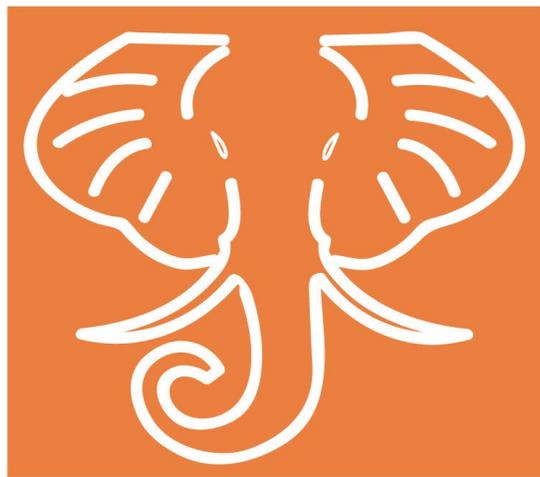


**Dynamics of art; with a foreword by Stephen C. Pepper.**

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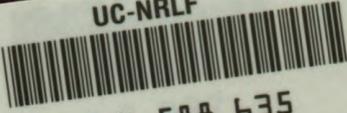
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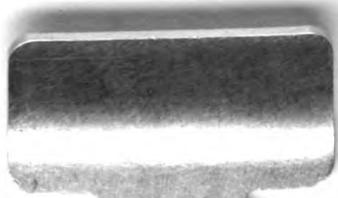
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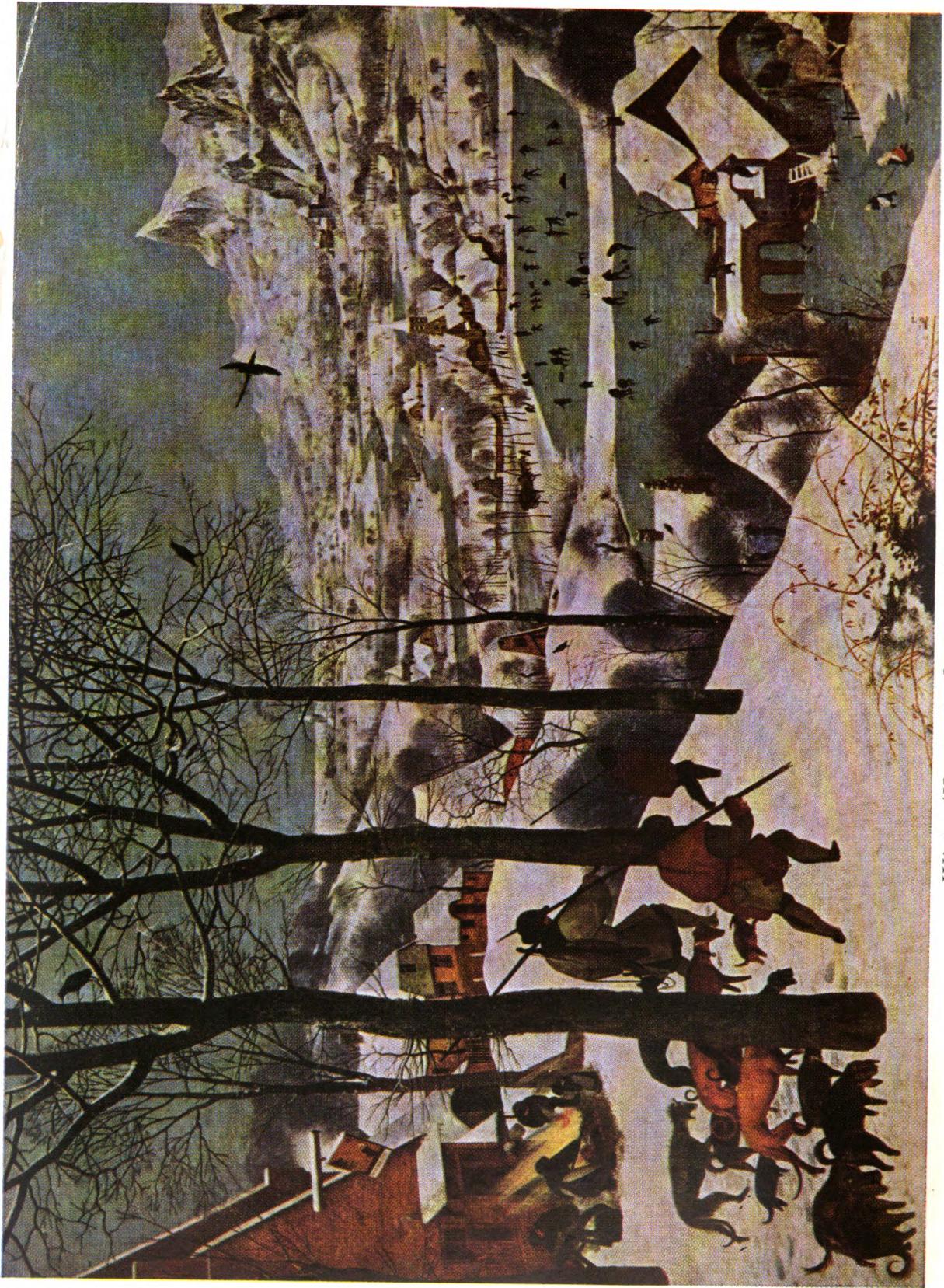




# DYNAMICS OF ART







Winter (Hunters in the Snow) Dieter Rams

# DYNAMICS OF ART

*by*

ANDREW PAUL USHENKO

*with a Foreword by*

STEPHEN C. PEPPER

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

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*To*  
FAY AND AUDREY

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## *Foreword*

**IN THIS** book Ushenko has presented the most searching analysis of the nature of the work of art that, so far as I know, has yet appeared. Whether one agrees with his conclusions or even the details of his analysis is a minor consideration. He has carried the process of analysis in this area deeper and with more precision than has previously been done.

For instance, the ambiguity that he finds in my own recent struggle with this problem I must admit is actually there in my statements. That the object of reference when we speak of an artist's work—particularly of a masterpiece—is not the physical stimulus, nor any single “subjective” impression of it, was clear enough to me. Yet the masterpiece was somehow generated from, or derivative from, these sources. It was clear to me also that the derivation of the masterpiece for the spectator was a cumulative process, and also a convergent one in some sense. I believed in the probability of this convergence being towards a terminus which was open to rather precise verification, and which was consequently objective. It was something that could accordingly be communicated by indication and description. The adequacy or inadequacy of any spectator's perception of the work at any stage of his appreciation of it could, on these grounds, be criticized and discussed in terms of the degree to which it approached the full perception which the work was capable of giving.

These were the convictions on which I was working, and I gathered together the evidences at hand to make a schematic description of the object as well as I could. And I dropped into the ambiguity of implicitly suggesting two quite different and inconsistent theories of the aesthetic object: one, that it con-

sisted of the collection of perceptions of the physical stimulus progressively accumulated by a spectator; the other, that it consisted of an ideal terminus of a spectator's progressively enriched perception of the physical stimulus. There was also implicit a concept of relevancy. In the first theory, I was assuming that irrelevancies would cancel out as the collection of perceptions increased. In the second theory they were eliminated in the very process of convergence towards the ideal terminus of the perceptive series. Actually, of course, I was making both of these assumptions together without being aware of an inconsistency.

Ushenko in his present analysis has brought these two conflicting exceptions out into the light. One has to make a choice between them or find some intermediate solution. Ushenko decides in favor of the second solution and proceeds to develop its implications and its applications in close detail. The aesthetic work of art is a potential object, and the details of any aesthetic perception in the context of an actual experience *tend* toward the actualization of the ultimate, potential object which is the work of art.

Ushenko takes the status of potentiality very seriously and with great intellectual daring allows it to develop as the evidences of aesthetic experience under this hypothesis indicate that it must develop. This trait of intellectual daring is exceptional in these positivistic days, and a very great virtue to my mind. It is the essence of philosophical imagination, and the source of all constructive (as opposed to purely critical) philosophical thinking. It often exposes a man to mistakes, but it is also the origin of insights. This book has, I judge, its mistakes (and I do not always agree with its statements), and it is loaded with insights. Some of these insights are startling, yet frequently I have been persuaded.

