Aesthetics and Philosophy of Music in Australasia

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Ismay Barwell and Justine Kingsbury

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Aesthetics in Australasia: 1945–2005

Aesthetics was taught in many Australasian philosophy departments after the Second World War. However, there were few publications until the expansion of the universities in 1970s and 1980s. In this chapter, my focus is on work done in Australasia by academics based in philosophy departments, rather on the work done in other countries by philosophers born in Australasia. This means that I will not discuss the work of philosophers like Samuel Alexander, whose books, *Art and The Material* (1925) and *Beauty and Other Forms of Value* (1933), were published while he was professor at Manchester, and I will not discuss work published either before or after someone took a position in Australasia. Moreover, I will focus on

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G. Oppy, N.N. Trakakis (eds.), *History of Philosophy in Australia and New Zealand*,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-6958-8_25,

books rather than articles, so when someone has written articles on issues discussed in their books, my account is an account of the book version.

In 'The Integrity of Aesthetics' (1990), David Novitz identifies issues that he sees as crucial to the coherence of aesthetics as a philosophical area, because they constitute its core. These issues lead to others, which form a constellation around the core. From the core, we can follow threads which lead to ontological, epistemological, political, ethical and semantic issues or to issues in philosophy of mind and action. I will not pursue those at the end of these threads unless they have a direct bearing on one that is clearly aesthetic. For example, I have decided to omit publications whose focus is on the semantic problems presented by fiction.

A survey of aesthetics in Australasia requires a map of this kind since it cannot be represented as a conversation amongst practicing philosophers in that geographical area. Aestheticians in Australasia are more involved with philosophers in other countries than they are with each other. Moreover, there are two deeply divided philosophical approaches, both of which have Kant as one of their ancestors, but which have developed in very different ways. These are the analytic tradition, which is sometimes called the Anglophone tradition though it is not all written in English, and the continental tradition. The continent in question is Europe, but this tradition is also followed in Britain, the United States and Australasia. My chapter focuses on the analytic tradition.

Although analytic aestheticians rarely engaged with each other in print, they did engage with the work of a similar range of British and North American philosophers. The same names appear either as partners or opponents or, very often, simply as those whose ideas are useful. They include Monroe Beardsley, Noel Carroll, Arthur Danto, George Dickie, Nelson Goodman, Herbert Grice, Jerrold Levinson, David Lewis, Joseph Margolis, Robert Stecker, Kendall Walton and Richard Wollheim.

Given the number and size of universities in Australasia, a disproportionate number of Australasian aestheticians have been based in New Zealand philosophy departments. Amongst these some stand out. For example, David Novitz was the first to achieve an international reputation. He had placed eight articles in international publications before he published *Pictures and Their Use in Communication* in 1976. *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* followed in 1987 and *The Boundaries of Art* in 1992. Other stars include Stephen Davies, Gregory Currie and Denis Dutton.

Stephen Davies' aesthetic publications fall into two main categories. Most concern music. These and works by other philosophers in the aesthetics of music are covered in Justine Kingsbury's essay in this volume. Davies was, and continues to be, interested in definitions of art. Two articles preceded the publication of *Definitions of Art* in 1991 and two have succeeded it. Other enduring interests have been interpretation and non-Western art, in particular Balinese art. He has edited two anthologies, *Art and Its Messages* (1997) and *Art and Essence* (2003), with Ananda C. Sukla. His most recent books are *The Philosophy of Art* (2006c) and *Philosophical Perspectives on Art* (2007). At the time of writing, Davies is president of the American Society for Aesthetics, a position never before held by an Australasian.

Denis Dutton is a rare beast amongst philosophers—a media star. As well as editing *The Forger's Art: Forgery and the Philosophy of Art* (1993) and *Philosophy and Literature*, Dutton edits an arts and literature website http://www.aldaily.com. He has also published on the universality of art and evolutionary aesthetics. His latest book is *The Art Instinct* (2008).

During his time at the University of Otago, Gregory Currie published *An Ontology of Art* (1989) and *The Nature of Fiction* (1990). When *Image and Mind* came out in 1995, he was professor at Flinders. Like Novitz and Davies, Currie published many articles on issues he discussed in his books. In addition, he has written about aesthetic properties ('Supervenience, Essentialism and Aesthetic Properties', 1990a), how we acquire moral knowledge from reading fiction ('The Moral Psychology of Fiction', 1995b), imagination and in particular simulation, which is a specific exercise of imagination ('Visual Imagery as the Simulation of Vision', 1995) and narrative and narration in movies and fiction ('Unreliability Refigured', 1995c).

Paul Thom was the only aesthetician in Australia comparable to Currie in the 1990s, and it is worth noting, since it is so uncommon, that in *For An Audience* (1993), Thom acknowledges Currie's work, even though he does not exactly engage with it. Apart from his work on music, Thom's other major book in aesthetics is *Making Sense* (2000).

Since 2000 the balance between the two countries has changed. Amongst rising stars, Elizabeth Burns Coleman and Jennifer McMahon are in Australian academic departments, and Catharine Abell was until 2006.

In 'The Integrity of Aesthetics', Novitz suggests that the coherence of aesthetics follows from two preoccupations. The focus of one preoccupation is 'the problem of explaining the rational basis of aesthetic evaluation' (Novitz 1990, p. 9). The focus of the other preoccupation is a distinctive value which Novitz calls 'artistic value' and a distinctive experience which he calls 'aesthetic experience'. These preoccupations make up the theme I pursue in my first section. I discuss publications on Kant's aesthetics and on aesthetic value and experience more generally. In the second section, I deal with books and articles on interpreting works of art and, in particular, attributing depictive and representational content to those which have either or both types of content. In the third section, I discuss conceptions of art and the aesthetic as they have been discussed in the first decade of the twenty-first century in connection with debates about the universality of art and the appropriate way to aesthetically appreciate nature.

Kant's Aesthetics, Aesthetic Value and Aesthetic Experience

Immanuel Kant's foray into judgments of taste left twentieth-century critics and theorists with a marvelous theory in terms of which to explain the nature of aesthetic experience and the objectivity of aesthetic value (Novitz 1990, p. 9). In 'The System of the Arts' (1993), Hartley Slater explores Kant's suggestions for systematising the arts. Slater begins, as he says Kant did, from the 'unquestionably

correct assumption that the arts are *expressive* and so must have the dimensions in which language is expressive' (Slater 1993, p. 612). These are word, gesture and tone. Slater adds perceptual structure to locate the 12 main arts along the six sides of a tetrahedron. He claims that this pyramid 'surely contains the whole of our culture' (1993, p. 617). This kind of systematisation would have delighted Kant, but it has not generated much contemporary interest.

The earliest book on Kant's aesthetics published in Australasia was Mary McCloskey's *Kant's Aesthetics* in 1987. The latest are Robert Wick's *Kant On Judgment* published in 2007 and Jennifer McMahon's *Aesthetics and Material Beauty* also published in 2007. Although McMahon deals with more than Kant's aesthetics in this book, she devotes several chapters to an interpretation of him.

Mary McCloskey undertakes to defend Kant against three objections. She defends him against Wollheim's objection to any aesthetic theory which approaches aesthetic appreciation of art through aesthetic appreciation of nature. Wollheim claimed that aesthetic appreciation of art involves a judgment about skilfulness that is irrelevant to the appreciation of nature. She defends him against Goodman's objection to understanding aesthetic value exclusively in terms of beauty and pleasure and against Collingwood's objection that Kant trivialised aesthetic experience.

Kant distinguished three kinds of aesthetic experience: pure beauty, dependent beauty and the sublime. All involve feeling and evaluative judgment. In the experience of pure and dependent beauty, the feeling is pleasure. In that of the sublime, the feeling is awe. In all three cases, the feeling is *a reason for* the evaluative judgment.

The feeling component in an experience of pure beauty is distinctive because it is disinterested. In this respect, it is unlike the delight involved in experience of the good and the agreeable. These are both interested pleasures. Pleasure in the good is a response to objects and events that meet standards they should meet. For example, human actions should meet moral standards. Pleasure of this kind unproblematically provides *a reason for* a judgment such as 'This action is good!' just because there is a standard involved. Pleasure in the agreeable is interested because it is a response to satisfied desire. For example, the pleasure a hungry person feels in eating her dinner is a response to the satisfaction of his desire for food. In this case, the pleasure does not constitute *a reason for* a judgment such as 'This meal is delicious!' because there is no rule or standard to which the dinner should conform.

