is linguistically expressing something, the expression still clarifies one's emotion to oneself. Similarly, the expression may be directed toward other people, as is the case with most of our expressions (in conversation, some art-creation, etc.). In such cases, too, the expression is a clarification to oneself of what one feels. (In all these cases, it is of course not only the emotions of the expresser that can become clear(er), and not only to the expresser. Those who overhear the expresser may have clarified to them the expresser's or their own emotions.)³²

According to Collingwood, the sensum which causes us to feel the emotion, the emotion itself, and our (psychical or linguistic) expression of this emotion, are part of an indivisible whole: that is, to perceive or experience the sensum without also feeling an emotion and in some way expressing this emotion is impossible; they are one experience (pp. 161, 228-30). It seems, at face, pretty implausible that we cannot feel an emotion without also in some way expressing it. Suppose, for example, that we feel an emotion, but have been raised in a way that leads us to instinctively suppress any display of emotion; or, more dramatically, are somehow frozen in such a way that we can think and listen, but not move our body. Someone hurls an insult at us, but we can't express the indignation we feel – by

³² It is because of this that Wollheim is not disagreeing with Collingwood, as one might think if reading together Wollheim's claim that art is not necessarily communicative (1987: p. 96) and Collingwood's extended discussion of the importance of the communicativeness of art in, esp., Ch. XIV.

frowning, perhaps, or shaking our fist. Surely we still feel the emotion, expression or no. Collingwood's response, I take it, would be that although we cannot express the emotion as explicitly as this, we must have *some* expression. Our blood will boil, for example, or our heart will race. (This would be a psychical expression. A linguistic expression would be, in such a constrained situation, purely mental.) The objection can be modified: suppose even these physiological changes are forbidden us. Can we not still feel insulted? This is an empirical question, to which I do not have the answer: but it is certainly not clear that we *would*, in this case, feel any emotion. Quite possibly, to have our body's movements this tightly restricted is to prevent thought as much as emotion; in which case the example presents no objection to Collingwood's thesis. Perhaps Collingwood is overly confident in making one's feeling of an emotion inseparable from one's expression of it. But, first, he may yet be right to do so: the psychological evidence will decide that; and second, if emotion and expression only come apart in the bizarre situation wherein one's physiological activity is restricted to the above, nigh-on complete, extent, the damage done thereby to Collingwood's account seems pretty minimal. (Perhaps it breaks a principle in a way that allows less extreme counter-examples to Collingwood's connecting of the experience and the expression of emotion to go through more readily. But, given our current epistemic position, this means only that we have to flag this claim as a possibly weak point in Collingwood's argument, to be scrutinised more intensely when some relevant psychological evidence comes through. For now, I am content to accept it.)

1.3 On What it is to See Something as Expressive

So far, we have seen what I mean by ‘the expression of emotion’. We have discussed two types of emotion, and two ways in which they might be expressed: psychical emotions are expressed psychically, and emotions of consciousness are expressed either psychically or linguistically. The relevance of all this to art is simply that art is a type of linguistic expression. But the expression of emotion being valuable requires that the emotions it expresses be understood, at least potentially, by its apprehenders. As such, I need an account of the other side of linguistic expression: of how apprehenders see an artwork as expressive. This will occupy this section. In §1.4, I will ask why certain things are expressive and others are not; that is, why, in linguistically expressing, say, sadness, one might reasonably, say, cry, but not reasonably, say, laugh.

This question is very much like the one Richard Wollheim asks in *Painting as an Art* (1987): Ch. 2, §C. He writes there, “What is it to see a painting as expressing melancholy, or turbulence, or serenity?” (p. 80) My question is just this, except that I am interested in a more general account: I am also interested, for example, in what it is to hear a piece of music as expressing joy, or passion, or love of God; and in what it is to apprehend a film as expressing angst, or tension, or happiness. My answer, too, will be very similar.

I need to first clarify this question, though. Under one understanding, the question is whether something’s being expressive, and something’s being seen as

expressive, is more fundamental or primary in some sense. I take it that the question is a metaphysical one analogous to the question of whether something's being some colour, or being perceived as that colour, is more fundamental or primary. I will not discuss this. I mean by the question something more like, 'What's the phenomenology of seeing something as expressive?', but in fact, I think the only way to see exactly what the question is is by giving an answer to it.

What, then, is the answer? Wollheim, in giving it, starts with a more basic phenomenon than expression: he starts with what he calls 'projection'. Projection is "a process in which emotions or feelings flow from us to what we perceive." (p. 82) More helpfully, Wollheim goes on to say that projection comes in two forms, simple and complex, and what these sorts of projection involve. Simple projection consists of someone in a certain emotional state coming to believe that some other "figure in the environment" (to use Wollheim's phrase (*ibid.*)) is in this emotional state, and coming to believe that the projector is not. Complex projection, which is the projection which is of particular interest to Wollheim and me, consists, first, of someone in a certain emotional state becoming anxious as a result of being in that state; and second, of the anxiousness in turn leading to the projector coming to experience the external world as 'of a piece' with their sadness. The first of the two relevant differences between these phenomena is that simple projection concerns beliefs about emotions whilst complex projection concerns experience of emotions. The second difference is that in simple projection the projector comes to believe some other figure to *have the same* emotion as the projector, whilst in complex projection the projector experiences the world to be

'of a piece with' their emotion (or to have a property which is of a piece with the emotion (a 'projective property')), which is much more vague.

Wollheim does not do terribly much to say what he means by his notorious 'of a piece' phrase. He does, though, say two things: first, that to think that one's environment is of a piece with one's emotion is not to think that the environment has (or experiences) any emotion; second, that "the property that [one] experience[s] the world as having [when the world is experienced as of a piece with one's emotion] is not fully comprehensible without going back to the projection itself." (p. 83) He also gives two examples of the phenomenon, on pp. 80-1. One might also imagine the awful grey days one gets so much of in Scotland and Ireland, with the endless low cloud and drizzle that can make even summer days cold enough that one has to wear a coat. One can very easily imagine how if, on such a day, one is stressed or unhappy because of for instance work or love, one could find such weather to be somehow fitting or related to this emotion: when one feels this, one feels the weather to be of a piece with that emotion.

Beyond this explication, I am not sure that there is a simple analysis of what it is to see something as of a piece with some emotion. Perhaps one can consider it Wollheim's way of expressing, and generalising to the level of all experience, Carroll Pratt's thought that "music sounds the way emotion feels".

Wollheim thinks that this form of projection and what he calls 'expressive perception' – seeing something as expressive – are on a continuum. As one travels the continuum from projection to expressive perception, one finds that one's abil-

ity to perceive the world or a part thereof as of a piece with an emotion one is feeling is to a greater extent constrained by the nature of the way things are – that just *is* the difference between projection and expressive perception. In an extreme case, such as Wollheim suspects is found in very young children, “[p]rojection is haphazard and responsive only to inner needs and demands.” That is, if one is engaged in projection, one can see anything as of a piece with any emotion one is feeling. But as projection becomes expressive perception, “projective properties start to owe something to the features upon which they are overlaid.” (p. 83) The expressive perception furthest from the extreme projection just mentioned, presumably (Wollheim does not say anything about it), is one in which the projective property had by what one is perceiving is determined entirely by the nature of the object and its treatment (broadly understood) in one’s cultural and personal history. When we perceive some emotion as being expressed by something, it is probably somewhere in between these two extremes, although in most cases of artistic and conversational interaction it will be much closer to the expressive-perception extreme than the projection extreme.

This point bears dwelling upon. There is no question that, for the artist, not any line will do. The segue between the second and third movements of Bach’s *Italian Concerto* could not be a jot other than it is and still express the divine perfection it does express; conversely, there seems to be nothing but that divine perfection to be legitimately found in the music (although of course people will differ greatly about how to label it). But very little art determines a response from those competent to apprehend it as ineluctably as this piece, and, to the extent

that this is so, there is room for legitimate but mutually inconsistent interpretations of artworks (and other expressions), room which few are willing to deny, and for which some (e.g., Stephen Davies (2006a)) go out of their way to secure.