Let me conclude by suggesting that the problem of potentiality—or, as some call it, of “dispositional properties”—is probably the central philosophic problem of this and the next few decades. It is showing up in logic, in the problem of the “conditional contrary to fact”; in scientific method, in the opera-

tional theory of truth; in ethics, in the emphasis on attitudes; in the general theory of perception; and here in the theory of aesthetic perception. Among other insights of Ushenko's is that of observing the importance of this issue today. And he dares to name the issue by its proper, traditional name, which sends a shiver down the back of all who have ever trembled under Hume's analytical knife. It is the problem of *powers* in nature.

STEPHEN C. PEPPER

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

## *Acknowledgment*

During the preparation of the manuscript for publication I have been greatly helped by the corrections and suggestions of my colleagues, Professors Edward D. Seeber and David H. Dickason, and by the editorial assistance of Mr. Walter Albee and Miss Edith R. Greenburg, of the Indiana University Press.

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# DYNAMICS OF ART



## *Introduction*

THE STUDENT of art will want to know what to expect of a book called *Dynamics of Art*. The title may suggest to him another survey of the arts, of painting, music, literature, and the others, however unusual the point of view from which they are surveyed. He may expect other things equally remote from my concern. This essay—let there be no doubt about that—is philosophy as well as aesthetics. Yet the title is not a misnomer. A study of the general principles of dynamics in art inevitably leads into philosophy.

Generality of treatment is a requirement of logical precedence. If the term “dynamics” is to designate, in accordance with one of its basic dictionary meanings, the theory of a field of forces, then a general study of forces in the field of aesthetic experience is a prerequisite for the more specialized inquiry into the peculiarities of dynamics that distinguish one art from another. In deference to logical precedence this book is intended to establish principles that are valid for all the major arts. Let the reader not be misled in this matter by my practice of using nothing but pictures or literary pieces whenever an illustration of an aesthetic principle is in order. The only reason for the restriction is expediency. A book is easily equipped with reproductions and quotations but not with samples from arts other than painting and literature.

There is another restriction on the choice of illustrations that is likely to be misleading. I do not turn from one work of art to another in order to illustrate different principles when I find that the same work of art may serve to illustrate each principle. For example, Brueghel's *Winter* is re-examined in a variety of contexts, each time in support of a different principle. This

practice, together with the prevailing philosophical temper of the discussion, is likely to give the impression that I use art only as a pretext for an exhibition of principles that have been derived from philosophical considerations, independently of specific works of art. That impression would be altogether false. I am convinced that our knowledge of aesthetic principles grows out of analysis and appreciation of representative works of art at its best. I have restricted representation to a minimum for this reason: I believe that familiarity with a particular work of art—to be induced by repeated examination—makes for the understanding of the principles in operation. And, to mention another reason, if I were to illustrate each principle by a different work of art, I would be suggesting, contrary to my intention, that aesthetic principles are to be applied one at a time and independently of one another.

Digressions into philosophy are to be expected in aesthetics, but the emphasis on logic and epistemology to be found in this book may be questioned. The fact is that I intend to fill a gap in the writings of contemporary philosophers. On the one hand, specialists in logic and epistemology do not consider any contribution from aesthetics to their own field to be needed and therefore show no interest in an attempt to bring these three branches of philosophy together. On the other hand, aestheticians have not yet learned from logic and epistemology the habit of writing with precision. The more significant their ideas, the more likely they are to express them, usually under the cover of flowery language, in vague or confusing terms. Consider, for example, the phrase “the logic of art.” In a general way the intended meaning of the phrase is clear. We understand that within a work of art all parts are interconnected with a bond of necessity that is comparable to the entailment of the conclusion of a syllogism by its premises. The phrase suggests, however, that, their similarity notwithstanding, formal logic and the logic of art represent different types of discursive procedure. One reason why aestheticians prefer to leave the suggestion without scrutiny or elaboration is that comparison with formal logic would require (just what they want to avoid) a considera-

tion of the latter. I have decided on a different course. This leads to §29, in Chapter Five, and to other passages that are not plain sailing. But the increased precision of treatment may compensate the reader for a measure of technical difficulty.

Philosophers with a positivist leaning may approve of logic and epistemology but are sure to object to my excursions into metaphysics. If they are to be appeased by an admission, let me admit that the metaphysics of this book is not necessary for the understanding of its aesthetics. I would even advise a reader who has no taste for metaphysics to omit §6, in Chapter One, altogether. Nevertheless, I believe that disregard for metaphysics would reduce the plausibility of the theory of dynamics in art. To substantiate my belief let me introduce the basic distinction between implicit and explicit data of an aesthetic experience.

Explicit sense data, for example, colors in painting or sounds in music, are not enough for art since they are perceivable—by animals as well as by unimaginative people—outside of aesthetic experience. An aesthetic experience is an imaginative transformation of explicit sense data under the dynamic control of implicit factors. For example, recession in depth is an implicit factor that controls the imaginative transformation of the flat surface of a painting into the appearance of a landscape. If the transformation were not so controlled, the work of art would disintegrate into fragments of disconnected, explicit sense data. For an explicit sense datum taken by itself, or unaided, is a factor of segregation. For example, a colored shape sets boundaries that the aesthetic effect of interpenetration of elements must overcome. It follows that the factors of integration in art must be implicit or latent. Not that they are unobservable but that they allow for explication, i.e., for a transformation into a set of explicit sense data. Take the landscape again. Its apparent depth can be made explicit by constructing a three-dimensional model, but of course the model would have none of the aesthetic power of the painting.

Latency of implicit factors suggests that they exist in the mode of potentiality. But their function of dynamic control makes the suggestion irresistible. For, in accordance with the

metaphysics of potentiality, power is a kind of potentiality. And the dictionary tells us that power means capacity of exerting influence or control upon others. A single tendency toward manifestation exemplifies power in the simplest form of compulsion. Let us equate a single implicit factor of art with a single tendency. Then a work of art as a whole is identifiable with a field of tension. The field turns out to be four-dimensional; therefore a tendency within the field is a tensor. In the text I use the more familiar term vector because the word connotes the dynamic directedness, or bearing upon others, that we must associate with an agency of influence or control.

S. C. Pepper has already identified the aesthetic work of art with a field of potentiality in his *Principles of Art Appreciation*. To show the extent of our agreement let me quote the relevant passage at length:

A simile may help, by way of summary, to make this conception of an objectively verifiable work of art clearer. The complete aesthetic work of art is an object of very much the same sort as a magnetic field in physics. Both are describable, verifiable, highly structured, and both exist generally in the status of potential objects. The pole of the magnet is to the magnetic field as the physical work of art is to the field of relevant details which constitutes the aesthetic work of art. Without the magnetic pole there would be no magnetic field. Similarly, without the physical work of art there would be no structure of relevant perceptual details for an aesthetic work of art. The lines of forces in the magnetic field are observable only when a sensitive needle is brought within the field, and it is the behavior of the needle relative to the magnetic pole that determines the structure of the magnetic field. Similarly, the details of the aesthetic work of art are observable only when a normally sensitive man enters into the perceptual field of the physical work of art, and the structure of the aesthetic work of art is known only through the relevant perceptions of detail stimulated by the physical work of art. . . . The only important difference is that a needle is never aware of the magnetic field as a whole. A sensitive needle cannot remember its behavior in one part of the field when it is carried to another. But a sensitive man in the perceptual field of a physical work of art can remember his previous perceptions and can fund them into a present one

focused on some other detail of the field, and can actually sometimes obtain a funded intuition of the total structure of the field. That is, the total aesthetic work of art may sometimes cease to be a potential object and actually become an object of immediate present perception in a fully funded experience.<sup>1</sup>

I accept Pepper's statement as far as it goes. But I think that there is another important difference between the magnetic and the aesthetic fields. The particularity of a magnetic field is of the same nature as the particularity of a magnet or of any other material thing. If two exactly similar magnets are placed in different rooms, each generates a distinct, particular field. The two fields are not identifiable despite the identity of the pattern of the lines of force; for if the two magnets are brought together into the same room, their fields interact, as two distinct agencies, to cause a joint field of a different pattern of magnetic forces. Not so with the aesthetic work of art. If two exactly similar reproductions of a picture are placed side by side, the spectator derives the same aesthetic experience whether he looks exclusively at one of them or shifts his glance alternately from one reproduction to the other. To use Pepper's terminology, the total aesthetic work of art has the particularity of a funded perceptual effect which is the same regardless of whether the component perceptions come from a single physical source or from several particular sources. Physical carriers of art can be duplicated, but the potential object, to be correlated with either duplicate, is one and undivided.