Kant did not argue that aesthetic experience was disinterested. Although he argues that the pleasure involved in an experience of pure beauty is disinterested, he did not argue that aesthetic appreciation required an attitude in which attention was disengaged from all personal, practical or cognitive concerns. The latter claim was attributed to him by theorists in the Art For Art's Sake strand of Modernism and also by McCloskey, Wicks and Dutton (1994b) and Slater (1997), but not by McMahon. In section 2 of *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant says that the delight involved in an experience of pure beauty is 'an estimate we form of it on mere contemplation', but he does not say that this delight entails that the contemplation be disinterested.

Because the pleasure involved in an experience of pure beauty is not a response to objects that meet standards, its ability to provide a *reason for* an evaluative judgment needs explaining. In section 56 of *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant suggests that the explanation requires the recognition of an 'indeterminate concept'. This is the concept that he called the 'Form der Zweckmassigkeit', and that in English is called the 'form of finality' or the 'form of purposiveness'. These terms refer to the unified structure that any complex object whatsoever must possess, if we are to make any judgment whatsoever about it. An object must be unified if we are to judge that it belongs to a particular class (a person or a cow, an attack or a journey), or that it has a particular attribute (is blue eyed or three legged, caused by an argument or over before it began), or that it is honourable or sickly, murderous or hazardous.

For Kant, the relations constituting the unity of an object are produced by us in the process of perceiving and thinking about it. The unifying is done by psychological activities in which imagination works with principles supplied by understanding. These principles are determinate concepts. Sometimes unifying and contemplating what we have unified are pleasurable activities. When they are, this is because our imagination and understanding are working together harmoniously in an interaction that Kant calls 'free-play'. When free-play occurs, we feel pleasure. We feel the object is particularly suited to our perceptual and cognitive capacities. The pleasure we feel supplies a reason for the judgment that the object is beautiful because it is pleasure taken in structures that every human being can produce and contemplate.

McCloskey defends Kant against Wollheim by arguing that the pleasure we experience in looking at or listening to some objects is an effect that they have on us by virtue of their perceptual structure. Like Dutton (1994b) and Wicks, she thinks the form of finality is not a structure that all complex objects of judgment must have. Only some objects have this structure, and they have it by virtue of their visual and auditory structure rather than their conceptual structure. 'How the calyx, corolla, stem, etc., of a daisy are put together is distinct from how the gold colour of the circular centre, the radiating band of white petals and the green stem are configured' (McCloskey 1987, p. 62). The latter is the structure in which the pleasure involved in the experience of pure beauty is taken.

For both McCloskey and Wicks, 'free-play' is a *consequence* of the finality of some perceptual forms but not an interaction involved in the production of them. Pure aesthetic pleasure is the effect of either looking at an object whose form is lovely to look at or listening to an object whose form is lovely to listen to. A daisy is lovely to look at because it is *made* to produce pleasure in the sense that by virtue of its visual form, it lends itself to this, even though it is not *made* for this purpose in the sense of being intentionally produced for this purpose. A beautiful painting of a daisy is made in the second sense as well. The adaptiveness of its sensory structure is a product of skill or art.

In 'Dependent Beauty as the Appreciation of Teleological Style' (1997) and in *Kant On Judgment* (2007), Robert Wicks offers an analysis of judgments of pure beauty that is incompatible with that offered by McCloskey. Wicks suggests that

the pleasure expressed in a pure judgment of beauty involves an awareness of a range of possible purposes the object might serve (Wicks 1997, p. 392). Pure aesthetic pleasure is the result of looking at an object which could be put to a range of purposes, not a response to the way in which it lends itself to being looked at.

McCloskey takes Goodman's objection to be a claim that the experiences we have in response to paintings or plays about appalling, horrifying or tragic things are not pleasurable. The effects of representations of these kinds of things are often painful or unpleasant. McCloskey does not defend Kant very well against this objection. Although she notices that Kant explicitly claims that beautiful representations of ugly things are possible and that the beauty of the representation lies in the skill with which it was made, she interprets Kant as saying that a representation can only be beautiful if it represents what it represents as beautiful. A representation can only be lovely to look at if it represents an object as beautiful. This defence leads to the criticism that fine art and aesthetic appreciation are trivialised. If aesthetic experience depends only on interrelations between sensory qualities that make the object lovely to look at, then how something looks is more important than what it says or even how it says what it says. Moreover, it becomes very difficult to see how works of literature can be objects of aesthetic judgment and thus of aesthetic appreciation.

In *Aesthetics and Material Beauty* (2007), Jennifer McMahon offers an interpretation of Kant that constitutes a much better defence against objections of the kind offered by Wollheim, Gombrich and Collingwood than McCloskey's. Earlier I said that according to Kant anything that can be the object of a judgment must be unified and that being unified entails a structure that is an instance of the form of finality. McMahon agrees with this interpretation. According to McMahon, the crucial feature in Kant's theory is that beauty supervenes on some structures (some forms of finality) possessed by natural objects and works of art. These structures are products of synthesising that occurs at a sub-personal or non-conscious level. They are imaginary configurations or perceptual constructs. Some mountains, motorbikes and movies possess a structure of this kind. Those that do are beautiful.

Structures that make objects beautiful constitute aesthetic ideas. An aesthetic idea is the counterpart of a rational idea. For Kant, rational ideas are ideas that do not apply to any object we experience. They are ideas like freedom, immortality and infinity. They do not apply to the objects we experience because every event has a cause, everything changes and passes out of existence and everything has its limits. For McMahon, rational ideas also include ideas like unity, harmony and order. They include ideas like being part of a larger whole and being perfectly integrated with nature or a community. Although these ideas do not apply to things we experience, they have enormous emotional power.

Kant's 'ingenious theory' (McMahon 2007, p. 3) was that rational ideas are activated by the imaginary configurations that please us and that we judge to be beautiful. When an imaginary configuration activates rational ideas, no determinate concept can capture all its aspects. The rules or principles supplied by determinate concepts are inadequate. Structures that activate rational ideas cannot be fully

described. These structures constitute aesthetic ideas because they are perceptual constructs to which no determinate concept is adequate. When mountains, motorbikes or movies possess such structures, they please us because they express aesthetic ideas. If mountains and motorbikes can express aesthetic ideas, then the expression of these ideas is not confined to works of art or other representations that have *content*. Mountains and motorbikes are not *about* anything.

The objection that Kant trivialised beauty had a great deal of influence. For several decades, beauty was an unfashionable value. In 'The Dreariness of Aesthetics' (1959), John Passmore is scornful of beauty because it is trivial and irrelevant to judgments about 'good' literature and 'good' paintings. Helen Knight explains that 'on the whole we commend the works of man for their goodness, and the works of nature for their beauty' (Knight 1959, p. 147).

However, beauty has made a comeback. In *The Secret Power of Beauty* (2004), John Armstrong offers an account of beauty in which it is a 'holistic feature' of objects (p. 37). It supervenes on relations of friendship between an object's parts. The parts of a beautiful object work together in the way that friends work together in a friendship. In a (perfect) friendship, each friend helps the other(s) to bring out 'the best in them' (p. 37). If beauty supervenes on relations between all parts of an object, then none can be isolated from others and there need be no 'part' that every beautiful thing possesses. Armstrong claims that all historical theories of beauty fail because they were attempts to identify a 'part' that all beautiful objects possess. Passmore (1959) offers a similar reason for the dreariness of aesthetic theories. There is no feature which all works of art have in common and which supply reasons for their 'goodness'. However, Passmore thinks that all good literary works have features which are peculiar to literature and which supply reasons for evaluations of them. Armstrong does not.

Some of Armstrong's examples of failed theories appear to be quite similar to his own. Both Kant's account of artifacts whose beauty depends upon the organisation of their parts so that they fulfill well a function they should fulfill (dependent beauty) and Palladio's account of the beauty of buildings in terms of ratios between their parts are holistic accounts of beauty. The beauty of the whole depends upon interrelations between their parts. They do not isolate a particular feature, such as the colour or the serpentine curve. Although Armstrong claims that all previous accounts of beauty fail because they tried to identify one feature, it is not clear that they all do suffer this defect.