Expressive perception logically (and historically) precedes expression, but does not quite get us there. We can look upon (to use Wollheim's example) a stretch of countryside, and find it expressive of, say, peace; but if we do not find it expressive of peace, we are not therefore mistaken. By contrast, in looking at, for example, Turner's *Snowstorm*, we are not free to equally correctly perceive it as expressing one thing rather than another. The painting is expressive of something like despair and humility; it is certainly not expressive of joy or jealousy. To perceive the painting as expressing the former is correct, or something close to correct; to perceive it as expressing the latter is to make a mistake. The difference between the stretch of countryside and the *Snowstorm*, and the reason that we can be mistaken in our expressive perception in the latter, is that the latter involves expression. It is this expression that imposes on expressive perception a standard of rightness and wrongness. Wollheim, who nowadays would probably be called an actual intentionalist, argues on p. 86 and (indirectly) on pp. 36-8 that this standard derives, in part, from the intentions of whoever is expressing something (e.g., the artist). I have argued for a position (hypothetical intentionalism) similar to Wollheim's in Ch. 2; but the point here is just that there *is* a standard, something accepted by everyone in the relevant debate (see, e.g., Levinson (1992: §2); Stephen Davies (2006a: p. 224)).

1.4 On Why Certain Things Strike One as Expressive

As Wollheim notes on p. 83, there is no reason to believe that there is going to be quick or uniform answer to why we perceive some thing as expressive, or as of a piece with some emotion. A harmonic interval of a minor ninth, resolving to an octave, is a harmonic progression which has a very strong effect: the minor ninth is extremely dissonant, the octave perfectly consonant. In this case, it seems entirely reasonable to think that the reason for the expressive effect is just the relative character of the sounds: the minor ninth has an extremely complex sound, in which the two notes and their overtones react against each other in a myriad complex ways; the octave, by contrast, has virtually no interplay of this sort. In other situations, for the same sort of reason, we might find a skyscraper intimidating, or a predominantly blood-red painting disconcerting. This is the first half

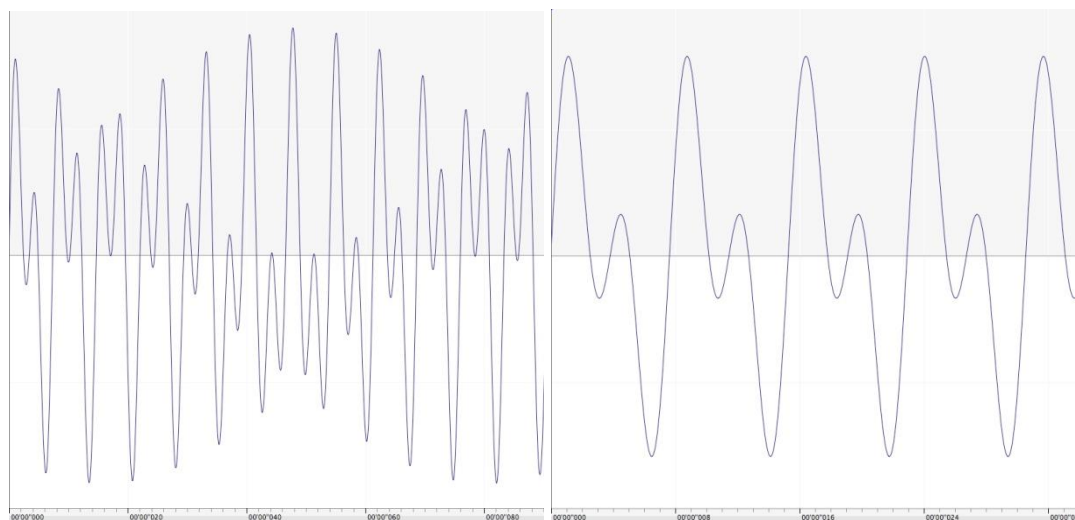


Figure 3.1: Waveforms of, on the left, C3 against Db4 (c against db') and, on the right, C3 against C4 (c against c'), at equal amplitude. Images courtesy of a pseudonymous internet source.

of the answer: we perceive things as expressive for a host of culturally- and biologically-determined reasons.³³ In such cases, we can, if we are so inclined, find out why certain things strike us as expressive of certain things by undertaking an empirical enquiry. But in other sorts of expressive perception, I think that this sort of enquiry is inadequate, although not useless. Consider George Crumb's *Makrokosmos*, Bk. 1, No. 11, in which he quotes a passage of Chopin's *Fantasia-Improvisata*. Let us accept for the sake of argument that, in its normal context, we expressively perceive the Chopin in the way suggested above: through a complex array of factors to do with relative complexity of succeeding sound waves, culturally accepted norms, and so on.³⁴ But it seems that, in addition to all this, there is one way of expressively perceiving Crumb's quotation of Chopin which is necessary to experiencing it in the right way. To see the expression of Crumb's quotation of Chopin, we must – and here is the second half of the answer – imaginatively recreate the process of creating Crumb's artwork. That is, we imagine ourselves doing whatever it is that we think needs doing to create the artwork which we are apprehending, and imaginatively inhabit the frame of mind we would have to be in to do this. We then say that the artwork expresses an emotion

³³ Nick Zangwill, in 'Against Emotion' (2004), §5, disagrees with the thesis that we can expressively perceive emotion in pure music (and presumably other abstract arts, but music is the focus of his discussion) because "[w]e can only perceive something in or as another if there is quite a lot in common between them. ...[I]t seems difficult to see how we could really hear an emotion *in* the music, when music is composed of sounds and emotion is not." (p. 41) But this objection assumes just what Wollheim denies: that we can only perceive something in or as another if there is quite a lot in common between them. Wollheim argues for in his stance in *Painting as an Art* (1987), Ch. II, esp. pp. 43-50. His conclusion can be denied, but it is tenable. If it is right, Zangwill's objection does not get off the ground.

³⁴ I doubt such an account is in fact all there is to be said about why we find Chopin's music expressive: but this need not detain us here. The point is the contrast between its expressive qualities in its original context and in Crumb's context. Other examples are the sounds of nature in Messiaen's *Catalogues d'oiseaux* or Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony.

which is of a piece with this emotion we feel in imaginatively creating it. To take a different example, in looking at a van Gogh, we imagine ourselves to be looking at the scene, seeing it as a subject of a painting, painting the canvas, and so on. We will find, in doing this, that imagining wielding the paintbrush in this way is accompanied by a particular emotion. We then quite naturally think that van Gogh, in actually painting the work which we are apprehending, had the same (or some similar)³⁵ emotion (pp. 247-52). We can apprehend art by imaginatively recreating it or we might not: this much is the domain of empirical enquiry. But such an enquiry cannot tell us whether this is the artistically most appropriate way to apprehend the art: this is the domain of philosophy.

The difference between these sorts of expressive perception is very significant. It maps on to what one might call the distinction between seeing something as an 'intentional' expression and as a 'natural' expression; that is, between seeing something as an expression by a person of some emotion they feel and seeing something as expressive in the way that calm vistas and lonely moors are expressive. This highlights an interesting phenomenon in our perception of art. Art involves the expression of its creator's (or creators') emotions; but we need not

³⁵ Collingwood, like everyone else who has tried to talk about this (e.g., Scruton, Hegel, Dewey), is vague about what the similarity between the artists' and the audience's emotions is. Are they identical emotions? Or merely similar in some sense? If the latter, what sense?: are the emotions analogous (or formally identical (or formally similar)), or do they just have a lot of identical qualities? These questions are interesting, and difficult to answer. They must at some point be answered. But until then, it is enough to notice that the emotions we feel in response to some artworks are intersubjective enough that we can have conversations about them, notice when people understand an artwork in the same way we do, praise and criticise people's understandings of it, and so on. This is all good evidence that it makes good sense to speak of having the same or a very similar emotion as someone else in response to an artwork, even if we cannot cash out exactly what we mean by this. It is incumbent on the sceptic to show that we need to worry about the coherency of this kind of talk, its pervasiveness notwithstanding.

view art in this way. In creating art, an artist will (if I may misrepresent the process in every but the relevant sense) use devices and techniques that are expressive for the sundry reasons mentioned above. In apprehending her art, we can find the art expressive because we find these sundry things expressive; or we can find it expressive because we know that the artist, who also found them expressive, chose to use them: and in deciding why she did this, we come to see the art in a different way. That we typically experience art in this latter way is accepted by, for example, Collingwood, Dewey (1934: p. 98), Ridley (1995: esp. Ch. 6, §§II-III), Levinson (2006), Robinson (2005), Vermazen (1986) and Wollheim (1987: p. 88). But I am not so sure that the experience of art is always and only of this latter sort. An example might help illustrate this. We could choose, in this regard, a landscape painting, such as Constable's *The Hay Wain*, in which we can be mesmerised by what is depicted, or by both this and *that* it is depicted; we could also consider music, such as the second movement of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major, in which we can be carried away by the endless melody itself, or also ask why Ravel wrote it; or photographs of unposed scenes, in which we can marvel at, say, the sunset depicted, or at the photographer's eye for a good photograph. But perhaps the most illuminating example is John Cage's *4'33"*, in which what we are supposed to listen to is whatever sounds happen to be audible during the performance. As I understand it, in this piece, we are to hear the sounds as just sounds, on which we may project whatever we wish; we are supposed to hear them as, in some extremely broad sense, beautiful, but this 'supposed to' comes from Cage's belief that they *are* beautiful and that sufficient attention will reveal this, rather than from some stipulation that we can only correctly appreciate