The particularity of a potential object of art is disclosed through multiple manifestation, i.e., in each of a number of particular percepts. To resolve the paradox of this statement I propose to differentiate between two kinds of particularity. A single aesthetic experience is a particular percept in the usual sense of particularity, which excludes recurrence. In this sense an aesthetic experience is dated and strictly localized. But, if "fully funded," an aesthetic experience has also the particularity of a potential object of art or of the aesthetic effect. The second kind of particularity—to be understood in accordance with Bertrand Russell's theory of particulars—does not exclude re-

currence. The date and place of the percept, in ordinary time, are no more relevant to the particularity of the potential object than the multiple particularity of physical carriers. Let two radio sets in the same room be turned to the same station. The divided particularity (the first kind) of the sets does not undermine the undivided particularity (the second kind) of the auditory effect of their performance. Similarly, the auditory effect remains invariant through the repetition of audition, i.e., through the change of the date and place of auditory percepts.

The proposed differentiation between two kinds of particularity is associated with the contrast between ordinary space and time, on the one hand, and aesthetic space-time, on the other. The contrast itself may be questioned, however. Two objections have already come to my notice.

G. Rowley has questioned the assertion that pictorial space is four-dimensional because he feels that the term "four-dimensional" should be reserved for the school of later cubism to distinguish it from other schools of painting. The point of Rowley's criticism is well taken. As he has pointed out to me, paintings by later cubists are not intended to be visualized in space but are exhibitions of dissection or analysis of percepts into pictorial elements to be imaginatively reorganized along the dimension of time. Any other painting, in distinction from such pictorial analysis, is supposed to be viewed in space much as the structure of the presented space may differ from space outside of art. I do not deny that the intended organization of pictorial elements in time entitles the historian of art to oppose the school of later cubism to other schools of painting. The fact remains, however, that, whether intended or not, integration in time is required for the beholder's experience of pictorial space regardless of the school of painting concerned. The requirement is more than the percipient's need for time in which to survey every region within the portrayal of space. It takes some time to examine a photograph, but the space represented by a photograph is, unlike pictorial space, three-dimensional. The requirement is for an extraordinary structure of space and time combined, i.e., for an incorporation of time into space that

enables the spectator to see a picture as, among other things, a pattern of colors on the plane of the canvas and as a presentation in depth. To call, as I do, pictorial space "four-dimensional" is merely to direct attention to the pictorial effect of combining time with space.

Admittedly the extraordinary space-time of art emerges in the course of an imaginative reconstruction of perception. This is not to admit, however, that aesthetic space-time is nothing but a fiction. The point in question brings me to the second criticism. In a letter of May 11, 1950, S. C. Pepper remarks: "All I cannot follow you in (barring details) is the strong ontological status you give to aesthetic space and time. I'd treat these as aesthetic constructs like the faery-land causality of Alice in Wonderland." I have several things to say apropos of Pepper's remark. We can imagine any kind of happening in a "faery-land," but we cannot force our own experience to conform to the fantastic conditions of what we have freely imagined or constructed. With aesthetic space and time, on the other hand, the case is different. Although we enter the structure of space-time in art through an effort of the imagination, the structure, once engaged, frames our experience throughout the duration of the aesthetic process. It is not that art provides us with an extraordinary image of space-time but that images of art are in an extraordinary space-time. And if to be real, for space or time, is to be public, aesthetic space-time is real. For in art sensory and imaginal contents are arranged, in relation to one another, in an order of temporal precedence or spatial orientation and distance that, even if highly complex or ambivalent, is public because ascertainable or verifiable by any beholder of the aesthetic effect. Of course, events that happen in art are not publicly dated in accordance with the calendar; nor are their places listed in a gazetteer. But dates and geographical places are, primarily, practical means for the arrangement of meetings or, more generally, for the anticipation and regulation of human transactions. Aesthetic space-time is a framework for the beholder's contemplation—not for action. Therefore art has no use for dates or meeting places. But can we deny that space and

time are real because, and in so far as, they provide the field for human action? The question is difficult because the answer is both Yes and No. No, if by space and time we mean the ordinary or practical three-dimensional space and one-dimensional time that appear to be separated from each other. Yes, if we accept, in addition to the separated space and time, the combined space-time of Einstein's relativity. Action or movement is preceded by perceptual anticipation; and perceptual anticipation, in the form of the percipient's field of vision, requires a separation between space and time. But, if Einstein is right, separation between space and time is a bisection of the underlying, four-dimensional medium of events. Action does not vanish within the four-dimensional medium, although it is resolved into a series of events; what vanishes is the anticipation of action or movement in the form of the agent's visual field, together with the assignment of exclusive dates and places.

The reference to Einstein is intended to suggest that aesthetic space-time is just as real as the space-time of relativity. The structure of both is four-dimensional and therefore equally extraordinary to an agent who must, in planning action, separate space from time. However, correspondence to the physical manifold would not settle the matter satisfactorily if it were true that the four-dimensional structure of physics were altogether beyond the range of human experience of nature. For if that were true, art would mean—something which I refuse to believe—an escape from nature. The question is whether human experience of nature presupposes a separation of space from time. Admittedly, planned action does. But not all activity is planned. Our sense of space and time, in life outside of art, does not always reach the level of awareness of structure. Sometimes we drift through experience not alert enough to take cognizance of perceptible boundaries that would mark off the present moment from the past and future by way of unfolding a momentary space in separation from time. Occasionally we even lapse into a state of dim and stagnant endurance that is appropriate to the life of plants. On such a level of vegetation the process of perceptual differentiation, including the differentia-

tion between space and time, is at a standstill; manifestations do not stand out against one another shaped in space and with a fixed measure of time but merge into an inarticulate, unsettled, and unbounded continuum of experience. There is no reason why the continuum—with space and time undifferentiated—is not to be identified with the experience of the manifold of physical science, although we must add that in experience the structure of space and time combined is discernible rather than discerned or determinable rather than determinate. Let me say that human experience of space-time in nature exists in the mode of latency or potentiality. By contrast I should describe art as bringing the structure into the open or as turning potentiality into actuality. The description is substantiated in Chapter Three, “The Aesthetic Process,” in which I have argued that art enables the beholder to stretch the span of his present experience to counteract his practical tendency to pulverize perception into moments each with a space separated from time. The upshot of the matter is that aesthetic space-time is extraordinary not because it is unnatural but because it makes evident a structure that nature, unaided by the physicist’s theory, leaves undiscerned or latent. The contrast is not between two different structures but between the definite or articulate structure of space-time in art and a mere potentiality of the same structure in nature. This is not to minimize the significance of the contrast. On the contrary, it enables us to define art as an instrument of insight into the nature of space-time.

The point of the preceding paragraph exemplifies the principle of the relation between art and nature. An aesthetic experience stands out in contrast to human experience of nature outside of art, and yet they are not discontinuous. I can mention John Dewey as a predecessor who has recognized the same principle. I once expressed to Dewey my opinion that his emphasis on continuity between life and art does not do justice to the fact that an aesthetic experience is disinterested, i.e., indifferent to matters of practical concern. Dewey answered that the conception of “an aesthetic experience,” as defined in *Art as Experience*,<sup>2</sup> is intended to recognize both the basic con-

tinuity between life and art and the distinctive quality of being completed in itself that makes a work of art stand apart from the field of practical transaction. The answer can be supported by certain passages of his book, for example, by the summary in the middle of page 46. I mention Dewey's intention, however, not because he, or his book, has convinced me of its successful fulfillment but to explain that my intention is exactly the same. In my case, however, fulfillment is assured by the employment of a metaphysics of potentiality. For one of the tenets of this metaphysics is that the same determinable potentiality may be actualized by several alternative manifestations, each with a different degree of determinacy or specification. Accordingly, one experience may differ from another not because of discontinuity—not because each experience is a manifestation of a different potentiality—but because the first experience remains comparatively indeterminate whereas the second is perceptually more specific, explicit, and articulate. I believe that the difference between our experience of nature and of art is of that kind. At any rate, there is no doubt that, as a rule, an aesthetic experience exceeds ordinary experience in determinacy and articulation. The rule enables me to contrast nature and art without admitting discontinuity.