Armstrong gives several examples of friendship between parts. Some, but not all, fit his definition of friendliness. For example, the music and the images of Venice in Visconti's *Death in Venice* work together to make both the image and the music more beautiful. In other examples, the friendliness of the parts seems to follow from their enabling us to see something lovely about the object they represent or from their being 'user-friendly'—they are making it easy for us to acquire an important insight about the object they represent.

The parts of Delacroix's portrait of Louis-Auguste Schwiter relevant to its beauty are relations between the sad-looking young man wearing formal clothes

and his setting. He stands outside a well-lit room on a terrace overlooking a dark and deserted garden. The background—the garden, the light from the room he stands outside and the dark sky—is friendly towards the subject of the portrait. Their friendliness consists in the way in which 'they bring forward and allow us to see what is attractive in him' (Armstrong 2004, p. 44). The parts of this painting are friendly because the relations between what it represents enable us to see something appealing about the young man. They provide us with a reason for liking him. This account of the beauty of a beautiful representation is similar to that which McCloskey attributes to Kant.

Armstrong gives a different account of the beauty of the last stanza of Tennyson's poem, 'Lycidas':

> And the stately ships go on
> To their haven under the hill;
> But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still!

The words 'the stately ships go on/To their haven under the hill' are juxtaposed with 'O for the touch of a vanished hand,/And the sound of a voice that is still!', and so the ships' return home is juxtaposed with an expression of grief. The friendliness of this juxtaposition consists in the way in which it enables the reader to make a connection between the ships returning to a haven and the poet's yearning from which there can be no haven, and by so doing the reader acquires both a deeper understanding of the poet's grief and a reason for pitying him.

The beauty of 'Lycidas' supervenes on the user-friendliness of its elements. Relations between its words enable the reader to make connections between the events the words are about and so perceive these events to have a significance that she did not appreciate before. Perceiving this significance supplies the reader with a reason for an emotional response to, and an evaluative judgment of, the events and the speaker. Relations between the words enable her to recognise, if not share, the perspective expressed in the poem on the events to which its words refer.

In both examples, the beauty of the poem and the painting supervenes on relations between a configuration of words or lines, shapes and colours that constitutes the structure in its material and a configuration of people, objects and events that the poem or picture is about. The latter configuration constitutes the structure in the content of the poem or the painting. Structure in a poem or picture's material enables the reader or spectator to recognise structure in its content and so perceive the significance of the people, objects or events the poem or picture is about. Typically, a beautiful poem or picture enables us to see the emotional significance of what it is about because the significance it enables us to see supplies a reason for an emotional response to, and an evaluative judgment of, the people, objects or events it is about.

Insofar as appreciating the beauty of a poem or painting or any other object with content depends upon recognising structure in its content, an account of what is involved in the aesthetic appreciation of these things presupposes an account of content.

Interpretation, Representation and Depiction

Apart from abstract paintings and sculpture, most pictures, sculptures, poetry, dramatic performances, operas and novels have content. They are about gods, kings and ordinary people, what they do and what happens to them. They are about actions, events and states of affairs, conflicts which arise and are resolved, triumphs, losses, celebrations and bereavements. They *represent* things as belonging to particular kinds, having particular properties, standing in particular relations, being of particular value and making particular emotional and behavioural responses appropriate. Kant did not offer a theory of content. In that respect, he was typical of his age. In the eighteenth century, philosophers were not greatly preoccupied with meaning of that kind. However, in the twentieth century and particularly in the decades after the Second World War, they were. These were the decades which saw what used to be called 'the linguistic turn'. The turn was taken in the hope that attention to language would solve or dissolve some of the most enduring philosophical problems. A good theory of language and linguistic meaning would provide the basis for theories of just about everything else.

All five 'stars' mentioned earlier have defended theories of content and interpretation. Denis Dutton did so in 'Why Intentionalism Won't Go Away' (1987). In this essay, he argues that an artist's intentions determine the genre to which a work belongs, they enable the detection of certain types of irony and they enable the detection of 'some mistakes in interpretation'. Gregory Currie offers his theory in a series of articles such as 'Work and Text' (1991c) and 'Interpretation and Objectivity' (1993), as well as *The Nature of Fiction* (1990b) and *Image and Mind* (1995a). In *Pictures and Their Use in Communication* (1976), David Novitz offers a theory of depictive content. In *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* (1987), he focuses on literature. In 'True Interpretations' (1988), 'Relativism in Interpretation' (1995), 'Interpreting Contextualities' (1996), 'Author's Intentions, Literary Interpretation and Literary Value' (2006b) and chapter five of *The Philosophy of Art*, Stephen Davies offers a theory of interpretation of literature and pictures. In *For An Audience* (1991), Paul Thom offers a theory about the interpretation and appreciation of the performing arts. In *Making Sense* (2000), he offers a theory of interpretation that is more comprehensive than the others, and I will begin with it because it enables me to place the others.

Thom argues that making sense is the point of what scientists do in their laboratories, what ordinary folk do in the course of their everyday lives, what readers do when they read novels and histories, what directors and actors do when they put on a play or make a movie and what audiences do when they watch plays, movies and opera or listen to music. They all interpret.

For Thom, the goal of interpretation is making sense, but there are two ways in which this goal can be achieved. Thom uses a distinction drawn by Joseph Margolis in *Interpretation Radical But Not Unruly* (Thom 2000, p. 16). Margolis distinguished adequational from constructive interpretation (Margolis 1995, p. 24). The goal of adequational interpretation is to discover the meaning that an object already has. This is the kind of interpretation that scientists, ordinary folk, readers and audiences are traditionally understood to be practicing.

Constructive interpretation is a productive practice. Intentional technologies such as painting and sculpture are used to construct an entire world (Margolis 1995, p. 26). In this case, sense is made or invented. At its most extreme, a constructive interpretation reduces the object to a sequence of words, or movements, or projected images and recorded sounds with which the reader or spectator plays. Their play is constrained by their abilities and their pleasure, but not by how the makers of the sequences of words, images and movements might have intended those sequences to be used or by how the audience for whom they were made was likely to have used them.

Thom argues that musicians and actors engage in constructive interpretation and 'are content to amplify on their objects' (Thom 2000, p. 68) rather than understand either the use for which the composer or playwright intended them or the uses to which they were put by the audience for whom they were made. Moreover, 'transgressive' adequational interpretations may deliberately set out to make a sense that is different from the understanding of their makers and the audiences to whom the work is directed. They aim to misunderstand.

Analytic philosophers tend to offer theories of interpretation in which there is no place for unconstrained constructive interpretation, and Australasian analytic philosophers are no exception to this rule. Currie and Novitz offer theories in which constructive interpretation is not a possibility. Their theories are about discovering meaning. Davies offers a theory of interpretation in which a special importance attaches to interpretations that aim to understand a work as its author's creation. In the articles I mentioned and in chapter five of *Philosophy of Art*, Davies claims that adequational interpretations of this kind have a special significance because they are likely to be the most rewarding and because the ongoing practice of art relies on our giving priority to them. Our practice of making and appreciating art depends upon giving priority to the intentions of novelists, artists and musicians, because those engaged in the practice understand the objects to be *works*: products of human intentions. However, within that constraint, the goal of interpretation is to maximise enjoyment.

For Thom, the goal of interpretation is 'to endow a given object with a particular type of significance by subsuming a representation of it under a governing concept' (Thom 2000, p. 71). This concept unifies the object as represented. In other words, sense is made of an object when it is represented in a way that enables it to be understood as falling under a concept that unifies it.

In Thom's account of the interpretive process, it involves four moments. The first is the identification of an object. The second is the realisation that this object does not make sense. Some synthesising may have occurred, but either more is needed or it should be done differently. In the third moment, the object is modified by being represented. Typically, the modifications include what Thom calls 'restructuring' and 'selecting'. In restructuring, some features that were not salient become so. In selecting, some features are excluded and others substituted. The specific modifications that are made depend upon the fourth moment. This is the choice of a governing concept. For an interpretation to be successful, the third and fourth moments must be successful. For the third to be successful, a representation

must be suitable 'in the sense that it preserves significance; that is, if the governing concept applies to the object-as-represented then it applies to the object' (Thom 2000, p. 84). For the fourth to be successful, the concept chosen to govern must unify the object—it must make of it an intelligible, because coherent, whole. For Thom, this is the only criterion that a governing concept must meet. For example, it need not be appropriate for the kind of object to which it is applied.