4'33" if we find the sounds beautiful. If we listen to the sounds with a mind to why Cage asked us to listen to them, we will no doubt get plenty out of 4'33"; but we will not, *qua* listening in this way, be listening to it as Cage intended us to; and, more importantly, we will still be listening to *it*: we will not merely be listening to the sounds it frames. (We, may, of course, simultaneously listen to these sounds in the way Cage wants us to).³⁶

What, then, is the significance of the distinction between seeing something as expressive because of sundry psychological associations, and seeing it as expressive because one sees the expression in imagining what it would take to create the artwork oneself; or, otherwise put, between seeing something as a natural expression and as an intentional expression? I think the difference is that, if we see something as a natural expression, we can never see it as communicative. 4'33" is again useful here: if we listen to what it frames, we are well rewarded for our time: but if we ask why Cage wrote the piece, we engage in a sort of communication with Cage: we get commentaries on the busy-ness of certain aspects of Western culture and music, insights into the need for peace in our lives, and so on. But we only get these insights by asking why Cage wrote 4'33". (I will deal with this again in §3.2.)

I want to stress that the imaginative recreation is an *imaginative* and *experiential* activity. Some philosophers deny this: for example, Nelson Goodman and

³⁶ Stephen Davies argues, in an article which gives a very detailed description of what kind of piece 4'33" is, that it is not music (1997). But this is not important, so long as we accept that it is art; and this seems hard to deny, both intuitively and because it meets the criterion of being an expression of emotion.

My understanding of what Cage is up to in 4'33" derives largely from this paper

Stephen Davies (and the structuralists, iconographers, hermeneuticists and semioticians mentioned by Wollheim in his *Painting as an Art* (1987), p. 44). I take it that if you don't think that seeing the expression of an artwork comes from imaginatively recreating an artwork – that is, by *seeing* in an expression of emotion an expression of that emotion – then you will think that seeing the expression comes from 'externally' inferring from evidence that the expression is so expressive. The terms I have used here are not great, so allow me to illustrate my meaning by example. Consider an utterance, sincerely uttered: "The cat is on the mat". To discover the meaning (in context) of this utterance, we must be able to interpret the utterer's facial expressions, tone of voice, or whatever, and more generally apply whatever contextual factors are relevant. This is uncontroversial: how else would we know that the utterance is being uttered sincerely as opposed to (say) sarcastically? But now, there are two ways in which this might be done. The first might be called 'scientific' or 'external': we see that something is uttered with certain facial muscular movements, hear it uttered in a certain tone of voice; and, with a greater or lesser degree of rigour and awareness that this is what we are doing, we infer from how these things combined in previous situations (of which we have personal experience or of which we have heard through books, conversations, etc.) that, in this situation, it means whatever it is we infer it means. The second is that we imagine what it would be like to be the other person, with whatever of their beliefs, dispositions, etc., we take to be relevant; and we imagine what the sentence would mean were we to utter it in the manner in

which the utterer did. We then take the utterer to have meant this. The evidence we use in this case might be called 'internal': it is experiential.³⁷

Now, one might argue that either or both of these ways of understanding takes place. Collingwood thinks only the latter takes place (see Ch. XI, esp. §5); Goodman, Davies and the people mentioned by Wollheim, as we have seen, think that only the former take place. I am more inclined to think that both take place.

In artistic contexts, it seems that the 'internal' method is much more common. Whatever about smiles and simple honestly-uttered sentences, which one can reasonably think are understood in the manner suggested by Goodman and Davies, it is hard to see how such a mechanism can lead to perception of the expression in art, especially revolutionary artworks such as Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, or Rothko's multiform paintings. This is because, as is explicit, the accounts rely on the spectators being able to infer from how the elements (broadly understood) of the artwork combined in previous situations to what it means in this case; but when the elements of the artwork are combined in drastically novel ways, or, especially, when some elements are entirely new, the spectator cannot be expected to make the inference.

This is not a strong argument, but there is further evidence against Goodman and Davies's account if we consider the following example. In listening to Steve

³⁷ As Collingwood puts it, "The hearer... speaks to himself with the words that he hears addressed to him [and] attributes that idea to the [actual speaker]. Understanding what some one says to you is thus attributing to him the idea which his words arouse in yourself" (p. 250).

Vai's 'Tender Surrender' (briefly discussed in Ch. 1), you might hear in it an unconstrainable passion on one listen, but on another listen hear a self-important attempt to exaggerate a rather less intense passion. But suppose that you are not content with not knowing whether there is art or its simulacrum in this piece. There are two ways of getting to the bottom of the issue of whether the song is art or empty virtuosity. The first way is to listen to the piece extremely carefully, and really fully imagine playing the song. The second is to, for instance, read a biography of Vai, watch him play the piece live, inquire into the culture of virtuosic electric guitar playing, ask trusted critics' opinions of the piece, and so on in this manner. Suppose in each case you come to the conclusion that, say, the first interpretation is superior: 'Tender Surrender' is truly passionate. In the first case, you come to this conclusion by finding that you can't make sense of all the notes when you try and imagine them being played from self-obsession, but can make sense of them in imagining them being played from passion. In the second case, you come to the conclusion by, for example, noticing that the melodies and timbres are highly contra-standard, that there is a massive amount of dynamic and melodic fluctuation, and that such things bespeak (directly or indirectly) passion being expressed by the piece. It seems clear that, first, these are two different ways of coming to the equally-well justified conclusion, and second, both occur.³⁸

³⁸ Another example is of people's understanding of other people: there are two ways this can be done too. On the one hand, we can have a very good understanding of someone while not really knowing what it's like to be that person; on the other, we can more literally 'see where they're coming from'. The latter is rarer, more precious, and more to do with art.

On the other hand, sometimes we appear to come to understand something by the method suggested by Goodman and Davies. For instance, sometimes we *do* read biographies of musicians to find out whether their music is expressive or self-important. Or, in learning the vocabulary of a foreign language, the student sometimes does appear to be learning just the meaning of the terms. I am inclined to think similar things go on, at least sometimes, in scientific, philosophical and legal contexts. We are left then with the position that we sometimes see the expressiveness of an expression by the first mechanism, and sometimes by the second.

I have said that this is pretty good evidence that Davies and Goodman are mistaken and that Collingwood is more right. I mean by this a stronger claim than that they think their account universal when it is not (after all, Collingwood is in the same position). I mean that Collingwood's account is more central to our experience of art. It is, so far as I am aware, undisputed that it is better, either because more appropriate (artistically or epistemically), or more rewarding, to believe that artworks are expressive because one sees their expression than because one has externally or scientifically discovered that they have this expression. It is also, so far as I am aware, undisputed that when we honestly call artworks expressive it is in fact almost always because we see this expression in them rather than because we have externally inferred that they have this expression. As such, it seems that the account of how we come to see an artwork as expressive (and so, of how we come to see any expression of emotion as expressive) in which we should be interested is Collingwood's. This is not to deny that other ways of

coming to understand expressiveness are reliable, valuable or interesting: it is rather to focus our enquiry on a manner of discerning expressiveness that is particularly central to art. And it is not just Collingwood that accepts this account: Jerrold Levinson writes that perceiving “emotion in music and experiencing emotion from music might not be as separable in principle as one might have liked. If this is so, the suggestion that in aesthetic appreciation of music we simply cognize emotional attributes without feeling anything corresponding to them may be conceptually problematic as well as empirically incredible” (‘Music and Negative Emotion’ (1982): p. 335); Ridley (1995) and (2004), Robinson (2005), Scruton (1974) and Walton (1997) make similar points.