The contrast between nature and art enables me to argue at once that a work of art is a potential object and that actual aesthetic experience is essential to it. The fact that a work of art continues to exist in the intervals when no one is engaged in its performance or experience is the evidence for the status of potentiality. But the evidence does not mean that performance or experience is not essential. When a work of art is not experienced, its mode of being is comparable to a state of sleep; we may say that sleep exists for the sake of the state of wakefulness. But, in addition to the point of the metaphor, there is the point that the intervals at which aesthetic experience happens to be suspended or interrupted belong to the course of nature and therefore are not relevant to the aesthetic process. On the other hand, a work of art remains a potential object even through the manifestation in an aesthetic experience. This is apparent when we

**identify a work of art with the object of art analysis and criticism. For the art critic does not intend to deal with an actual aesthetic experience except in so far as he finds it representative of the transcending objective power, the work of art under examination, that allows not only for the present experience but also for alternative, equally relevant manifestations and disclosures.**



## ONE

### *The Work of Art*

#### 1. AESTHETICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART

The term aesthetics has a wide range of senses and uses. Ety-mological derivation leads us to a Greek word which stands for sensory cognition, and aesthetics is, in its broadest sense, a study of the field of phenomena or sense data and images. Such a study has not yet been undertaken, however, in the form of a systematic and self-contained science. The central chapters of Gestalt psychology—the chapters dealing with dynamically unified configurations within the field of perception—represent the closest approach that we have to aesthetics in the broad sense and ought to be recognized as such in spite of the misleading label. And of course we have Kant's "transcendental aesthetics," in which space and time are treated as indispensable conditions of sense awareness. We may also mention the alternative epistemology of sense data in British empiricism, although, like Kant's approach, the philosophy of sense data is aesthetics unduly restricted by the dominating standpoint of a theory of knowledge. The present essay does not aim at completion or correction of such earlier attempts but reverts to the tradition (observed by all books published under the title "Aesthetics") in which the term is used in some narrower sense.

Books on aesthetics have always treated sense perception with an eye on perceptual peculiarities in the field of art. Even D. W. Prall, who contends that the field of aesthetics is wider than the field of art, has actually limited his study of sense data to such qualities as color and sound because they can be combined, according to definite rules, into unified patterns of which works of art are familiar exemplifications. And the majority of writers set a further restriction by preoccupying themselves only with those patterns—which, perhaps, nothing but art ex-

emphases—that afford a uniquely enduring satisfaction or have a unique value, beauty. Much writing on aesthetics can therefore be described as an elaboration of Keats's line, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Recognizing the restriction imposed by the word beauty and excluding from consideration objects of questionable beauty, we arrive at aesthetics in the sense used in this book. In this sense aesthetics is identical with that section of the philosophy of art which is concerned with the status and nature of an individual work of art.

The reason why aesthetics must be identified with only a part of the philosophy of art is that the latter includes matters which are not connected at all with the field of sense data and imagery. Let me mention two such topics, which, although irrelevant to aesthetics, are responsible for much confusion in the writings of aestheticians.

The philosophy of art is concerned with art in both senses of the word, with art written in lower case and with Art written with a capital "A." By art with a small "a" I mean individual works of art, the proper concern of aesthetics; Art with a capital "A" is a factor of human culture. Confusion of the two meanings has vitiated the arguments of both the proponents and the critics of the doctrine of art for art's sake. I would not go as far as D. F. Tovey, who thinks that the doctrine "errs in spelling Art with a capital A, as if anything existed except individual works of art."<sup>1</sup> I admit the existence of art in the second sense, of Art with a capital "A." For there certainly exists a distinct function of the mind or, if one prefers a different way of speaking, a distinct field of human development and accomplishment to be appropriately contrasted to, and co-ordinated with, the domains of Science, Religion, and Practice. The distinct function or field, to be called Art, would be the same even if individual works of art were entirely different from what they historically happen to be. Creative urge and artistic construction are the same in China, Russia, and in the West, although the national character of individual works of art strikingly differs from one country to another. Accordingly, let me amend Tovey's contention by saying that the doctrine of art for art's sake has erred

in failing to distinguish between the two senses of the word art. The doctrine is certainly false for Art with a capital "A." Various functions of the mind, however different from each other, can and must be set in co-operation, and the artistic function, in particular, may serve toward the fulfillment of other spiritual needs and demands. Through ancient and mediaeval history Art was subservient to, as well as inspired by, aspirations of Religion. And although in the crowded and restless medium of industrial capitalism the service of Art may take a negative form of escape from reality, new experiments in socialism may yet succeed in drafting the imaginative support of artists. On the other hand, we can unquestionably consider, analyze, and appraise an individual work of art for its own sake and disregard the context of actual history or of the current course of events. Sometimes, as in the case of cave art, we are even forced to study works of art as isolated phenomena, for their own sake, for the simple reason that we know next to nothing of the primitive artists' modes of life. This is not to say that the thesis of art for art's sake is to be accepted without additional clarification or qualification, even when we agree to discuss art in the sense of individual works of art.

To take another topic which belongs to the philosophy of art but not to aesthetics, let us consider the difference between the point of view of a beholder—a point of view taken exclusively in aesthetics—and the point of view of the artist. The philosophy of art must take into account the artist's experience and distinguish it from the aesthetic experience, for there would seem to be on first consideration an important difference between the beholder's receptive attitude and experience (a reaction to a ready-made product of art) and the artist's creative effort and activity. Even if the argument that aesthetic reception requires sustained effort and activity that duplicate the original process of creation should prove to be correct, the argument and the proof would belong to the philosophy of art and not to aesthetics. Besides, however plausible the argument may be in the main, there is no doubt that the artist's experience is tinged with a sense for the physical material of his art and the physio-

logical sensation of handling that material, a sense that comes out of practice and technical skill which are beyond the resources of a mere beholder. This means that we must be alert to the fact that there is at least some difference between the experiences of the artist and of the beholder, and aware that the failure to do so may lead to confusion. Repeated attempts to identify works of art with physical objects can be attributed to the confusing practice of reading into an aesthetic experience something which is foreign to it, the artist's concern with material things.

## 2. THE AESTHETIC POSTULATE

Aesthetics in the present sense, as the theory of individual works of art considered from the point of view of a beholder, is based upon, even if it does not strictly imply, the aesthetic postulate. The postulate stipulates that there exists, in each individual aesthetic experience, such a thing as the work of art, the unique and objective outcome of an artist's creative activity, which is identifiable and can be enjoyed by others as well as by the artist himself, in short which is objective and communicable. To illustrate the postulate we may say that in any edition T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is the same objective poem, different as it may look in print in the various editions, and in spite of the fact that such an outstanding critic as I. A. Richards does not agree with the author on the interpretation.

The aesthetic postulate is indispensable for several decisive reasons. The principles and concepts of aesthetics, to be understood and established, must be derived by inductive generalization from, or at least illustrated by, publicly recognizable features of particular works of art; otherwise the student, with no access to identifiable evidence, would not know what the aesthetician were talking about. And even if the aesthetician were reconciled to the failure to communicate with others so long as he understood and accepted his own ideas, I would point out to him that his capacity to say today the same thing about a work of art that he said yesterday presupposes the validity of the aes-

thetic postulate, although in this case the required communicability is not from one person to another but within the same mind. And let me add that if intersubjective communicability can be stipulated without further justification, there is no good reason why extrasubjective communicability, from one person to another, should not be stipulated in the same way.