Thom discusses two interpretations of Van Gogh's 'The Potato Eaters'. In that offered by H.P. Bremmer, perceptual form is salient (Thom 2000, p. 40). That offered by H.R. Graetz highlights features such as the direction and expressive content of the subjects' gazes and the wall separating the older woman and man (Thom 2000, p. 40). The concept employed in the first is 'interrelated unity' and in the second 'expression of isolation'.

Just from these examples, it is clear that there is more than one way to interpret works with content. The first appears to use a concept similar to Kant's form of finality in that it can be applied to objects that do not have content. However, if the goal of an interpretation is to understand a representation as a representation and thus as having content, only some governing concepts will be appropriate. Moreover, if the goal of an interpretation is aesthetic appreciation of a representation *as a representation*, then the governing concept must highlight features of the representation that supply reasons for the judgment of aesthetic value that is an essential component of the appreciation of it.

Graetz' 'expression of isolation' is a useful concept for those interpretations whose purpose is aesthetic appreciation of Van Gogh's painting, because it enables us to recognise, if not share, the perspective expressed in the painting. It enables this because when we use it, the relations between the people—such as the way in which they do not look at each other—become salient. It helps us to see how structures in its material—such as strong contrasts between light and dark patches—affect the emotional significance of the relations between the people depicted (structure in its content). When we see how structures in the material and the content of this painting enable us to see the people as isolated from each other, we see relations upon which the beauty of this painting supervenes and which supply reasons for aesthetic judgment of it as beautiful.

The conception of a perspective required here is one in which features—such as the kinds or categories to which objects belong, the properties they have and the relations in which they stand—are significant from a point of view defined by beliefs and values. How features of objects are significant is constituted by the reasons they supply for emotional and behavioural responses to the objects. This conception of a perspective allows objects to have features such as causal relations whose existence is not dependent upon a point of view, but whose significance is.

Conscious subjects are things which have perspectives of this kind. If the point of interpreting someone's behaviour is to see it as an expression of her perspective, then it requires recognising how she perceives and judges people, events and states of affairs to be significant. It requires recognising perceptions and evaluative judgments as well as propositional attitudes. For example, appreciating someone's perspective might involve understanding that she perceives moving from one house

to another to be scary and difficult, a newly baked pie to be yummy, sexual abuse to be appalling, or an argument to be compelling. These perceptions are appraisals. Appreciating someone's perspective also involves recognising judgments she makes, for example, that leaving rotten food in the fridge is unhygienic, that visiting your father in hospital is showing him the proper respect, that being required to keep a record of every expenditure is inconvenient or that spitting and singing on the ferry are forbidden. How people and events are perceived or judged to be significant is identified by the emotional and behavioural responses which express that significance, because they are appropriate, given it.

In 'Narrative, Identity and Moral Philosophy' (2003), Raimond Gaita argues that understanding intentional actions involves understanding the perspective of their agents, and understanding an agent's perspective involves appreciating it in the way I have just described. Understanding someone's perspective entails understanding what their experiences mean to them or being able 'to see dignity in faces. . .to see the full range of human expressiveness in them, to hearing suffering that lacerates the soul in someone's cry or in their music, or to see it in their art, to hear all the depth of language in sounds' (Gaita 2003, p. 267). Gaita claims that when we understand a perspective in this way, we have entered 'the realm of meaning', a realm that is 'partly defined by the fact that reflection in it is in idioms in which form and content cannot be separated', and so it is 'more like understanding in literature than in science and metaphysics' (Gaita 2003, p. 271). His last statement implies that the point of interpreting is not the same when scientists do it and when readers of literature do it, and that 'expression of a perspective' should be the governing concept used by readers of literature and by those who seek to make sense of behaviour as action done for reasons. If interpretation of novels, movies, pictures and other works with representational content is done in order to appreciate them as representations, then 'expression of a perspective' is the appropriate governing concept.

Thom understands Currie to be offering a theory of interpretation in which the governing concept involved in interpreting both the behaviour of a conscious agent and the content of a work is 'explanation by intentional causes'. In 'Feminine Perspectives and Narrative Points of View' (Barwell 1993) and 'Who's Telling This Story, Anyway? Or, How to Tell The Gender of a Storyteller' (Barwell 1995), I adopted a position similar to that offered by Currie, but I abandoned it for reasons which I give in my critique of him.

For Currie, the product of interpreting is a theory. If the object to be interpreted is an utterance, then the theory is a theory about the propositions constituting the content of the 'communication intention' of a speaker. Currie models his account of the meaning of speech acts and the utterances that are their products on Grice's model of 'non-natural speaker meaning' (Grice 1957, 1969). The propositions constituting the content of the communication intention are those the speaker hoped his audience would believe.

According to Currie, interpreting utterances involves formulating hypotheses about the propositions that the speaker hoped his audience will believe. These propositions explain the words he spoke or wrote because if he says what he means,

the words he used are appropriate. Writing or speaking the words he did is a reasonable or appropriate thing to do, given his designs on his audience's beliefs. Moreover, if a speaker says what he means, the propositional content of his utterance is the same as the content of his communication intention. As a consequence, a theory about the propositions constituting the content of a communication intention is a theory about both the 'intentional cause' of a speech act and its product, if the speaker says what he means. The interpreter's reason for believing that a communication intention with a specific propositional content causes an utterance is the 'fit' between the content of the hypothesised cause, the content of the product and the words used to perform the speech act.

Interpreting a novel or a movie is like interpreting an utterance. The interpreter formulates a hypothesis about the propositions that are the content of a communication intention. These are the propositions that someone intended her readers or listeners to *imagine*, rather than believe. This is the mark of fiction. The propositions to be imagined constitute the world of a novel or movie because they constitute the content of the product of the speech act performed by the author or movie-maker. However, interpreting literary works, movies and operas is like interpreting utterances with respect to the first, but not the second, moment. This is because authors, movie-makers and directors do not always say what they mean or mean what they say. The contents of their communication intentions and their utterances are not always the same. In *The Nature of Fiction* (Currie 1990b), the communication intention whose propositional content is identified with that of the world of the novel is that of a 'fictional storyteller'. He is an inhabitant of the world of the fiction who is telling his story as known fact. In *Image and Mind* (Currie 1995a), the role of the fictional storyteller is given to the 'implied author' who is not an inhabitant of the world of the novel or movie. Both the fictional storyteller and the implied author are constructs. This means that the role of their communication intention cannot be causal. The constructed communication intentions are relevant, not because they are *causes* of speech acts, but because they supply *reasons* for writing the sequence of words constituting the text of the novel. The explanation is after all an explanation not in terms of intentional *causes* but in terms of *reasons*.

In *Pictures and Their Use in Communication* (1976), Novitz accepted the account of depictive content that Nelson Goodman offered in *Languages of Art* (1968). In this account, the depictive content of a picture is an essential, because identifying, property of it. Novitz applies this to literary works. The point of interpreting them is to discover properties which constitute their identity. The product of interpreting a novel is not a theory but a set of identifying descriptions.

Apart from their agreement that interpreting is a process whose point is to discover the meaning that an object already possesses, Currie and Novitz agree about five other important things. (i) They agree that interpreting is a process which essentially involves formulating and testing hypotheses about the meaning of the work. (ii) They agree that there are objective facts which supply evidence and confirm, or fail to confirm, these hypotheses. (iii) They agree that there are objective standards for measuring the degree to which the evidence confirms a hypothesis. (This agreement means that neither are relativists as Currie

understands relativism. The relativist, according to Currie's definition denies claims (ii) and (iii).) (iv) They agree about the nature of the facts that provide evidence. These are facts about the author, the meaning of the text and features of the social environment in which the text was written. The latter include 'cultural stabilities: enduring beliefs, theories, values, in terms of which we perceive all manner of objects' (Novitz 1987, p. 102). 'Cultural stabilities' include conventions, practices and traditions of one sort and another (Novitz 1987, pp. 113–114).

(v) Finally, Novitz and Currie are both anti-realists where interpretations of works of art are concerned. As Currie defines anti-realism, the anti-realist does not recognise a 'gap' between evidence and truth or correctness. For him, the theory that is best supported by the evidence is the best explanation of the work. Because there is no gap between confirmation and truth, it is the true theory about the work. Currie accepts that there are some works for which equally well-supported but conflicting theories exist. Theories conflict if they attribute contradictory propositions to the work. An example is provided by Henry James' short novel, *The Turn of the Screw*. According to one interpretation, the governess is delusional. According to another, she is not. The interpretations are equally supported by the evidence, and so they provide equally good explanations of the propositions true in the world of the novel and thus of its meaning.