I wish now to summarise the last few sections. In §1.3, I have argued that we come to see the expressiveness of art through what I have termed, following Wollheim, expressive perception. This is a phenomenon closely akin to another one Wollheim picks out, projection; it is, indeed, on a continuum with projection. Projection (the sort which is relevant to this dissertation) is the perceiving of the world or some part of it as of a piece with one’s own emotion. Expressive perception is just this except with greater consideration given to how the world is: we cannot, in expressively perceiving, see anything as of a piece with any emotion, although we may do so in projection.

In §1.4, I have argued that we expressively perceive things as expressions for all sorts of culturally- and biologically-determined reasons. But I have further

argued that a particular sort of expressive perception is involved in seeing something as a human expression: we imaginatively recreate the expression of emotion. If we expressively perceive something which is an expression – someone’s laughing face, or an artwork – a constraint of rightness and wrongness obtains. We can correctly or incorrectly perceive a face as happy, or an artwork as melancholy. This imaginative recreation is, as is all expressive perception, an experiential enterprise.

2. On art expressing its creator’s emotion

Up to this point, I have only hinted at a well-established distinction in the debate between two notions of expressiveness. Both are legitimate uses of the term, but I am only interested in one of them. In the first of these senses, something is expressive if it appears to be a manifestation of some emotion. So one might say that a smile is expressive of happiness, or that a St. Bernard’s face is expressive of sadness. In the second sense, something is expressive only if in fact it does manifest some emotion. So, to take the above examples, one might say, with regard to the smile, that it expresses happiness only if it is worn by someone who is happy. If the smiling person is not happy, we should better say that his smile expresses the emotion of a hypothetical person that we mistake as the person actually smiling; this hypothetical person being a construct toward which the smiling person directs our attention in order that he evade it. Or we might say that the smile ex-

presses whatever complicated emotion (sadness with the desire that it be masked, for example) that the person actually feels.³⁹ With regard to the St. Bernard, we should probably say that its face is not expressing anything; or, more exactly, that it is not expressing anything *qua* being expressive of sadness because it looks like how all St. Bernards' faces look.

Something can be expressive in only the former sense if, for example, it merely appears to be expressive: if, in fact, no emotion is being expressed. Something can, perhaps, be expressive in only the latter sense if, for example, it expresses an emotion, but is utterly unrecognisable as an expression of that emotion. (Examples of this are hard, or perhaps impossible, to find, because even if the expresser expresses their emotion in a language of which they are the only speaker, they will themselves recognise the expression as expressing the emotion it appears to express, if it is expressive at all; and so, it will be expressive of that emotion.) Finally, and obviously, something can be expressive in both senses of the term: if someone is sad and for this reason wears a long face, this face will be expressive in both senses of the term.

I have ignored the difference between these notions of 'expression' because we can't, by simply looking at, say, a sad face, know whether it also expresses sadness; we can only, by bringing to bear whatever facts are relevant, come to see whether it does so. I have approached the question of what it is for an artwork to express some emotion by first offering an account of how someone can see an artwork to be expressive of some emotion at all.

³⁹ I don't think that these explanations are mutually exclusive.

My hints at the distinction have been in my discussion of Wollheim's notions of expressive perception and expression, and particularly in my discussion of natural and human expressiveness. Wollheim acknowledges that we can see something as expressive without it in fact expressing anything. If we want to say that there is a sense in which such things – I have in mind landscapes and St. Bernard dogs – are expressive, we might call them 'intransitively expressive'. But such an expressiveness is miles from the expressiveness (which we might call 'transitive') of a human linguistic and artistic utterance. (In making the distinction with the terms I have used, I ignore another way of making the same distinction, by which transitive expression is called 'expression', and intransitive expression is called 'expressive'. I use my distinction for the simple reason of grammatical flexibility: 'expressive' and 'expression' can be used more freely, as I don't attach any philosophical significance to their use.)

But why does this distinction matter? This is the subject of the next section.

3. On the value of an artwork's being expressive of its creator's emotions

I wish now to argue that artworks which are intransitively expressive of emotion are, in a respect to be specified, artistically inferior to artworks that also express their respective creator's emotion (i.e., are transitively expressive). I will first con-

sider an argument in favour of this position. I will then consider a reason why one might wish to deny its claim. But first I want to reiterate a point made in Ch. 1: I am not talking about art as it is normally understood. This means that I am not criticising artworks, such as some modern conceptual art, which are not even ostensibly expressive of emotion. It would be unfair to judge such works by the standards I am defending here; such a criticism would be like criticising chairs and cars for not being expressive. Neither am I arguing that artworks which are merely expressive of emotion are necessarily worse than any artwork which is genuinely expressive: the value I am concerned with here is only one value that artworks may have, and I make no argument (except briefly and impressionistically at the end of this section) about the value or importance of this value.

3.1 'The Secrets of Our Own Hearts': the Conversational Value of Art

One main reason for thinking that it is valuable for an artwork to be expressive of its creator's emotion is that only thereby do we get what Noël Carroll, in his 'Art, Intention, and Conversation' (1992), calls the 'conversational' value of art. Carroll wants to argue that much art is centrally about communication or communion between the artist and her audience, just in the way that normal conversations are centrally about communication or communion between the parties involved. He is not, of course, arguing that artworks are conversations, or that apprehend-

ing art is in most respects like partaking in a conversation. Rather, he is arguing that conversations and art share at least one important similarity: that in each case, people are saying things to other people in order that these people might understand what they say, and, by so doing, commune with them. This is also where Collingwood locates the value of art, although he finds in it an additional value. He puts it more darkly. (Apparently, this is because he was writing at a time of the rising fascism that would soon lead to the Second World War (see Ridley (1998: p. 9).) He writes: "The artist must [tell] his audience... the secrets of their own hearts... Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness." (Collingwood: p. 336) The 'secrets', of course, are both the artist's and his audience's, and to this extent, art is communication, and so Collingwood and Carroll are on the same page. But Collingwood goes further in saying that art is a medicine for the corruption of consciousness.

I first want to consider Carroll's claim that art is like conversation in that it involves in central part communication between the parties involved. Immediately it needs qualification. Carroll does not deny that many conversations do not involve this sense of communication: he sometimes prefixes 'conversation' with 'serious', 'rewarding' or 'genuine' (p. 118). Other prefixes could be used (Carroll doesn't think his terms perfect): 'deep' or 'earnest', perhaps. But whatever term is used, it is pretty clear from his discussion in which sorts of conversations Carroll is and is not interested. Conversations which consist solely in the exchange of external information - firings, perhaps, or e-mail communication between employees in large organisations who otherwise don't know each other - don't in-

volve this sort of communication.⁴⁰ But much of our conversation does not involve just this. Much of it involves to a significant extent the attempt to communicate what one feels about something, and to understand what someone else feels about something. To an extent this is still the communication of propositions, questions, imperatives, and so on, that we can understand just by understanding the relevant language and whatever contextual factors are relevant ('external' information) - it involves saying or hearing, "I feel like *this*" - but most of the communication is going to involve the interlocutor (and indeed the utterer) gaining the experiential knowledge of what 'this' is. A conversation between two friends is going to involve to a great extent each party trying to build this kind of mutual understanding. It is this sort of conversation that Carroll thinks art is like. In painting a painting or writing some music, we are trying to communicate what we feel about something; or, to use the terminology I have been using above, we are trying to express an emotion we feel.⁴¹

It is not, however, entirely clear what sort of understanding Carroll is interested in. He could be talking about either the experiential knowledge of what it is

⁴⁰ Some - for example Collingwood (see Ch. XIII, §3) - will deny that we can have a conversation which consists purely of the communication of external information, because we cannot but express something of who we are, even if all we express is that we are intelligent enough to use English correctly, or conscientious enough that we reply to e-mails quickly. The truth or falsity of this claim does not really affect Carroll's point. We can just say that insofar as any given conversation (or utterance) consists of the mere conveyance of non-experiential information, it is not what Carroll is interested in.

⁴¹ In Ch. 2, I argue, with Carroll, that there are deep similarities between artistic utterances and quotidian utterances. Here, I am arguing that there are deep similarities between art and serious conversations. I want to stress that these are two different relations, and so that I am making different arguments in Ch. 2 and here. In Ch. 2, I argue that we interpret both artistic and quotidian utterances with an eye to understanding the utterer's meaning. Here, I am arguing that both art and serious conversation involve the expression of emotion.

to feel a certain way (as I have been assuming above) or the non-experiential knowledge of what sort of person one is, what one cares about, and so on. One can claim, probably quite fairly, to be involved in the sort of conversation Carroll is talking about with someone if the conversation consists of the communication of this latter sort of information. I tentatively think that Carroll is interested in both these sorts of communication; both can also be found in art. But in this dissertation, I will focus on the former sort of communication. This is mainly for reasons of space; but it is also because it seems to be a rarer and more valuable phenomenon, because it looks more like what goes in art, and because it is definitely Collingwood's concern.