Consider next the matter of aesthetic analysis and art criticism. If it were not for identifiable, objective properties and qualities which distinguish one work of art from another, there would be no point in trying to exercise or cultivate our capacity for analytic discernment; there could be no error of appraisal, and arguments about art would be utterly stultified. No one denies that it was a scandalous blunder on the part of André Gide to reject the publication of Proust's manuscript. Admittedly, good critics sometimes disagree. And the admission may, perhaps, provide an excuse for Gide's error of judgment. But the fact of occasional disagreement in the matter of analysis or criticism is itself, contrary to a common opinion, excellent evidence for the existence of independent and objective works of art. For if there were no such thing as the work of art under consideration, if each critic were absorbed in a distinct private affair, with no communicable qualities to be discerned by anyone capable of discernment, either critical agreement or disagreement would be illusory. If one critic says "X is a masterpiece" but means "Y is a masterpiece," and if another critic says "X is a failure" but means "Z is a failure" (X standing for a title and Y and Z for two different, private percepts of the two men), their disagreement would be verbal, an appearance only; and so would be their agreement if one of them ever happened to change his mind. Suppose that, in order to avoid our conclusion, someone attempted the following alternative interpretation. "Your interpretation," he might tell us, "does not take into account the fact that the title X is the name of an identifiable, physical thing; for instance, in the case of Gide, X is an abbreviation of *Du Côté de chez Swann*, the name of the manuscript, a physical thing that was once brought to Gide for consideration. Hence the disagreement between the two critics is real:

one of them means to say, 'The physical thing *X* is *Y*, and *Y* is a masterpiece,' whereas the other contends, 'The physical thing *X* is not *Y* but *Z*, and *Z* is a failure.'" But what does the alternative account amount to? Even if it were correct, it would not be an objection to the aesthetic postulate; it would require the identification of an individual work of art with an objectively identifiable, physical thing. But, of course, the account is incorrect. In the first place, it is still incomplete. Even if, when referred to the same physical thing, *Y* and *Z* were incompatible manifestations, the statements of the two critics would have to be expanded. The first would read, "The physical thing *X* is *Y* from the point of view of the first critic," and the second, "The physical thing *X* is *Z* from the point of view of the second critic." When so completed, the two statements would no longer contradict each other. In the second place, the identification of a work of art with a physical object is, in fact, indefensible.\*

I have argued for the aesthetic postulate on premises that can be summed up in the simple phrase "No postulate—no aesthetics." But we must be prepared for a cynical reply, "So much the worse for aesthetics." To be so prepared we must look for the independent, empirical evidence in favor of the aesthetic postulate. In other words, we must try to show that the postulate is not only a stipulation but also a true, or at least plausible, empirical proposition. This chapter is, in a measure, an attempt at the required demonstration.

\* An opponent may argue that, unlike disagreement in evaluation, the fact that two competent critics may disagree in their interpretations of a work of art is evidence against the postulate of objective aesthetic experience. To forestall such arguments let me point out that, since critical essays are usually works of literary art, the opponent's own premise, that we can objectively ascertain whether or not two critical essays differ in their interpretations, inadvertently admits what he intends to deny. Let me add that an interpretation of a work of art is perforce a paraphrase and that the difficulty of determining the adequacy of a paraphrase adds to the difficulty of ascertaining whether there is an essential disagreement of interpretation between two critical essays.

### 3. PHYSICAL THINGS AND WORKS OF ART

Attempts to identify a work of art with a physical object are inspired by the belief that the physical world provides the measure of stability required for the identification and communicability of an aesthetic experience and that the percipient's contribution, conditioned by the peculiarity of perceptive or sensory faculties, accounts for the existence of perceptual distortion and failure to recognize the objective qualities of things. The truth is, however, that the physical world is essentially plastic and amenable to alternative (mutually exclusive and yet equally plausible) perceptual manifestations or theoretical interpretations. Take a single solid physical thing, the table on which I am writing. A layman would not question the statement that the basic, stable properties of the table are the two that I have just mentioned; the table is single and solid. And yet the physicist, who ought to know better than the layman what the nature of a physical thing is, tells us that the bulk of the table is empty space through which millions of molecules rush in all directions at an incredible speed; and he adds that this account is only a first approximation, to be followed by conceptions which are far more fantastic. The simplest hypothesis, which would do justice to the layman's as well as to the physicist's alternative views, is that the physical world is a power, or potentiality, to be realized, on the scale of human perception and transaction, in the familiar scene which includes people and animals as well as tables and trees and other material things, and that the same physical world is also a power, or potentiality, to be realized, or conceptualized, in the strange theoretical structures and schemes of the physicist. The point is not that the familiar, external world is perceptible while its scientific counterparts are only conceptual constructions; presumably, if human beings could be reduced to the size of a virus, and endowed with the capacity to perceive on an appropriate scale, they would not see the table as a single object, but would shoot through it, only occasionally encountering a molecular obstacle on the way. The point is that any perceptual or conceptual view

of the physical world, as we know it, is a human perspective. Or, to put the matter differently, any identifiable actuality depends upon the nature of the percipient and of his standpoint; and physical things, considered independently of human perception and cognition, exist in the mode of power, or potentiality, and therefore cannot serve to identify an actual work of art. Let me remark, in concluding this paragraph, that once we accept the proposition that nature, apart from her transaction with men, is not a display of actual and definite items but a variable source of alternative aspects, the ancient notion that art is imitation of nature can be dismissed without further discussion. Art cannot provide copies if nature has no definite original.

Admittedly, no one would attempt to identify a work of art with such physical objects as electrons, molecules, or waves of probability; attempted identification is always concerned with canvases hanging on a wall, blocks of chiseled marble, and other gross items of the familiar common-sense world. Yet the objection that a material thing is not an identifiable article of actuality because it exists in the mode of power is not weakened by the unopposed admission. And if the reader protests that, regardless of metaphysical speculations and subtleties, he can recognize in the world of actuality such material things as canvases or blocks of marble, he hides confusion in theory behind the relative and contingent success of practical transaction.\* The fact is that practical identification is unreliable as well as theoretically faulty. You may buy a car and park it in the street overnight; should the dealer decide on a replacement during your sleep, you may never discover that the automobile you drive is not the original purchase. Similarly with material carriers of works of art. Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* has been identified with the canvas painted upon by the artist himself in Florence, later transferred to France, and subsequently stolen from and recovered by the Louvre; but the identification might not have taken place if the thief had thought of replacing the original

\* For a proof that material objects are not actual things see my *Power and Events* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946).

painting with a skillful reproduction. To contend that substitution would be immediately exposed because Leonardo's masterpiece could not be duplicated is to concede that detection of forgery in art is a matter of sensory discernment by experts capable of discovering an inadequacy within the aesthetic effect and not a question of dealing with material objects; although, of course, once the suspicion were aroused, chemical analysis of the pigments, or other technical operations upon physical objects, might follow. The crucial point is, however, that in principle no masterpiece, taken as a physical object, is irreplaceable. The point may be obscured, as far as painting is concerned, because reproduction of colors and patterns, whether by hand or with the aid of a camera, has not yet reached the mechanical perfection of phonograph records or radio. I am convinced, to mention one case, that no copy or reproduction has yet done justice to Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. The possibility of duplication in art, however, is evident the moment we turn from painting to music or poetry. We replace a broken phonograph disk and continue to speak of the same record because reproduction is exact to the point of perceptual identity, so that we can disregard the multiplicity of physical carriers. If one insists on the identification of a work of art with a single physical thing, one may try to reduce the multiplicity by tracing back the recorded piece of music to its original physical source, presumably to the score on the composer's own manuscript, only to realize that the existence of the manuscript is not necessary for the existence of the composition. A piece of music will continue to exist, and may be actually performed, even if no record except in the performer's memory is preserved. Such evidence is overwhelming and conclusive. The conclusion is, of course, that a work of art is not a material thing since it can be associated with any of a number of physical replicas and, occasionally, with none.