Because Novitz thinks an interpretation is a set of identifying descriptions of a work, he does not understand the conflicting interpretations of *The Turn of the Screw* in this way. Given that identifying descriptions are descriptions of essential properties of the work and given that a work has either a property or not, the correct description of *The Turn of the Screw* is that it is ambiguous.

Novitz offers no account of the cognitive processes involved in interpreting beyond the claim that they involve formulating and testing hypotheses. Currie, on the other hand, gives a careful and comprehensive account of these processes. I am not able to give the details, but from the brief description I offered earlier, it should be clear that he thinks that interpreting novels and movies is like interpreting utterances that are the product of speech acts with one salient difference: the speaker or writer is an 'implied author' rather than the actual author.

Wayne Booth first invented the 'implied author' to avoid attributing stupid and morally repulsive opinions to the actual author. The implied author opens a logical gap between the perspectives of the actual author and that expressed in the work. The relevant concept of a perspective is the one I described earlier. It is defined in terms of values and preferences and not just in terms of beliefs. However, sets of propositions true in possible worlds are essentially non-perspectival and so the function the implied author fulfills in Currie's theory of interpretation cannot be that for which it was first invented. The 'implied author' is a constructed perspective from which reasons for writing the words of the novel follow. It need not be the perspective of the actual author.

In *The Philosophy of Art* (2006c), Davies states that interpreting narrative and representational works requires recognising 'the way in which the use of the medium structures or otherwise affects the content that is narrated or represented' (Davies 2006c, p. 110). In 'Sculpture and the Sculptural' (1995), Erik Koed writes:

'In appreciating an artwork, we attend to the medium of the work. That is to say, we attend to the way in which materials are used toward the end of content and, at the same time, to the content realised through that use of materials, rather than solely to the material construction or the content of the work' (Koed 1995, p. 150). These statements imply that interpreting narrative and other works as works with content requires recognising structure(s) in sequences of words, images or painted lines and patches of colours that constitute the material or medium of the work because it is from structure(s) of this kind that structure(s) in the content follows. There is an intimate connection between material and content. In the earlier example of *The Potato Eaters*, the second interpretation described a way in which relations between the people depicted (structure in its content) followed from properties and relations of the painting's lines and colours (structure in its material).

Currie's approach to interpreting content is unable to recognise intimate relations of this kind. If recognition of them is essential to aesthetic appreciation of works with content, then a theoretical approach of Currie's kind is inadequate. Moreover, if the content of novels, movies, paintings and other works constitutes a perspective on the people, objects and events they are about, then interpreting it requires recognising significance that depends upon a point of view defined by values as well as beliefs and that supplies reasons for emotional responses to, and evaluative judgments of, the people, objects and events that the works are about. Interpretations of content in terms of sets of propositions are not able to recognise significance of this kind.

As a consequence, theories of interpretation in which sets of propositions constitute content are unable to explain aesthetic pleasure in works of this kind insofar as it is pleasure in relations between structures in the medium of the work and structure in the content with essentially perspectival significance. In addition, insofar as structure in the medium, structure in the content and the relations between them are those on which the beauty of a representation supervenes, and these structures supply the reasons for an aesthetic judgment about the beauty of the work qua representation; theories that understand content as propositional cannot explain the beauty of a beautiful representation or the reasons that justify aesthetic judgments of this kind. Currie's theory of interpretation cannot explain beautiful representations of ugly, wicked or appalling things.

In the theory, Novitz offers in *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* (1987) perceptions of significance are an important component of the understanding on which we rely to negotiate our environment and the knowledge we can acquire from reading fiction. However, in his theory, these perceptions do not supply reasons for actions or emotional responses but reasons for beliefs. Novitz appears to recognise perceptions which are essentially perspectival, but he thinks of them as attitudes to propositions and thus non-perspectival.

Earlier I said that Novitz accepted Goodman's proposal that the content of both pictures and novels is to be understood in terms of a set of essential, because identifying, properties. In *Languages of Art*, Goodman argued that depictive content could not be understood in terms of resemblances between the arrangement of lines and colours that constitutes a picture and whatever the picture is a picture of.

This is because any picture resembles an indefinitely large number of objects in some respects and any picture resembles other pictures in more respects than it resembles other kinds of objects, without being a picture of a picture. Novitz takes up this challenge.

In *Pictures and Their Use in Communication* (1976), Novitz argues that depictive content is to be understood in terms of resemblances between pictures and what they are pictures of. However, recognising that a picture is a picture requires knowledge of picture-making practices, and recognising what resemblances are relevant for determining what it is a picture of requires knowledge of pictorial conventions. Novitz claims that picture-making presents what David Lewis in *Convention* (1969) called a 'coordination problem'. A coordination problem arises when agreement is required about a method to avoid undesirable results (such as collisions between cars), and there is more than one method which would have the same result (everyone agrees to drive on either the left- or right-hand side of the road). A solution to such a problem requires agreement about what would count as a desirable outcome and widespread acceptance of the solution. A solution to such a problem is a practice that is governed by rules and that constitutes a method or technique for bringing about the desirable outcome. The solution to the picture-recognising problem involves rules which must be known before relevant resemblances between pictures and what they depict can be known.

In 'Pictorial Representation: A Matter of Resemblance' (1987), Karen Neander also defends an account of depictive content in terms of resemblances between pictures and what they are of. A successful picture must supply visual information which enables a viewer to recognise the object it depicts (Neander 1987, p. 213). In other words, a successful picture must look like what it is a picture of. However, there is no one way in which the spatial arrangement of a picture must resemble the object it pictures (Neander 1987, p. 215) and there are no systematic principles of relevance. Our criteria alter along with our judgment of the kind of picture it is (Neander 1987, p. 216). Recognising what a picture is of requires knowledge of 'modes of representation' (Neander 1987, p. 216). These modes operate in the way that Kendall Walton (1970) argues categories of art operate—they determine which resemblances are relevant.

Almost 20 years later, Catharine Abell argued against convention-based accounts of resemblance like that developed by Novitz (and others). In 'Against Depictive Conventionalism' (Abell 2005c), she argues that depictions are not governed by conventions of the kind described by David Lewis. According to Abell, depictive conventions must be conventions for depicting basic colour, shape and textural properties, while Lewis' conventions must be recognised as solutions to coordination problems by those who comply with them. However, the parts of a picture that depict the basic properties of the objects they depict are 'not salient as bearing the depiction relation to such properties because they are not independently interpretable' (Abell 2005c, p. 24).

In 'Pictorial Implicature' (Abell 2005b), she presents an account of depictive content that depends on intention-based resemblances. The relevant resemblances are those that the picture-maker 'intended to pictorially implicate'

(Abell 2005b, p. 65). Her model of pictorial implicature is based on H.P. Grice's model of conversational implicature (Grice 1975, 1978). In so far as conversations and pictures involve communication, they presuppose a principle of cooperation. This principle is not a convention adopted to facilitate conversational exchange but a rational means for conducting cooperative exchanges. In the case of picturing, it implies that one of the following alternatives is true: Given background knowledge that includes knowledge of picture-making techniques, *either* enough visible information to recognise what a picture depicts has been supplied, *or* the information supplied should be supplemented so that the picture-maker is seen to be adhering to the principle of cooperation, *or* the information should be revised to overcome the fact that the artist has deliberately flouted the principle of cooperation.

In both *The Nature of Fiction* and *Image and Mind*, Currie denies that recognising pictorial content requires knowledge of pictorial conventions, modes of representation, or pictorial techniques. All that is required to see a picture as a picture of an object is the ability to recognise objects of the kind it depicts. For example, all that is required to see a picture of a young blond woman holding a baby as a picture of a young blond woman holding a baby is the ability to recognise young blond women and babies.