Collingwood gets at the thought in his discussion of psychical emotions and emotions of consciousness. For him, as I have argued in §1.2, linguistic and artistic expression (which are the same thing) consist of the clarifying to oneself of emotions one feels. This looks different, because Carroll's picture looks fundamentally interpersonal, whereas one can clarify one's emotions alone. But this tension between the views is merely apparent: Collingwood's account gives much greater importance to other people than has thus far been apparent. He is very alive to the necessity of expression being a collaborative act, done in a community (such as is created in serious conversation), and indeed spends the last chapter of his book emphasising just that. The purely personal way he uses to describe expression in the rest of the book seems to be abstract for the sake of clarity of explanation. The discussion on pp. 311-5 is all very relevant, but a good brief statement is:

Unless [the artist] sees his own proclamation, 'This is good', echoed on the faces of his audience - 'Yes, that is good' - he wonders whether he was speaking the truth or not... Was he suffering from a corruption of consciousness? Has his audience judged him better than he judged himself? (p. 314)

It is possible, according to Collingwood, to express oneself only to oneself, for one's own sake, although "an artist who [felt this way] would not feel the craving to publish his work, or take seriously the public's opinion of it" (p. 315). But the rarity of artists who are totally indifferent to understanding apprehenders' opinions of their work implies that it is no more possible to be an artist in this way than it is to have a serious conversation with oneself.⁴² But how we decide on this matter is not particularly relevant. The more important point is that art is the expression of emotion, and is, in both Carroll's and Collingwood's views, typically a conversational, or interpersonal, phenomenon.

This, then, is the first step of the argument: in art, as in what Carroll calls 'serious' conversation (henceforth just 'conversation'), we create and utter in order to express our emotions. I have argued for this in §1. The next step is to argue that we in fact take art to be expressive in this way. This argument is the subject of Ch. 2. The third step is to argue that art which does not express its creator's emotions gains its claim to expressiveness by deceit; that is, it appears to be expressive in the sense of expressing its creator's emotion, but does not express

⁴² The only examples of artists who are indifferent to others' opinions of their work I can think of are 'outsider artists': but note, first, that 'outsider art' is very unlike normal artworks, and second, that even advocates of this sort of artwork have reservations about it that might mean that outsider art is not 'art', as I understand the term. See Terry Castle (2011).

such an emotion. This follows from the previous step: if we take something to be expressive because it seems to us to be a certain thing, but it is in fact something that is exclusive of it being this, but intentionally makes us think that it is that first thing, then we are deceived; that thing is only a simulacrum of what we take it to be. The final step of this argument is to argue that this deceit is artistically vicious. It is to this argument I now turn.

First, a word on 'deceit'. I am not interested in criticising every way in which an artwork can be deceitful. An artwork can make inconsequential false claims about, for example, the locations of buildings or the dates of historical events, or exaggerate the features of a face. I am not here concerned with deceit of this sort, except insofar as it leads to, or is symptomatic of, deceit of the sort in which I am interested. This might be called 'emotional deceit': the expression of an emotion which bears no resemblance to any emotion the artist felt while creating it (as is perhaps the case in 'manufactured' popular music); or the expression of an emotion related to the one the artist felt, but falsified by being misrepresented in some way (e.g., through exaggeration). Finally, this deceit need not arise from a highly conscious intent to deceive on the artist's part: it can arise simply from the artist not trying hard enough to not deceive: from not attending closely enough to her emotions, for example, or from not trying hard enough to perfect the artwork.⁴³

⁴³ Peter Lamarque's erudite discussion of truth in literature (2009: Ch. 6) is relevant to this discussion.

That deceit is bad, *ceteris paribus*, is hardly controversial. Every mainstream moral theory advises against deceit, even if most will allow for situations in which it is acceptable or good, and even if not all will understand it as fundamentally or intrinsically valuable. It seems, *prima facie*, that this should hold for art too. But are there cultures of art-creation in which this deceit is acceptable or good? If not, is deceit a vice of peculiarly low importance for art for some reason?

I am not aware, however, that anyone has suggested that deceit is unimportant in art. It does not strike me as at all plausible, so I will only consider the suggestion briefly. First, it should be noted in this regard that if artworks are as close to conversation as I have been arguing, there needs to be an explanation of why deceit is typically artistically good, acceptable, or bad but unimportant, when it is typically bad in conversational contexts, and when it is typically very bad there: but there does not need to be an explanation of why it is to be treated in the same way as deceit in quotidian contexts. This is because if artworks are very close to conversation, the expectation is that deceit will be treated in the same way. Second, it does not seem to me that deceit in artworks is acceptable or unimportant, and I don't think I am peculiar in this respect. Unless an unanswered argument is provided against this position, it seems acceptable to occupy it.

Far from there being such an argument, there are persuasive arguments in the opposite direction: deceit in artworks is very bad, and something about which we care very much. First, artworks do not seem to me to differ from conversation in any way that prevents the badness of deceit in conversation being bad in at least some of the same ways. Deceit is disrespectful in ordinary and Kantian senses of

the term, liable to mislead and harm the deceived party, liable to create an atmosphere of distrust, and so on.

But it is worse than this. Artworks *do* differ from conversation in some relevant ways, but in ways which make deceit in artworks a vice which is bad in ways in which it isn't a vice (or isn't as vicious) in conversation. The differences I have in mind are not absolute: there is nothing relevant which artworks have and conversation does not at all have.⁴⁴ But there are things which artworks can typically do much more easily than conversation can; and these things are important, so that failure to do them in artworks is worse than failure to do them in conversation. The basic difference is this: artwork-creation can be far more careful than conversational utterance. Artworks are typically created in advance of being apprehended, over longer time-periods than the apprehensions of them; are (endlessly) revised or (in the case of live art-creation) meticulously prepared (via, e.g., rehearsal, practice); are dwelt on over the course of, sometimes, years; are ideally made public only when the artist is sure that what she is saying is not deceitful; and so on. Conversations, by contrast, are almost always extemporised, involve saying things and exploring ideas never considered before (or never considered in the same way before), involve the massive uncertainty of how the interlocutor will contribute to the conversation, and so on. This makes it much easier for an artwork to not be deceitful, or to be emotionally honest (although of course it is still unfathomably difficult); and so, it is more vicious when it is deceitful than

⁴⁴ I think that this truth is important and overlooked; but it is affirmed by philosophers such as Breskin (2010), Collingwood, Dewey (1934, esp. Ch. 1), Nelson Goodman, Kreitman (2011) and Ridley (1998: pp. 39-40).

when conversational utterances are deceitful. The vice appears still more vicious when one observes that there is no other human activity (apart from conversation) which can be honest in this way, and so that if artworks are deceitful, there is nowhere to turn to find honesty. I hardly need to argue that that emotional honesty is valuable: just as no-one thinks that emotional deceit is *ceteris paribus* good, although people's opinions on the extent and nature of emotional honesty will differ, no-one will deny that it is valuable.

This talk of emotional honesty captures the value of art in which Carroll is interested; but Collingwood is interested in, additionally, something more: the well-being of a community (or culture). How does emotional honesty contribute to this? The quick answer is that in being deeply honest about her own emotions, the artist will also force those who apprehend the artwork to be honest about theirs, to the extent that they have the same emotions (their consciousnesses will become less corrupt); this honesty is itself a sort of healthiness, and when many members of a community are so healthy, the community itself may become that much healthier. I say 'may' for two reasons. The first is because, for instance, a community's core values may be unsustainable when honestly considered, and so an honest artwork may serve only to highlight this, and so make it less attractive. Or, more commonly, a culture stops creating such art, and a rival culture supersedes it because of its ability to create such art. (Consider the rise and fall of punk, or of dodecaphony.) And in any case, art is still justly called that which contributes to the well-being of a community, even if it sometimes doesn't, because it *can* do this, even if it not always does. The second is simply that the

world being the complicated place it is, emotionally honest artworks, like anything else, can have unpredictable roles in a society. For example, an artwork could be appropriated as powerful propaganda by a culture at war with the community in question.