Those who are reluctant to accept my conclusion are likely to make one more suggestion, that the identification of a work of art with a material thing is not exclusive, so that any of a number of distinct material things which exhibit the same per-

ceptual pattern of objective qualities can serve to identify the corresponding work of art. Accordingly, different editions or even copies of the same edition of a book would identify a literary work provided they displayed the same sequence of printed letters; distinct phonograph disks record the same piece of music because they are impressed with the same pattern of grooves; and so on for other arts. I find the suggestion untenable for several reasons. A literary piece is often identifiable even when associated with material things having no perceptual pattern in common. For example, a visual pattern perceived by someone reading a printed page is succeeded by a pattern of sound, in recitation. Another example is the work of art that is committed to memory in the absence of any physical record. And, finally, even if a definite perceptual pattern exhibited by a material thing were indispensable, it would not be sufficient to introduce or make possible recognition of a work of art. Show a picture to a dog. The dog can see the canvas as well as you do, and he comes closer to sniff at the strange thing; but presently he turns away, and the lack of interest proves that he does not perceive the work of art. Evidently the aesthetic effect, accessible to a qualified human observer but not to an animal, is something beyond an ordinary percept, accessible to both, of a pattern or bundle of sense qualities.\*

A perceptual pattern, while not identical with a work of art would seem to be an indispensable part of the latter; but the perceptual pattern need not be an aspect of a material thing. This is not to say that a work of art can exist without any physical counterpart. The work of art does not have to be mechanically recorded (it may be recorded in memory), but a memory record is not a work of art except when the record is displayed in an actual performance. And when an actual performance takes place, there is a physical counterpart, although the physical counterpart may be a process and not a thing. A painting or

\* Let me add that a decision to treat a number of distinct things as if they were exemplifying the same perceptual pattern is, in a measure, subjective and arbitrary. Though two printed copies of a book are virtually indistinguishable, the recognition of their perceptual pattern in the author's own handwriting of the original manuscript may call for an imaginative effort.

a monument would not exist without a carrier which is a material thing. But the act of reciting a poem from memory brings forth, as its physical counterpart, a train of waves in the air; and the corresponding perceptual aspect of the recitation, which forms an indispensable part of the total aesthetic effect, is the pattern—the tempo, the rhythm, the accent—of a process, an articulated sequence of sounds as heard by the audience. A dance or a performance of music is, in the same way, a process.

Since a work of art is experienced with the perceptual pattern derivable from a physical source or stimulation—even though the pattern may undergo a radical change in the process of amalgamation with other images and ideas—an aesthetic experience shares the nature of percepts. The question to be considered next is whether the status of a percept is compatible with objectivity.

#### 4. OBJECTIVITY AND RELATIVITY

I am now in a position to define aesthetic experience. Let me take advantage of the example of a spectator and his dog both looking at the same painting. We assume that their percepts are essentially alike. Why then does the dog fail to enjoy an aesthetic experience? The answer is easy: The dog lacks the imagination. This answer leads to the intended definition. An aesthetic experience is not simply a percept but an imaginatively reconstructed percept.

Does the proposed definition mean that in art percepts are subjectively distorted by the imagination? This way of asking the question is objectionable because it assumes that if the imagination does not intervene, percepts are objective. But have I not assumed the same thing myself? Yes, but only provisionally. This is not to say that I believe that no two percipients can have similar percepts. The truth of the matter is that I do not know. For epistemology tells us that when two percipients watch the rainbow and, using the same words, describe the bands of color, the order of colors perceived by one of them may be the reverse of the order perceived by the other; i.e., where one perceives

red and calls it red, the other may perceive violet but call it red, and where the first perceives orange and calls it orange, the second may perceive blue but call it orange, and so forth. And epistemology entertains this possibility of incurably subjective percepts in a spirit of skeptical resignation; there is no way of finding out whether or not the possibility happens to be realized. Some semanticists argue that the entertaining of a possibility that would stultify linguistic communication is illegitimate, but I do not find their arguments convincing.

The possibility that all percepts are subjective must be admitted. How does this admission affect the requirement for objective art and aesthetic experience. The answer is that the admission is harmless because it deals with the perception of absolute qualities, whereas aesthetic experience is a field of contextual qualities. This is not the place to undertake an explanation of the difference between absolute and contextual qualities except to mention, by way of anticipation, that contextual qualities cannot be perceived without the aid of the imagination. The reason for anticipating the point is that it serves to introduce the idea that the contextually controlled imagination serves to correct the subjective variation with which perception of qualities outside of art may admittedly be affected. Reconstruction by the imagination endows perceptual experience with a measure of objectivity.

There is a different kind of subjective perception which would undermine objective art unless it were exposed. The criteria for exposure, i.e., for distinguishing an objective aesthetic experience from a subjective distortion, are readily established in the process of making clear the difference between subjectivity and relativity. Let me therefore attempt to explain that difference. While every perceptual quality is relative, i.e., conditioned by the percipient's point of view and by other things, it may or may not be subjective. Consider the green color of a leaf, for example. The fact that the reader understands my request proves that green is the objective color of the leaf. For if the phrase "green leaf" stood for a subjective image of mine, not shared by others, he would say: "You mean an image

of a green leaf; a real leaf is not green." And yet a leaf is green only under favorable circumstances. The leaf turns red in the fall. To an inhuman eye with the magnifying power of a microscope the leaf would be colorless. And the same leaf is not green if the observer is color-blind. The relativity to seasonal conditions and, more generally, to conditions that are not dependent upon the peculiarity of a percipient's make-up does not make the percept subjective. Nor does the relativity to the scale, and to other standard conditions, of human perception. On the other hand, colors perceived by the color-blind eye are said to be subjectively distorted or anomalous. But what is the criterion for differentiating between the perceptually normal and abnormal? We do not say that the leaf is green because most of us see it so: presumably we would continue to call the leaf green even if it turned out that the majority of our generation were color-blind. But there is a way of establishing the required criterion on the basis of correlation between perceptual qualities and physical stimuli.

Compare a regular percept of the rainbow with the percept of an onlooker who does not perceive the difference between red and green, i.e., with the percept in which the color bands form the sequence of red, orange, yellow, red, blue, and violet. The irregular percept is subjective because it fails to register in terms of sensation the objective fact that the range of wave length correlated with the band of red is different from the range of wave length correlated with green. Subjective distortion, in this instance, is confusion of qualities that are discernible. Such confusion obviously impoverishes perception. Hence the first criterion of perceptual subjectivity: A percept is subjective if it impoverishes perception, i.e., if it fails to record a difference of physical stimuli.

The relevance of the first criterion to art is evident. An impoverished percept cannot do justice to the intended richness of the aesthetic effect. Examples can be given at will. To mention one: The color scheme of *The Sistine Madonna* brings out a contrast between red and green. Let the reader paint red all of the areas of contrast on his reproduction; the experiment will

convince him that the percept of a color-blind spectator takes the life out of the picture.

The opposite of perceptual impoverishment is, of course, unwarranted importation of perception, i.e., putting into the percept contents to which no physical stimuli correspond. And, obviously, seeing things that are not there is no less subjective than not seeing enough. For example, to read a word with an extra sound added to its spelling is—the name of the composer Dvorak notwithstanding—to misread it; i.e., the outcome is, as a rule, a distorted or subjective percept. There are two kinds of perceptual distortion by enrichment: Either the perceived quality has no physical counterpart at all, or else a determinable quality is perceived with an unwarranted degree of specification or definiteness. In either case, the criterion of perceptual subjectivity is obvious; any perceptual manifestation is subjective provided no special stimulus is correlated with it.

A failure to recognize the second criterion has led objective relativists—whom I follow part of the way in the present analysis—to unconditional denial of subjective perception. A radical objective relativist has no use for the term “subjective” because he believes that the phrase “objective but relative” will do instead. Let me take advantage of his own illustration in order to show the absurdity of the position. Suppose that you notice a speck in the sky and say, “There is a bird,” but later, as the flying object approaches you, you recognize an airplane. You are likely to correct yourself and admit: “I made a mistake; the appearance of a bird was a distorted perception of the airplane.” But the radical objective relativist would protest: “There was no mistake or distortion; from the standpoint of the original observation the flying object was a bird even though it turned into an airplane at closer range.” But his interpretation is not acceptable. From the distance of the original observation the appearance of the flying object was not sufficiently distinct to be perceived specifically as either a bird or an airplane. To make allowance for perceptual indeterminacy the percipient should have said to begin with: “The thing is either a bird or an airplane, but I cannot tell which.”

My criticism amounts to an application of the second criterion. To make this evident let me take a simpler illustration. Under adverse conditions of lighting a distant patch of color does not appear with the specificity that would enable one to tell whether it is definitely blue or green. The percipient may conjecture, "The patch is blue," but if at a shorter distance the patch turns out to be definitely green, to insist that a change of color has actually taken place would be foolish. A reasonable observer would conclude, in accordance with the second criterion, that his conjecture had been a subjective distortion.\*

In art the second criterion is applied as a request for verifiability. To describe a work of art in terms which other beholders fail to confirm and to which no physical stimuli are assignable is to describe a subjective experience. A common type of such description betrays what may be called a substitute experience. An enthusiast who reports a vision of a garden with colorful birds flying about after he has heard the sounds of a symphony cannot be credited with an objective musical experience; he substitutes pictures for music.†

\* Whether the source of a mistaken conjecture is a distorted percept or a bias of preconception is immaterial for the refutation of the radical contention of objective relativism.