Like Alec Hyslop, Currie rejects the claim made by Walton, in articles such as 'Fearing Fictions' (1978), that the role of the audience for pictures, plays and movies requires imagining seeing the people, objects and events the picture, play or movie is about and imagining hearing what they say. However, Hyslop and Currie have very different reasons for rejecting this claim. In 'Seeing-as' (1983), Hyslop argues that the logical structure of seeing a picture as a picture of an object rules out imagining seeing the object. In *Image and Mind*, Currie argues that if the role of a member of a movie audience is understood to require her to imagine seeing the characters and events in the movie, then she must imagine she is located in the space of the movie, and sometimes she must imagine she sees events which no one saw. He denies that audiences for movies imagine these or any other logical consequences of imagining seeing. The normative element in Currie's claim that someone who imagines seeing characters and events must imagine other unacceptable things appears to follow from standards of rationality. However, it is not at all clear that standards which are appropriate for belief are also appropriate for imagining. Should we, or must we, imagine the logical consequences of anything we imagine?

Definitions, Evolutionary Theory and Appreciating Nature

For Kant, identifying works of art did not present a problem because at that time in Europe, there was widespread agreement about how to classify and evaluate them. This state of affairs was disrupted by the invention of new technologies that enabled the emergence of new art forms and by the way in which artists working in established art practices pushed the boundaries of what was possible in those practices. Artists made objects which resisted

classification and evaluation because they failed to meet criteria that had previously been perfectly adequate for both purposes.

When Stephen Davies' *Definitions of Art* was published in 1991, the point of defining the term 'art' was to settle issues about classification that arose from developments within the Western art world during the twentieth century. In this book, Davies opts for an institutional definition that emphasises the procedures by which an artifact acquires the status of a work of art. This status is achieved when and only when it is 'appropriately placed within a web of practices, roles and frameworks that comprise an informally organized institution, the artworld' (Davies 2006c, p. 38).

Davies continued to be preoccupied with definitions whose point is classification, although by the time *Art and Essence* was published in 2003, new issues had emerged. These were whether 'our' concept of art could be applied to the products (objects and performances) of small-scale traditional societies and whether art production and appreciation occurred universally. These issues are connected. If 'our' concept of art can be applied to the products of small-scale traditional societies, even if they do not classify any of their products according to 'our' criteria, then this supplies a reason for claiming that art production and appreciation are universal. A universally applicable concept need not be universally applied.

In his contribution to *Art and Essence* (2003), Davies distinguishes questions about the meaning of the term 'art' from questions about the meaning of art. The second is a request for a theory of art; the first is a request for criteria that determine the extension or reference of the term 'art'. The point of the first question is classification. A good answer to it supplies criteria for belonging to a class. These criteria must pick out all and only members of the class. Davies claims that a good answer to the first question can be as surprising as the definition of gold as an element with a specific atomic structure was to people who used the term 'gold'. If criteria for membership of a class constitute a concept, then the concept of gold captured in the definition of it as an element is not the concept that people had before the discovery of atoms and the construction of the periodic table. Moreover, if criteria for *identifying* members of a class constitute a concept (as they did for Frege), then the concept of gold captured in the best definition for classificatory purposes is not the same concept as that captured in a definition whose point is to articulate criteria used to identify members of the class. For example, neither the colour of gold nor its tendency to not tarnish is included in the best classificatory definition. Moreover, the extension fixed by the new criteria might not coincide with that fixed by the old criteria.

Davies' claims imply that a good definition for purposes of classification need not include uses to which people thought that the thing defined could and should be put, what it symbolises or is a sign of for them, or how it is appropriate to respond emotionally to it. A good definition need not capture that community's understanding of the class of things defined.

In 'But They Don't Have Our Concept of Art' (2000), Denis Dutton argues not just that our concept of art is universally applicable but also that small-scale traditional societies possess this concept. They classify some of their products as

art in the way we classify some of ours. According to Dutton, the concept of art present in all societies is a concept that implies the same standards and values. It applies not just to those arts that we in the West call 'The Fine Arts' but also to religious arts, functional objects like furniture and pottery and decorative crafts like embroidery.

'Our' concept of art can only be so comprehensive if it constitutes what Beryl Gaut has called a 'cluster concept' (Gaut 2000) and if some of the criteria in this cluster capture the value and significance art has for us. In a cluster concept none of the criteria are necessary, but anything that meets a 'certain number' (Davies 2006c, p. 33) of them counts as a work of art.

A dozen criteria relevant for our concept of art, and which have been offered in definitions of art, are as follows: (i) the object is intended to be a work of art, (ii) it belongs to an established category of art, (iii) it is produced for disinterested contemplation, (iv) it is the expression of cultural values (e.g. spiritual values), (v) it is the expression of individual vision, (vi) its production requires skill, (vii) it is able to communicate complex meanings, (viii) it is lovely to look at or listen to, (ix) it is primarily (or solely) produced for aesthetic appreciation, (x) it fulfills an aesthetic function (whether intended or not), (xi) it is created to be presented to an art world and (xi) it can be fitted into a true and coherent narrative that ties it to past art.

The universal applicability of our concept of art is less likely if some of these criteria are necessary. This observation is supported by Elizabeth Burns Coleman's discussions of Aboriginal art in 'Aboriginal Painting: Identity and Authenticity' (2001) and *Aboriginal Art, Identity and Appropriation* (2005). In her 2001 article, Coleman begins with a documentary about Aboriginal paintings made for the art market. In the documentary, the charge was made that 'the paintings under question were fakes in the sense that they are not "traditional aboriginal art" and in the sense that they are not "art"' (Coleman 2001, p. 285).

The reasons given in the documentary for the first claim were that the painters were not spiritually motivated but were producing their paintings for sale, some of the painters were not of Aboriginal descent and some of the paintings were done in acrylics on canvas. The reason given for the second claim was that the people who signed the paintings were not those who had painted them. The first charge presupposes that authentic works of indigenous art cannot be made from nontraditional materials, or by people who are not members of the community, or for commercial motives. The second charge presupposes that a work of art must be the product of individual vision, and the individual whose signature is on it must be the person who made it.

The makers of this documentary are not alone in making claims of these kinds. In 'Authenticity in the Art of Traditional Societies' (1994a), Denis Dutton makes a distinction between 'nominal authenticity' which is merely a question of correct provenance and 'deep authenticity' which entails the expression of spiritual values. He claims that being produced for sale to tourists, collectors or art museums is incompatible with being an authentic work of indigenous art because that entails being the expression of spiritual values. Dutton also argues that works produced for sale are unlikely to be of aesthetic value because little care is taken in their production.

Coleman argues that once the point of view of the Aboriginal painters and their communities is understood, neither the claim made in the documentary nor the reasons given for it are valid, because the concept presupposed by the documentary is not the concept guiding the practice of the Aboriginal artists. All the paintings in question use traditional images or designs. These designs are like heraldic devices or insignia. They are symbols that belong to a community and are associated with control over a territory. The authority to produce and use them and the instructions for making them correctly are passed down from generation to generation through specified kinship relations. Those with authority to produce them are permitted to authorise their production by other people, even by people who are not of Aboriginal descent.

The paintings involved in the controversy are art according to 'our' cluster concept of art because their production involves skill, they are able to communicate complex meanings, they are lovely to look at, they fulfill an aesthetic function and they are created to be presented to an art world even though the art world in question is not theirs but that of the West. If Coleman is right, they are also authentic examples of indigenous art because they are expressions of their community's cultural, if not spiritual, values. The paintings were of traditional designs which belonged to a community, had symbolic value and were painted correctly by people authorised to do so by those with the appropriate authority. They are works of art rather than fakes because the signatures were those of people who had authority over the production of the design and their signatures expressed that authority. Moreover, since traditional designs need not be made in traditional materials, their being painted on canvas in acrylics is appropriate.

In several of the criteria in the cluster constituting our concept of art, there is an intimate connection between art and aesthetic experience. 'It is primarily (or solely) produced for aesthetic appreciation' and 'it fulfills an aesthetic function (whether intended, or not)' that connects them explicitly. 'Being produced for disinterested contemplation' does so implicitly because it was a criterion included in the Art For Art's Sake strand in modernist conceptions of art and of aesthetic appreciation. As I said in Section I, this criterion was wrongly attributed to Kant.