Collingwood has some stunning polemics on the vital importance of artistic honesty: see, for example, Ch. X, §7, Ch. XII, §3, and Ch. XV; and on the evil of the corruption of consciousness: see, for example, Ch. XII, §8. However, although I find them convincing, I am very biased toward him. I am not sure how one might make his arguments convincing to a sceptic. As such, I content myself here with Carroll's more modest claim – that artistic honesty is good, and important – but only suggest Collingwood's stronger claims – that artistic honesty is one of the most important things in the world, and is so because it keeps cultures alive. (Ridley (1998), esp. pp. 49-52, more mildly stresses the importance of artistic honesty for Collingwoodian reasons.)

3.2 The Objection that Collingwood's Account Leads There to Be (Virtually) no Art

One reason why one might wish to argue that whether some art expresses an emotion its creator had while creating it, and which she put into it in creating it, is irrelevant to its artistic value, is that, arguably, it is extremely rare that even the greatest and most expressive artworks express their respective creators' emo-

tions. If this is so, then it is a *reductio ad absurdum* against the position that it is relevant to the value of an artwork that it expresses an emotion its creator had while creating it, and which she put into it in creating it. At the very least, it puts a lot of pressure on the positive argument just given. Not that it is absurd that there is very little great art knocking about: what is implausible is that very little of what is considered great and expressive art is great. But we do not need to face this challenge, as most good art does in fact express the emotions its creator had while creating it and put into it in creating it, as I will soon argue.

But first let us see how the objection goes. Some art hardly lends itself to it. Van Gogh, for example, makes this objection look weak: the thick streaks of paint on his canvases do look like they have been created from a very real and strongly-felt passion. Similar things can be said about some music, especially, for example, punk and jazz; and, more generally, art in which the creative process is not heavily masked by revision. But other examples make it look much stronger: endlessly-revised works of literature and notated music; art which, for all its expressive power, we know required a lot of unemotional technical work (such as smoothing a marble statue, or making sure that there are no grammatical problems in music or literature). However, Collingwood's account of expression does not require that the artist be in the throes of the emotion he is expressing in the art for the duration that he is creating it. He allows that we may imaginatively recreate the emotion that we have previously felt in our minds when we are creating the art (see Ch. X, §§3-5, esp. p. 209). Indeed, to say that he *allows* this possibility is to seriously understate his position; he thinks that this kind of imagina-

tive recreation is absolutely central to all linguistic expression. Consider: in order to consciously and deliberately paint a colour, we first 'see' the colour in our imagination; it is surely impossible to deliberately paint that colour without knowing from one's mind's eye what red looks like. This is uncontroversial. Collingwood thinks that the same thing is going on in the case of emotions: If we want to capture an emotion we once felt, we can do so only by imaginatively recreating it. But an emotion is not, as colour is, the kind of thing we can see in our mind's eye, or, as sound is, the kind of thing we can hear in our mind's ear: it is the kind of thing we must feel; which means, feeling afresh the emotion. In this sense, then, Collingwood's account demands that the artist feels the emotion he is expressing in the art. This shouldn't be controversial either: as Ridley notes in 'Expression in Art' (2004), it is an "everyday fact" that "what one does, how one behaves, reveals what one feels in a way that nothing else can", and that we should treat artworks, which are of course the result of actions, as similarly revealing, absent some good reason to think that they are somehow different (p. 218).

In the same way that the red we see in our mind's eye is not like the red we see when it is really in front of us, the emotion we feel in our imagination is not like the emotion we feel when we feel it for the first time. To explain the manner in which it differs would take more time than its relevance to this dissertation merits. Suffice it to say, first, that Collingwood discusses the relation between imagined and 'really-experienced' *sensa* in Ch. X, esp. §5; and second, that it is plausible that the art will express this imaginatively recreated emotion. At any

rate, in my own case, writing music that expresses an emotion without recollecting that emotion in something like Collingwood's way is about as difficult as painting red without being able to see what it looks like in my mind's eye.

Collingwood's account is more possibly susceptible to this objection if its scope is limited. It is very plausible that the creation of art involves some work of a technical, grammatical and polishing nature that can be done without attending to any relevant emotion. Collingwood would wish to deny it, but we can, for the sake of dialogue, allow it: this is because, as the role of these ways of creating in the creation of art is very limited, doing so does not affect any of the main points of his account. No doubt they do play a role: for example, when one looks through a draft of a novel for typographical errors, or scans a music score (in a traditional Western-classical-music harmonic language) for parallel fifths. But such purely technical work is rare in the creation of art. Even when checking for parallel fifths, the composer (if she is an artist) will normally extricate them from her music because they mar the work, not because they are ungrammatical; and to know that they mar the work, she will have to imaginatively recreate its sound, and what it expresses, in her mind. If we accept the rarity of purely technical art-creation, I don't see how it can be used to put pressure on Collingwood's account.

4. Objections

Over the course of this chapter, I have considered various objections to my account of what it is for art to express emotion. However, some objections have not fitted easily into the narrative flow of the presentation of the account. This section is devoted to answering these other objections. I am not aware of any work which thoroughly argues against the account. The objections I will consider are the only I could find, and brief and scattered. They can all be answered. Before answering them, though, I must warn that the objections I could find were extremely brief: sometimes no more than a sentence was given to them. This has naturally led to some hermeneutic difficulties, and I am not sure that I have understood all the objections correctly.

I will consider eight objections. I will consider four objections raised by Gordon Graham in his 'Expressivism' (2005); I will then consider two objections raised by Stephen Davies in his 'Artistic Expression' (1998). I will finally consider two objections that I have not seen in the literature.

Graham's first objection is that if the emotion expressed in an artwork cannot be specified or apprehended independently of that artwork, how can we speak of the artwork being an expression of emotion at all (pp. 140-1)? This objection is misguided on two counts. First, Collingwood allows that we can *roughly* specify and apprehend the emotion expressed independently of the artwork: he just denies that we can capture the exact nature of the emotion independently of the

artwork. So we *can* say of, for example, the first theme of the second movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* that it is sad, or even, more specifically, tragic; but these broad and vague terms only very slightly capture the particular emotional quality of the music. Second, Graham is mistaken in thinking that it is through English (or French or whatever) that we come to see that it is an emotion that is expressed through an artwork. It is both consistent with Collingwood's theory and totally obvious that we have direct access to the fact that what is expressed in an artwork is an emotion. We learn this by apprehending the art and perceiving the emotion in it. (Wollheim (1987: p. 80) rhetorically pushes this response further: "Why should something, if it can be expressed once, have to be expressible twice[?]")

Graham's second objection is that if an artwork is "wholly and entirely imaginative" (Collingwood: p. 306), in what sense can we speak of the emotion thereby expressed being the artist's (Graham: p. 141)? If the emotion is so imaginative, "the emotion presented to us is presented, so to speak, indifferently as to ownership" (*ibid.*). I am not sure how to respond to Graham's objection, as it is so underdeveloped that I don't see its bite: but if he is arguing that the claim that art is expressive of emotion does not by itself get us the claim that we understand the art as being an expression, by its creator, of emotions she feels, then I am happy to accept it: I spend Ch. 2 arguing for this second claim.

Graham's third objection is that Collingwood's insistence on the importance of imagination to artistic creation makes it look like the peculiar gift of the artist is her ability to imagine, or create, emotions; and not, as Collingwood would say,

her ability to feel emotions sensitively and capture them (p. 141). However, this misunderstands Collingwood's account of emotions. For him, as we have seen, emotions really have two stages, a psychical and linguistic stage. Imagination's role is to 'translate', by expression, which is clarification, psychical emotions into emotions of consciousness. This role can only be adequately fulfilled if the artist is properly attentive to her emotions. Creation, to be sure, plays an important role: it cannot but do so given that the artist creates artworks; but the creation cannot happen without proper attention to the emotions. This, to restate, is because the emotions we find expressed in art are the *clarified* psychical emotions the artist felt that led her to create it; there is an important, relevant sense, in which it is the same emotion before and after the art-creation. It can obviously not be so if the emotion is created, as Graham supposes.

Graham's fourth objection is that Collingwood insists that art is not a 'craft', which means, among other things, that it does not involve a means-end relation (see Ch. II, §1). Specifically, the artist does not create art as a means to the end of arousing some emotion in the audience. But in contradiction to this, Collingwood also holds that by means of art, some emotion of its artist is communicated to the audience - this communication being one end of the artwork.