† Although subjective impoverishment or enrichment often marks off a personal or private experience, the subjective and the personal occasionally part company and therefore must be distinguished. The percept of a Daltonist is subjective but, since many people are color-blind, not personal. A peeping Tom watches through the keyhole a scene which is objective even if closed to the rest of mankind. The exceptional sensibility of a critic enables him to acclaim a new masterpiece notwithstanding the disapproval by contemporaries; his personal finding turns out to be objective. In general, the privileged percept of a single beholder is both personal and objective provided, under more favorable circumstances, it would become public.

Whether personal and original perception is also objective depends upon the nature of the case. Assuming that two percipients see the same shade of orange and that one of them does and the other does not like what he sees, we may say that each percept is at once subjective, personal, and original. For there is no objective basis for giving preference to one percept rather than to the other. On the other hand, a personal and original percept that has no competitors is objective. If a percipient rightly claims that he can see an ultraviolet color, there is no point in calling his percept subjective. The abnormal but not the supernormal is subjective.

Subjective enrichment of perception is often an excess of the imagination. This fact raises the problem to be considered next. How is the objective, imaginative reconstruction of percepts in art to be distinguished from a distorting and subjective excess of the imagination?

##### 5. CONTEXTUAL OBJECTIVITY AND VECTORS

Differentiation between the subjective, on the one hand, and the relative and the personal, on the other, cannot assure us that any given percept is objective even if the percept has successfully passed the test of the two criteria of objectivity. If my treatment of perceptual confusion and distortion is at all plausible, it would be awkward not to assume the existence of undistorted and therefore objective percepts; but it must be admitted that perception in art is distorted to the degree to which imaginative transformation involves distortion. One cannot get away from imaginative transformation in aesthetic experience. There is the dog that sees the colors and shapes on a canvas as well as any one of us but who fails to perceive the work of art because of the lack of imagination. Accordingly, the main concern of aesthetics is with the imagination. I want to demonstrate that in art imaginative transformation, although perceptually a "distortion," is not a subjective distortion.

There is no doubt that outside of art the imagination is a major source of subjective distortion. And it is a fact that nowhere else does the imagination play a greater part than in art. Hence the subjectivist argument against the aesthetic postulate.

A work of art—the subjectivist argues—provides the objective perceptual framework to be filled out from the beholder's imaginative resources. But no two beholders have the same imaginative resources. For the latter grow out of, and with, experience; that is why no two biographies are ever identical. Hence each beholder's imaginative contribution to the work of art is different. This means that there is no objective or communicable work of art.

The subjectivist argument has convinced many able thinkers.

Even Dewey, his objectivist pronouncements elsewhere notwithstanding, endorses the argument:

A new poem is created by everyone who reads poetically—not that the raw material is original for, after all, we live in the same old world, but that every individual brings with him, when he exercises his individuality, a way of seeing and feeling that in its interaction with old material creates something new, something previously not existing in experience.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the argument is faulty. The subjectivist overlooks the fact that in art context controls the beholder's imagination. There are two major forms of contextual control, by relevance and by compensation. Let us consider them in turn.

In art context establishes a perspective, i.e., provides the beholder with an exclusive way of perceiving things. This means, on the one hand, that data which would be unrelated to one another outside of the perspective appear to bear upon one another within the established context, and, on the other hand, that any irrelevancy is promptly discharged from the aesthetic experience as an accidental intrusion because it happens to be out of place within the perspective, i.e., because it is not tied up with the rest. We all know, in listening to music, how to turn a deaf ear to an accidental cough from someone in the audience. And the more absorbed we are in the composition, the better is the total aesthetic effect protected from disruption. The intruding noise leaves no damaging impression. In this case contextual control eliminates subjective distortion, or irrelevancy, by means of what may be called the perspective of tonality. A noise is not registered because it does not belong to, i.e., does not fit in with, the tonal sequence of the piece of music.

Contextual control that protects aesthetic experience from irrelevant importation by the beholder's private imagination can be treated similarly. The protecting perspective may be based, of course, on various devices or contrivances. Tonality is one. Rhythm and rhyme that lift a poem from the medium of ordinary discourse are others. The so-called artistic conventions are also to be mentioned in this connection. If one does not accept

the established convention (for example, if a spectator is annoyed with the singers at the opera because they do not talk), the recalcitrant imagination inevitably causes a subjective distortion of the aesthetic experience. To illustrate effective contextual control of the imagination by relevance, let me give an example from poetry in which the perspective depends upon imaginal cohesion.

The line "Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask" may materialize into the image of a black silk mask that has softly fallen to the floor. But not within the context of the sonnet. The line to follow, "Of snow upon the mountains and the moors . . .," erases the irrelevant image so thoroughly that no permanent trace of it—that would be damaging to the aesthetic effect—remains. But the better to understand contextual control by relevance we must not assume that the image of the mask (in the literal sense of the word) is altogether irrelevant. Persistence of the wrong image, even after the context had forced the imagination to visualize a wintry landscape, would be a mark of subjective irrelevancy. But a momentary appearance would not be. For since Keats used the word "mask" as a metaphor, he intended a measure of interplay between the metaphorical and the literal meanings. More specifically, he intended certain connotations of the word to continue in operation so long as the wrong image itself did not survive along with them. The word "mask" connotes secrecy, and the connotation continues to be operative, contributing to the intended and therefore objective mood of mystery.

Compensatory contextual change—which preserves the same functional correlation of contents through the change in the latter—controls the beholder's experience with equally remarkable success. Context maintains the total aesthetic effect virtually invariant as it induces us to offset a change in one component by a change in another. Consider the effect of transcribing music in a different key. Although the pitch of each component tone has been changed, the transcribed piece remains recognizably the same composition. Perceptual adjustment to a change of scale in representation is another example. Even if momen-

tarily struck by the gigantic size of the figures on the screen, the spectator in a motion-picture theatre soon adapts himself to the new context of demonstration and follows the performance as if it were reduced to the normal scale of perception. Similarly with the change introduced by the imagination: Let one beholder fill out the framework of his aesthetic experience with an appearance,  $A_1$ , and suppose that another beholder imagines a different appearance,  $A_2$ ; both beholders may nevertheless share essentially the same aesthetic effects provided the change from  $A_1$  to  $A_2$  is contextually counteracted by a compensatory change in other constituents.

A mathematical function exemplifies contextual compensation outside of art. Let the function be  $y = 2x$ . As we assign, in turn, the values 2, 3, 4, etc., to the independent variable  $x$ , there is a compensatory change in the value of the dependent variable  $y$ , from 4 to 6, from 6 to 8, and so on. The result is a series of equations:  $4 = 2 \cdot 2$ ;  $6 = 2 \cdot 3$ ;  $8 = 2 \cdot 4$ , etc. These equations appear to be entirely different from one another. Yet the change from one equation to another leaves the function, the pattern of correlated numbers, invariant.

The mathematical analogue is instructive not so much because of the similarity to aesthetic compensation, but because by contrast it enables us to avoid a misinterpretation of the principle of contextual compensatory control in art. While in mathematics invariance of a functional pattern is accompanied by a change from one numerical equation to another, in art the very point of compensatory change is to have the outcome, the aesthetic effect, virtually the same for all competent beholders. We must keep in mind the contrast in order not to be tempted by the faulty suggestion that in art objectivity depends upon a definite relational pattern and has nothing to do with the specific quality of contents. The suggestion leads to the aesthetic fallacy of opposing form to content as if the two were detachable from each other. The truth is that the specific quality of the constituent sense data and images determines an aesthetic experience in co-operation with the pattern of their correlation. The principle of compensatory change in art is that the recog-

tion or identification of a work of art does not depend upon absolute qualities. To be fully understood the principle requires a differentiation between absolute and contextual qualities. A percept of an isolated or detached quality, i.e., of a quality unrelated to other qualities of the same kind within the field of perception, presents an absolute quality. For example, the absolute pitch that we hear when we strike a single note on the keyboard of the piano is an absolute tonal quality. The specific shade of blue which an observer lying on his back sees in the clear sky above his head is an absolute quality of hue. The corresponding contextual quality, on the other hand, is the different perceptual appearance into which the absolute quality is turned or transformed within the context of other qualities. The white of the eye that the spectator perceives in looking at a portrait exemplifies a contextual quality. For if the spectator should cover with a white screen the area of the portrait except for the small region where he saw the white of the portrayed eye, he would no longer perceive anything white but some shade of absolute blue or green. The artist never uses the white pigment to convey the impression of something white against the background of other colors on the canvas. The distinction between absolute and contextual qualities enables us to state the aesthetic principle of contextual compensation with greater precision as follows. The aesthetic effect remains essentially the same through the change of absolute qualities from one experience to another provided the corresponding contextual qualities continue to be virtually unchanged.