'Disinterested' required the detachment of all knowledge, practical concerns, values and interests from the contemplation of an artwork and implied a distinction between its internal and external relations. Only internal relations were relevant to aesthetic appreciation. For two paradigmatic modernists, Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg, only structure in the medium of painting was relevant to aesthetic pleasure taken in paintings. Only visible relations between a painting's colours, lines and shapes supplied reasons for aesthetic judgments of it because its aesthetic qualities supervened only on that kind of structure. Structures in the content and relations between structures in the material and structures in the content are irrelevant to aesthetic appreciation because knowledge of cultural values and beliefs are needed to recognise these aspects. For example, knowledge of cultural beliefs and values is needed to recognise the point of view from which objects represented in a painting or poem are significant, knowledge of a culture's stories is required to perceive the significance of people (historical figures, gods, ancestors,

characters in fairytales, etc.) and events (the Battle of Waterloo, the Transfiguration, the Honey Ant Dreaming, The Clock Striking Midnight, etc.), and knowledge of cultural categories and genres is needed insofar as these supply criteria for identifying aesthetically relevant structures.

The model of aesthetic appreciation to which disinterested contemplation is essential has problematic implications for understanding aesthetic experience. It suggests that aesthetic pleasure is trivial rather than an expression of 'deep' human values or the effect of exercising psychological capacities which have been crucial for us as a species. This model is empirically inadequate since it omits crucial features of the way in which people do experience works of art, and it is completely inadequate as a model for aesthetic appreciation of natural objects and environments.

Some arguments offered by Davies and Dutton imply that making and appreciating art is universal because aesthetic appreciation is universal. These arguments presuppose a concept of art in which a close connection between art and aesthetic appreciation is crucial and a concept of aesthetic appreciation in which aesthetic pleasure supplies a reason for aesthetic judgments, because it is pleasure in structures on which aesthetic qualities supervene. In 'Tribal Art and Artifact' (1993), Dutton argues that small-scale societies share our concept of art because some of their artifacts have 'aesthetic qualities which have intentionally been placed in the objects to be seen' (Dutton 1993, p. 20). In 'Universalism, Evolutionary Psychology, and Aesthetics' (2003), he includes natural objects such as the markings on cows in a list of objects aesthetically appreciated by people in small-scale traditional societies.

Supervenience is a relation that allows a range of structures to be beautiful. All beautiful objects have a structure in the range, but they need not have the same structure. If beauty supervenes on a range of structures, then there is space for cultural and individual tastes to play a role. Aesthetic preferences might have cultural bases.

Both Davies and Dutton are committed to the view that the range of structures on which beauty supervenes is to be explained in terms of psychological capacities that human beings have as a result of their biology. They reject explanations in terms of social conditions such as that offered by Novitz in *Boundaries of Art*. Novitz argues that the development of the fine arts as autonomous practices with distinctive goals and values and the distinction between high and low art which this development entails were the product of the rise of the bourgeoisie, the ideological belief that every individual was unique and free to pursue their goals and a tighter connection between wealth and social status.

In *The Philosophy of Art*, Davies formulates the issue in this way. Does art have 'a universal ancient basis in our evolved biology', or is it 'an invention, unconstrained by biological directives, of the Enlightenment and modern age of European culture?' (Davies 2006c, pp. 42–43). Davies opts for the first alternative. Art-making practices are cultural practices, but 'the pleasure we gain from making and consuming art derives from, without being the target of, biological dispositions and cognitive structures that were generated for other evolutionary payoffs they deliver' (Davies 2003, p. 6).

Dutton, like Jennifer McMahon, ties the structures of the objects we produce for aesthetic pleasure or which give us aesthetic pleasure to the survival needs of our ancestors. Although Kant's psychological explanation of aesthetic delight was murky, it was an explanation of the right kind. McMahon claims that the range of things we can know and love is determined by what our common ancestors needed to do to survive in the environment in which they found themselves. Pleasure serves to reinforce experiences. If we experience pleasure in producing and contemplating some structures, then we are more likely to notice them. In some unspecified way, noticing those that activate ideas such as unity, community, freedom and immortality helped us to survive. Our love for such structures was adaptive. Kant called these ideas 'rational ideas'. McMahon thinks of them as human values with enormous emotional power. For both McMahon and Kant, natural objects and artifacts such as buildings, which are not objects with representational content, as well as paintings, poems and sculptures, which are objects with content, can activate these ideas.

The aesthetics of natural environments emerged as a major new area in aesthetics during the 1990s. It involved a critique of both Art For Art's Sake Modernist accounts of art and aesthetic appreciation and also the theories of art and aesthetic experience which were popular in the 1990s. In the 1990s, art was understood in terms of the criteria in the cluster defining art that include a reference to art history, traditions and institutions such as the art world. Davies in *Definitions of Art* offered a conception of this kind. Aesthetic appreciation, on such a model, is appreciation of art qua product of the self-conscious practices of specific cultures. Under the influence of this model, Don Mannison (1980) argues that nature and natural environments are not proper objects of aesthetic appreciation at all.

In a series of articles published during the 1990s, Stan Godlovitch argued that aesthetic appreciation of nature is appropriate and that appreciating natural objects and natural environments in the appropriate way entails seeing 'their proper naturalness, their reality as natural things' (Godlovitch 1998, p. 181). This latter claim implies that we should not see nature and natural environments as either paintings or sculptures, we should not imaginatively 'frame' nature so its formal features can be seen as a composition, and we should not contemplate it disinterestedly. It also meant that our ordinary commonsense categories are sufficient for aesthetic appreciation. This claim conflicted with the model for aesthetic appreciation of nature that was advocated by Allen Carlson and led to a debate in 1997 in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Godlovitch 1997a).

Conclusion: State of the Art

Aesthetics of the environment is only one major new area to have emerged over the last two decades. The invention of digital technologies has raised ethical, ontological and aesthetic questions about the objects it has made possible. In 'Towards an Ethics of Videogaming' (2007) and 'Definitions of Videogames' (2008), Grant Tavinor discusses some of these.

In the first decade of this century, the trickle of interest in the political dimension of art continues, but its focus has changed. In the 1990s, San McColl (1993) and I contributed to feminist debates in aesthetics, and David Novitz argued that the fine arts and the distinction between high and popular art are both products of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social and ideological conditions. In the 2000s, John Armstrong (2004) argued against Bourdieu and others who have suggested that our sense of beauty is a social product, while Elizabeth Burns Coleman (2001, 2004) argued that the commercial use of traditional Aboriginal designs by the West is a direct appropriation of their identity.

Both traditional and new issues concerning interpretation and content continue to be discussed. For example, in 'Towards a Metaphysical Historicism' (2005), Sondra Bacharach argues that the properties of an artwork change over time, and in 'Collaborative Arts and Collective Intention' (2008), she and Deb Tollefsen argue that no current accounts of collective intention can make sense of the intentions involved in certain types of collaboratively produced art.

The range, quantity and quality of this small sample, together with those I discussed in previous sections, shows that even if Passmore's complaint about the dreariness of aesthetics may have had some plausibility in 1959, 50 years later it has none.

Philosophy of Music in Australasia

The philosophy of music occupies a distinctive position within the philosophy of art. Most philosophy of art is either philosophy of visual art or philosophy of literature. As Stephen Davies argues (Davies 1994b), theories of art in general tend not to be easily applicable to music. Music is a performing art and an abstract art, and it is usually non-representational: in all of these respects, it is anomalous. Some of the questions addressed by philosophers of music have no analogues in the philosophy of art more generally: for example, questions about musical movement—we hear music as involving movement, but what moves, exactly, when what you are dealing with is a sequence of pitched tones, and if nothing does, what gives rise to the illusion? Other questions addressed by philosophers of music look like the same questions that arise in the philosophies of visual art and literature, but the discussion of them plays out very differently in the case of music: for example, questions about representation, expressiveness, interpretation and ontology.

Many of the big questions in the philosophy of music are inextricably intertwined with each other. A musical performance presents to us the performer's interpretation of what? The score? The composer's intentions? The musical work? What is the musical work? How we answer this basic ontological question will make a difference to what we say about further questions concerning musical performance such as what it is to interpret a musical work, what constitutes an authentic performance of a musical work and why authenticity matters.

Another cluster of questions concerns responses to music, and what the relationship is between the properties of the music and the listener's response. When we

hear music as sad, is there some property of the music, its sadness, which we are detecting? If so, what is that property? Or is it that the music causes *us* to feel sad, and we project our emotion onto the music? If so, what is it about the music that causes our sadness? If it is expressive music and a listener does not respond to it emotionally, can that listener be fully appreciating it? How much do we need to know about a piece of music and its genre, era and composer before we can appreciate it properly?