But there are two different sorts of means-ends relations in play here. The one from which Collingwood is keen to distance himself is only the first. The latter is a very pedestrian claim: as it does not say in what sense of 'end' it is the end of the artwork to express the artist's emotion is aroused in the audience, it is open for Collingwood to say (as he does on pp. 34-5) that the end is not internal to its

being an artwork. As it does not say why artworks can function as means to ends, it is not threatening to Collingwood's position: it is no part of his theory that artworks cannot be appropriated. Consider a different example. Lovers will fail to behave themselves on couches, and no doubt most couches enjoy the privilege of enabling such behaviour. Being behaved badly upon, perhaps, is thus an end of couches. But it doesn't follow that furniture designers design couches as a means to this of lovers' ends. Similarly, art may involve communication between artist and audience, may do so even in the majority of cases, but this doesn't mean that art is created as a means to this end.

I turn now to those of Stephen Davies's objections to which I have not responded (sometimes implicitly) elsewhere in this dissertation. The first of these is that "in according primacy to the private, mental dimension of affective experience and in treating public expressions of emotion as dispensable ancillaries, [Collingwood's] theory's account of expression is questionable."⁴⁵ Davies does not expand on this point, but I tentatively take it that he means something like this. It is possible, given Collingwood's account, that one can express something in such a way that no-one will understand one's actions to express what one takes them to express. An example could be of someone who expresses heart-break in a way that strikes everyone around her as being very expressive of joy. Suppose she expresses it by uttering the sentence, "I am feeling joyous", in a manner which reasonably leads speakers of English to believe that she is being sincere. Arguably, it seems very strange to think that an action which is inter-

⁴⁵ This objection is, as all the objections are, in §4 of his 'Artistic Expression' (1998); all references to Davies are to this section of this paper unless otherwise indicated.

preted universally as expressive of joy could in fact be expressive of heartbreak: in such cases, the expresser's intention with regard to the interpretation of her action is surely over-ridden by what is reasonable to interpret her action as meaning.

My response to this relies on arguments I make more thoroughly in Ch. 2, §3.2.3. I do not want to repeat myself too much here. Suffice it to say that there is no tenable position of utterance meaning which does not allow "I am feeling joyous" to mean that the utterer is suffering from heartbreak; once this connection between an utterance and its meaning has been shown to be established when the requisite conditions obtain, I cannot see how the connection between the meaning of the utterance, and the emotion which it expresses, can be severed. The argument, very briefly, runs like this. We must allow that an utterer can decide in which language she is speaking: otherwise, we deny people the ability to stipulate the meanings of terms, which is too common a practice, in all sorts of contexts from philosophy to quotidian conversation, to deny. Once we accept this, we can redescribe the above example so that our heartbroken soul is speaking a language in which her utterance means that she is heartbroken. If all that it means to say that expression for Collingwood is private and mental is that it is up to the expresser to determine the language in which she is speaking, then Collingwood's position is, in this respect, no less plausible than any other theory of expression. And Collingwood's account can easily allow that this is all it means for expression to be private and mental.

The second objection is that Collingwood's theory cannot account for the way in which performers contribute to an artwork, especially in drama, music, ballet and film. I take it that the objection could be generalised to the objection that Collingwood's theory cannot account for any art which is created collaboratively.

What might Davies mean by this objection? I can imagine two mutually consistent interpretations. The first is that Collingwood's account can't account for the collaborative nature of creation: how can an artwork express one emotion when different artists have created different parts or aspects of it? Surely the artwork can never express less than as many different emotions as there are artists, if it's in the business of expressing its artists' emotions at all. The second is that, in artworks in which there is an 'ur-artist' such as a composer or playwright, and secondary artists such as performers or actors, Collingwood can't account for the role these secondary artists play, because the artwork – the music or play – only expresses the composer's or playwright's emotion, according to Collingwood's account. But this is counter-intuitive, because it doesn't account for the undeniable (and undeniably) important role of musicians and actors to music and plays.

Collingwood's account has the resources to respond to both objections. The problem with them both is that Davies thinks Collingwood to be more demanding than he is with regard to how shared an emotion can be, and with regard to how much of one's mental life an emotion must occupy. In the case of jazz, for example, in which the artwork is created, fairly equally, by each performer, Davies might object that surely each musician cannot be experiencing the same emotion: therefore, the music cannot be expressing just one emotion. This objec-

tion is the same as the one that the apprehender of an artwork cannot feel the same emotion as the artist. Collingwood is admittedly vague about the intersubjectivity of emotions; but, as I noted in n. 35, although this is a question worth exploring, it is no *objection* to Collingwood's account that it requires that people can have the same emotions as each other (or very similar emotions to each other). We speak all the time of emotions in a way that supports Collingwood's account: we do so when we speak of two musicians 'being on the same wavelength' as each other; of knowing how someone else feels; of empathising; of conversing with each other about the emotion something like which we both agree is found in an artwork; and so on. Similarly, it looks, *prima facie*, like artists can feel the same emotions as each other, or very similar emotions to each other.⁴⁶

Further, as we have seen in §3.2, although the artist needs to *attend* to the emotion expressed if she is to consciously and deliberately create an artwork that expresses it, just as she needs to attend to a colour she paints if she is to paint it consciously and deliberately, she does not, in expressing an emotion, necessarily feel it with such force that it makes her unable to feel anything else; just as she does not become unable to visually imagine anything else in painting a colour. And, as we have also seen, Collingwood's account is not committed to the claim that every emotion in the artist's mental life will be expressed in whatever art she

⁴⁶ It need not always be the case that, in art, every artist involved feels the emotion behind the artwork. In a play, for instance, perhaps the ur-artist will feel this emotion, but each actor will feel the emotions expressed by the character she or he is playing. Or in a jazz piece, perhaps each performer only feels the emotion expressed by his or her contribution, and the overall emotional character of the piece is only apparent to the listener. (And as the players are also listeners, in hearing the emergent emotional character of the music, they may come to feel it and respond to it in as many and as complicated ways as their psychology allows.) This is all compatible with, but not required by, Collingwood's account.

produces; just as not every colour in the artist's imagination will be found in every brushstroke she makes.

Davies is responded to, then, on each interpretation of his objection. It need not be the case that an artwork expresses as many different emotions as there are artists: they can *prima facie* feel the same emotion and express only that emotion in the artwork.

So much for Davies's objections. There are two final objections I want to consider, which I have not seen in the literature. The first of these is that Collingwood's account creates too much art. Let us see how it goes. The objection starts with the observation that in some great artworks, for example Picasso's *Weeping Woman*, we come to feel some of the same emotions as Picasso, as a result of him having successfully expressed himself in it. But in apprehending poor artworks, such as William McGonagall's *The Tay Bridge Disaster*, a poem about a train crash in which ninety people died, we also get this experience: we see what it was like for McGonagall to have been much more mindful of rhymes and colourful adjectives than the nature of what he was writing about, as only thus could he have written about the disaster in the way he did. Further, by imaginatively recreating what it is like to compose this poem, we can come to know our emotions more clearly: we can reflect on our disgust at the poem and its insensitive treatment of the loss of human life, and thus come to see many things about sympathy, empathy, art, the human condition, and so on. Is *The Tay Bridge Disaster*, then, art?

Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay!
Alas! I am very sorry to say
That ninety lives have been taken away
On the last Sabbath day of 1879,
Which will be remember'd for a very long time.

- William McGonagall, *The Tay Bridge Disaster*, lines 1-5

The response comes in two parts. The first involves using Collingwood's distinction between the expression and betrayal of emotion: Picasso *expresses* his grief or anger or whatever; McGonagall *betrays* his insensitivity. Picasso saw that some certain line in *Weeping Woman* was right. McGonagall was either too emotionally lazy to be aware of what he really felt about the Tay Bridge disaster and so see that a line is right or wrong, or insufficiently bothered that some line was wrong to have done something about it. The insensitivity that we see in what he produces is not 'put into' it like the grief Picasso put into *Weeping Woman*; it is inferred from the lack of anything analogous, in his poem, to the grief in Picasso's painting. The insensitivity we see in McGonagall's poem is matched to the earnestness and seriousness in Picasso's painting: not to the grief in it.

Things which betray but do not express emotion are not art: so not every caringly-built table and musical exercise is art, and the objection gets no purchase in such cases. However, *The Tay Bridge Disaster* does express *something*: a childish and inappropriate emotion, perhaps, but an emotion nonetheless; and as that it express an emotion is what it is for something to be art, then McGonagall's creation is art. But this is not a problem: neither Collingwood nor I tie art so closely to

something very valuable that it is problematic to the offered account that *The Tay Bridge Disaster* is art. For art to be good, it must not only express its artist's emotions. What it must also do is not something it is part of this dissertation to specify. Different philosophers will give different answers: I have given Collingwood's above in §3.1, but other philosophers (e.g., Scruton) will differ. But the critical evaluations of McGonagall's poem will no doubt all agree that *The Tay Bridge Disaster* is a terrible poem. Collingwood would say it's because the emotions the poem expresses are not sufficiently clarified, it can corrupt one's consciousness, which can endanger everything from systems of morality to common sense (pp. 280-1); Scruton would perhaps say that it's because it expresses childish and self-regarding emotions, which, in this context, are repugnant (that he can make this kind of criticism is evinced in his *The Aesthetics of Music*, e.g., pp. 384-90).

The final objection is that there are certain artworks, specifically the music of Bach, which I want my account to cover, but which aren't covered by it. This objection is strongest seen through discussion of Douglas Adams's *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* (1987). One of the subplots of this novel is the attempts of one of its protagonists, Richard MacDuff, to write a software programme that transforms into sound the beautiful music that he is convinced underlies all creation, the mathematical processes and shapes that underlie that being themselves, in Richard's opinion, beautiful. He does this by, for example, getting complicated mathematical representations of, say, swallows' flight (p. 82), and putting it

through a computer function that results in sound. But his labours, to his frustration, never bear more than cacophony.

At the end of the novel and its time-travelling and changing of history, however, Richard hears his girlfriend playing a Bach 'cello suite, and is profoundly struck by it. He asks her what on Earth that beautiful music is, and she responds, somewhat bemusedly, that it is Bach; but to her incredulity he has never heard that name. It transpires that the original world was one in which Bach's music did not exist, but that in time-travelling, he'd changed the world so that it did. But - and this is the really interesting part - he'd changed the world, not to one in which Bach had been born and written the music he is attributed with writing, but to one in which some aliens had accomplished Richard's task of turning "the music of life itself" (p. 233) into something that we can hear, which was then attributed to Bach, who was, in fact, one might say, just a bloke.

The point of this, of course, is that Adams considers Bach's music not just to be great, but to be something one could naturally believe is no human's invention, a musical transliteration of the simple, beautiful and perfect order of the world. This is something that one can't say of something simply because it's great. Consider the music of Beethoven, Buxtehude or Palestrina, or the work of Rothko or Mondrian. Could one make the same claim? Surely not. And what if it were better (whatever that could mean)? Not then either. Beethoven's music is incredibly human, is all about people - people that you could almost kiss - dancing and singing together, and not the sort of music that could underlie the world (at least, not unless you attributed some very human cause to the world being the way it is). And this is interesting, because if Bach's music can naturally be heard

as the music that makes the world what it is, then it can, of course, be naturally heard as not written by any human, and so not the expression of emotion; but it can still be all we think it to be; which is to say that it can still be art, as I have used that term. This is of course bad for my account, which analyses art as the expression of emotion.

There are problems with this objection, and responses to it, but let us ignore them, and assume that my account cannot make sense of Bach's music, even though it is an instance of the phenomenon of which my account is a purported analysis. Is this really such a problem? I am not so sure. I am not sure that we want an account of the sort I am offering that makes sense of Bach. Bach defies the understanding. In listening to him, I sometimes shake my head in disbelief, because I cannot see how a human could have created what he created. He has never, to my knowledge, written a note that is less than perfect, which is an unfathomable accomplishment for a mere fallible human. And I am not alone in speaking about Bach in such terms. The estimation is shared, however it may be expressed, by – in my experience – everyone with even the most basic understanding of the type of music Bach wrote, and by most people with experience of the music but no such understanding.

But the point is this: my account of art may not do justice to Bach's music, and this looks, from one point of view, like a serious problem with my account. I do not want to say that I reject this point of view, but I want to insist that there is another valid point of view; and from here, it looks like an advantage of my account that it does not make sense of the mystery of Bach's music, that it captures the incomprehension we cannot but feel every time we listen to it.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have, after some explication of important terms (§1.1 and §1.2) argued that to see something as expressive is to see it as of a piece with some emotion we feel (§1.3). We see something as expressive for any number of psychological reasons. However, in apprehending some expression as expressive because it is the product of human intention, we also imaginatively recreate what we think it is like to express ourselves in that way (§1.4). If something is not expressive because someone is expressing themselves by it (e.g., it is a mountain, or the emotion expressed by an artwork is not of a piece with anything the artist put into it), then that thing is intransitively expressive (§2). I have argued that art gets (at least part of its) value from its singular capacity of emotional honesty: its ability to vividly capture and show us the secrets of our own hearts, thus allowing us to know ourselves and our fellows; this itself an important value, but is also, I have hinted, valuable because it protects from a peculiar sort of disease or vice that comes from not being properly in touch with oneself (§3). I have then discussed and responded to a number of objections that have been raised against it that haven't arisen in the course of the previous three sections (§4).

The account I have argued for is in all essentials Collingwood's. I have departed from his account only to add to it.

Conclusion

This dissertation has been about art. It has been primarily about a phenomenon that I have somewhat stipulatively called art, but to the extent that this is central to perhaps most of what is commonly called the greatest art, the dissertation has also been about what is commonly called art. I have not established anything conclusively, and I have not explored any debate exhaustively, but this was not my aim. What I have tried to do is sketch an account of what art is and why it is so valuable. I have set this as my aim because, although the account is old, it has been neglected, and I believe that if the debate concerns itself with this phenomenon, and with this account of it, then much that seems intractable or strange will become sensible and clear. I will give some examples. First, many things said by Collingwood, Tolstoy, Scruton, etc., that seem obviously false if taken to be about what is normally called art, become defensible if they are understood as being about what I have called art. If we want to think that eminently intelligent people do not often make manifestly false claims, then this is an advantage of Collingwood's theory. Second, the importance of art to our lives - as Goldie says in 'Towards a Virtue Theory of Art' (2007), "artmaking and art appreciation [is]

not a luxury, but just as important to our lives as human beings as ethics or contemplation" (p. 386) – becomes clear, because the account understands art to be a matter self-understanding and mental well-being. Goldie, in that paper, is trying to suggest where the answer might lie: but Goldie is trying to build an account almost from scratch, and this is unnecessary, as Collingwood has already offered an account. Relatedly, Collingwood's account makes sense of the sense of 'blasphemy' artistic insensitivity can cause us to feel. Third, this account has an answer to the question of why derivative artworks and forgeries are thought to be of little value; it can also account for why people *do* find such artworks to be valuable. Fourth, why snobbery is a vice, and why it seems that snobs sometimes don't 'really understand' art, is also readily accounted for in Collingwood's account. This saves us the bother of forging a new direction in aesthetics to accommodate our sense that this is a vice, which Kieran argued to be necessary in his 'The Vice of Snobbery' (2010). Fifth, the centrality to art criticism of terms that most immediately apply to people – 'vibrant', 'dull', 'serious', 'sentimental', etc. – is easily explained. Sixth – more speculatively – the relationship between art and language, which is so tantalising and has been highlighted so often (such as recently by Robert Kraut in his 'Why Does Jazz Matter to Aesthetic Theory?' (2005)), will become more comprehensible if we look at it from the vantage of Collingwood's account. Seventh, the peculiar phenomenon that people, even with very similar artistic backgrounds, will relate most strongly to different artworks, can be explained, or at least can be seen as part of the more general phenomenon that people choose different people as their friends, even when this cannot be explained by reference to shared experiences, geographical conven-

ience, etc. Relatedly, the particular ways in which people can fail to understand art is easily accounted for.

Of course, people have objected to Collingwood's account on various grounds; but I have considered all of the objections to the account that I could find, and I have not found any that are persuasive. (Indeed, I have hardly found any to which the response is not in *The Principles of Art* itself.) The account is not perfect, of course: for example, I am not sure what it is for two people to have the same emotion as each other, and the account relies heavily on something like this being coherent and possible. But it is in the nature of theories to be objectionable. I remain convinced that renewed interest in the account of the nature and value of art offered by Collingwood in *The Principles of Art* will be repaid manifold by its beauty and by its truth. The worst that can happen is that, by being so beautiful, and so true, we'll have to find a new area of philosophy to be interested in.

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