Modern technology raises new questions in the philosophy of music. Is the ontology of rock music the same as the ontology of classical music? Can you properly appreciate a musical work intended for performance if you listen to a recording rather than a live performance?

The philosophy of music is a small field internationally, and its 'stars' can be counted on the fingers of one hand. One of them is Stephen Davies, originally from Australia but at the University of Auckland since 1983. Davies has written two influential books in the area, *Musical Meaning and Expression* (Davies 1994d) and *Musical Works and Performances* (Davies 2001), and more than 30 articles, some of them collected in *Themes in the Philosophy of Music* (Davies 2003c) and in *Musical Understandings and Other Essays on the Philosophy of Music* (Davies 2011). Davies covers a wide range of topics within the philosophy of music. He defends a cognitivist view of musical expressiveness according to which when we hear music as expressive, we are not projecting our own emotional responses onto the music but rather perceiving resemblances between dynamic characteristics of the music and aspects of human expressive behaviour (Davies 1994d, 1997d, 2005). Davies also writes on emotional responses to music (Davies 1994c, 1997c, f), authenticity (Davies 1987, 1988b, 1990, 1991b, 2001), what a musical work is (Davies 1991b, c, 1992, 2001, 2003a, 2008), interpretation (Davies 2002b, 2011), representation (Davies 1993, 1994d), the value of music (Davies 1994f, 2003b), musical understanding (1994e, 2011), the difference between rock music and classical music (Davies 1999), the impact of modern technology on the presentation and reception of musical works (Davies 1997e) and profundity in music (Davies 2002a).

Paul Thom (at the University of Sydney) has written extensively about musical interpretation (Thom 1993, 2003, 2006, 2007) and also writes on authenticity (Thom 1990, 1993b). *For An Audience: A Philosophy of the Performing Arts* (Thom 1993b) is an extended discussion of these issues, and of the nature of performance and works for performance, along with the role of the performer, as these apply not just in the case of music but in drama and dance as well.

Apart from Thom's work, most of the action in Australasian philosophy of music has been in New Zealand. Stan Godlovitch was at Lincoln University from 1994 to 2002 and, during his time there, wrote about musical performance (Godlovitch 1997b, 1998). Roy Perrett (then at Massey University) has a paper in the *British Journal of Aesthetics* about musical unity (Perrett 1999). Justine Kingsbury writes on musical expressiveness in the same cognitivist vein as Davies (Kingsbury 1999, 2002). Jonathan McKeown-Green and Andrew Kania (both former students of Davies: Kania now works in the United States) write about issues to do with the

effect of modern technology on music listening (McKeown-Green 2007, Kania 2009a). Kania has a piece (Kania 2009b) on the philosophy of music in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and is coeditor (with Theodore A. Gracyk) of *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*. He also writes on the ontology of music (Kania 2006, 2008a, 2010) and on meta-questions about the methodology and purpose of the field of musical ontology (2008b, Kania 2008c). In the remainder of this section, I will briefly discuss a few of these debates in the philosophy of music and point out how Australasian philosophers have contributed to them.

When the Auckland Philharmonia takes the stage at the town hall and plays Mozart's Jupiter Symphony, what makes it the case that they are performing *that* work rather than some other? On one view, it is because they are producing an instance of a particular sonic structure—a set of notes with specified relative pitches and relative durations. This view implies that the same work could have been performed by a different combination of instruments, or on a synthesiser, or, in principle, in 1700: sonic structures are abstract and eternal.

This is a very thin characterisation of a musical work. We can arrive at a range of richer characterisations depending on which other properties of performances we take to be essential to their being performances of that very work. Timbre and tempo might be added; instrumentation might be added; composer and date of composition might be added, along with the existence of a causal chain connecting the act of composition to the present performance, via the published sheet music on the APO's music stands.

Kania (2008c) has recently defended the study of the ontology of music against an attack by Aaron Ridley (2003), who claims that it has no consequences for musical aesthetics or musical practice. Kania argues that confusion or disagreement about musical ontology leads to evaluative mistakes or evaluative disagreements. This is surely right: depending on our ontology, we may classify the same performance as a bad performance of one work or a good performance of a different one. Davies' paper 'The Ontology of Musical Works and the Authenticity of Their Performances' (Davies 1991b) might also be marshalled in defence of the practical importance of musical ontology. Davies points out the connection between ontology and authenticity. Authenticity is normally taken to be a virtue in a performance (by musicians as well as by theorists and philosophers of music). But what is authenticity, and with respect to which features should we be trying to be authentic (if indeed we should be aiming at authentic performances at all)? The gender of the musicians performing the Jupiter Symphony and whether or not they are wearing the kind of clothes musicians wore in Mozart's day presumably have no bearing on the authenticity of the performance. Most think that listening conditions (the modern concert hall is probably the most hushed and reverent environment for the performance of secular music ever) are irrelevant to the authenticity of a performance as well. At the other end of the scale, almost everyone thinks that in order to be authentic a performance must be consistent with tempo and phrasing indications explicitly marked in the original score. In between, there are more contested features; for example, the size of the orchestra, tuning and whether the

instruments should approximate the instruments of Mozart's day or whether modern instruments will suffice (or indeed are to be preferred). Which features of a musical work are constitutive of its being the work that it is makes a difference to what contributes to the authenticity of a performance of that work. Thinking about it the other way around, what we count as contributing to the authenticity of a performance reveals something about what we think essential to the work.

Davies suggests that there is considerable agreement about what we count as contributing to authenticity and that what we do count shows that we operate with a fairly rich notion of what a musical work is:

> Consistently performers have tried to achieve authenticity by the use of the instruments for which the composer wrote, by the adoption of styles of playing and by the adoption of the performance practices for reading and interpreting notations which held at the time of composition, and so on. If we consider the kind of ontology presupposed by such a view of authenticity, it appears that we must favour a thicker rather than a thinner characterization of the nature of the musical work. (Davies 1991b, p. 36)

However, he goes on to say, this depends a lot on the conventions operative at the time the music was composed. Mozart specified instrumentation and phrasing and dynamics, and a performance of the Jupiter Symphony cannot be authentic if it does not follow his specifications. But a century earlier, these things were often not specified. A score which only specifies pitches and rhythms might be a specification of a work which is much closer to our initial very thin characterisation: a sonic structure. And if that is right, we might think that we are free to play it on any instruments that will do the job and that the resulting performance will not thereby be inauthentic. (Paul Thom (1990) also defends the view that authenticity consists in faithfulness to the composer's directives, though he thinks that some of these directives may not be explicit in the score.)

The upshot is that what features of a musical work are essential to its identity depends on facts about its genre and date of composition and what conventions (including conventions of notation) were operative at that time. This is even clearer when one looks at more recent music. One might think it is of the essence of music that it is a *performing* art. However, Davies (2001, p. 25), Godlovitch (1992), Kania (2006, p. 401) and McKeown-Green (2007) point out that modern music is often composed not for performance but for playback, and yet no one has any inclination to deny that it is music—at least, not for that reason. Kania (following Gracyk 1996) suggests that in the case of rock music, the musical work is not an abstract sound structure or a song composed and notated at a particular time. Rather, the work of art in rock music is a track constructed in the studio: tracks usually manifest songs which can also be performed live, and a cover version is a track which is intended to manifest the same song as some other track and succeeds in doing so. If something like this is right, this bears out the idea that there is not going to be an across-the-board answer to the question of what kind of thing a musical work is.

As well as making possible new kinds of musical works, recording technology has given us new ways of accessing music. The vast majority of musical experiences nowadays are not experiences of live performance, even when they are of

music that was composed for performance. It is common to think that listening to live music is somehow better than listening to recordings (consider how much we are prepared to pay to hear The Rolling Stones play the same songs, and pretty much the same versions of them, as we can hear in our living rooms for nothing). Jonathan McKeown-Green (2007), also following Gracyk (1996), argues that if what we are concerned about is just appreciating the music, then this is a mistake: recordings provide us with access to the qualities of the music that is just as good as the access provided by live performances, and possibly better.

I have here provided only a taste of a few of the major debates in philosophy of music and how Australasian philosophers have contributed to them. As is obvious from this sampler, philosophy of music is alive and well in Australasia, and it is noteworthy that while for most of the last 25 years, Stephen Davies and Paul Thom have been the only Australasian philosophers for whom the philosophy of music was a major focus, in the last few years a new generation of philosophers of music has emerged.

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