The principle of compensatory change, let me add, must be accepted with a reservation. As an absolute quality is allowed to vary, we cannot expect the corresponding contextual quality to remain altogether unchanged, even if the pattern of correlations continues to be the same. And the change in the contextual quality may reach a degree at which we should hesitate to identify the work of art; or, on occasion, we may even concede that an entirely new aesthetic effect has emerged. A translation of a poem into some foreign language may turn out to be a good poem, but it can never be the same poem as the original. In the

case of translation, however, more than a change of the absolute quality of sound is involved. To take a simpler example, consider a violin rendition of a piece written for the piano. The character of the piece is changed by the violin so pronouncedly that the hearer may wonder whether he is listening to the same piece. Nevertheless, contextual control is always a factor to be considered. And in many cases—for example, when we allow for the pianist's particular interpretation of a piece of music—the factor of contextual control enables us to recognize the same work of art in a variety of renditions. In such cases, let us admit, absolute quality is not altogether negligible. For example, although we should attribute greatness to Leporello's aria from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* regardless of the performance, the full effect of the piece may not be realized without the concurrence of the absolute qualities of timbre and flexible power of a voice such as Pinza's.

The context of perception outside of art is usually too involved to be grasped within a unified pattern that would counteract perceptual subjectivity. We have the evidence of the courtroom that discrepancy in the accounts by the witnesses of some such complex event as an automobile accident is inevitable. But even if the complexity of an ordinary event were reduced and made comparable to that of an aesthetic experience, perceptual subjectivity would still be much more prominent outside of art. The reason is that in ordinary perception the factors of subjective variability, the constituent sense qualities, and the factors of invariance and objectivity (the constituent perceptual relations) are generally independent of each other. Consider a simple illustration. Let the percept consist of three colored dots, one red and two green, placed from left to right in this order: first a green dot, next the red one, and last the second green dot. To designate the sequence the dots may be labeled, respectively, 1, 2, and 3. The percept exhibits two qualities, red and green, and one relation, the relation of betweenness. To show that the relation is independent of the qualities, we proceed to shuffle the dots. For example, we can move the red dot to the left of the two green dots. The new arrangement

gives to a normal eye a different qualitative effect although the set continues to exhibit a relation of betweenness. Now let each of two observers, one normal, the other color-blind, describe his own percept of the original arrangement. The first says: "There is a red spot between two green dots." The second disagrees: "There are just three green spots." Their disagreement proves that the quality of at least one percept is subjective. But the relation is objective and invariant since both observers agree that dot 2 is between dots 1 and 3. The same is true in the case of a qualitative distortion resulting from faulty imagination rather than physiological defect. In either case, the perceptible objective pattern does not make for an objective experience as a whole because constituent qualities can be varied from one experience to another, whereas constituent relations continue to be the same.

Nevertheless, even outside of art contextual control of an experience may not be negligible. The apprehension of the murderer C. H. Schwartz in California is a case in point. Even a photograph of Schwartz, with a bushy mustache, would not induce his acquaintance, Edmunds, to identify the criminal because Edmunds knew him as a close-shaven man. But the moment that a detective screened out with his hand the mustache in the picture, Edmunds was able to identify the murderer as his acquaintance. In this case recognition was contextually blocked; the removal of a feature of interference was sufficient to restore the familiar contextual control. As a matter of fact, some measure of dependence of qualities upon relations is likely to be present in an experience of any kind. Even in the experiment with the red dot moved over to the left of the two green dots, perception of a *Gestalt* may interfere with the recognition of the relation of betweenness. Instead of perceiving dot 1 between dots 2 and 3 we may observe an image of contrast: a single red dot on the left and a group of two green dots on the right. However, the interdependence between qualities and relations is distinctive or characteristic of aesthetic experience in the sense of being much more pronounced and significant than it is in nonaesthetic experience. Let me add, for the sake of se-

mantic or linguistic consistency, that any experience contains an element of the aesthetic to the extent that it exhibits some interdependence between constituent qualities and relations.

The fact that art promotes the maximum of co-operation between the qualitative and the relational aspects of experience has been expressed by aestheticians in a variety of phrases or formulations. "The logic of art," one of the familiar phrases, ~~intimates that constituents~~ within a work of art imply one another with the kind of deductive necessity that binds the conclusion of a syllogism to its premises. Another frequently used expression is "organic unity" or "unity in variety" in the work of art. But to recognize that such phrases are suggestive and apt is not to answer the critics who have denounced them as vague and pretentious figures of speech. A satisfactory answer requires a clear and precise restatement of the principle of contextual objectivity. The differentiation between absolute and contextual qualities enables me to formulate the required statement as follows: A particular work of art remains recognizably the same through a change of absolute qualities—whether the change depends upon a modification of physical stimuli or of perceptual and imaginative response to the latter—provided its contextual qualities are unchanged. To account for the invariance of contextual qualities, and consequently for their objectivity, let me point out that a contextual quality is a vector, i.e., that it combines the functions of a property and a relation.

A sensory or imaginal constituent of a work of art is to be entertained and enjoyed for its own sake and also as a way of leading to the appreciation of other constituents. The double function is the result of a co-operation between the explicit and the implicit factors that make up a constituent. Although it is explicitly a sensory or imaginal quality, a constituent implies a relation. This is to say that a contextual quality is a directed or oriented manifestation and therefore identifiable as a vector, something which bears upon, in the direction of, something else. An arrow indicates direction and therefore portrays a vector. Vectors, and their arrow representations, are familiar in physics. The employment of the same term in aesthetics depends upon

the close analogy between a vector of force within a physical field and an operative constituent within the field of aesthetic experience. Let me consider the analogy at some length.

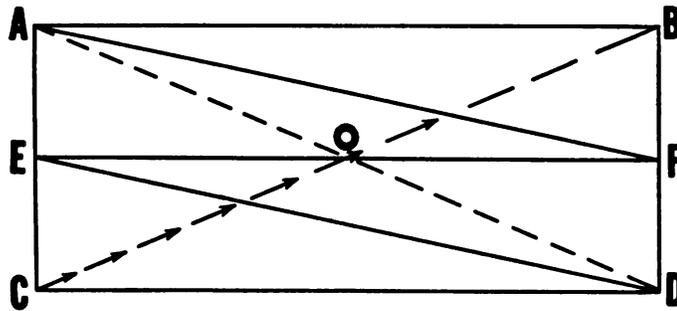
Subjection to push or pull is a personal experience of pressure applied from outside. An effort in moving objects is felt in the mode of tension directed outwards. So much for the experience of physical force. The analogy with the dynamics of art is clear. The bearing that sense data or images have upon one another in an aesthetic experience takes the form of a felt pressure or tension that forces the beholder's perception and imagination into a contextually prescribed course. Let a directed pressure or tension in art be identified as a tendency. Then the similarity between the physical vector of force and the aesthetic vector can be expressed by saying that both are perceivable or felt in the form of a tendency. In either case a tendency may appear with a variable power of compulsion. Accordingly, the same convention of representation by means of arrows, by an arrow-graph, can be agreed upon in an analysis of art as well as in physics. The length of the shaft of the arrow will represent the magnitude or intensity of a vector and the arrowhead the direction and sense of its orientation. The arrow representation brings out another point of similarity. An arrow in the void would point nowhere. This means that, in art and in physics alike, the context of a dynamic field is required to turn the implicit directedness of a vector into a definite direction within a particular pattern of tension. The point of analogy entitles us to treat an aesthetic experience as an aesthetic vector field.

The presence of a verifiable law of physics, upon which the composition of forces depends, makes for the objectivity of a vector field. For example, in statics the field of balanced forces is objective because it conforms to the law of the lever, the law that the forces vary inversely with the lengths of the lever arms. And, of course, every time children swing on the seesaw, the law of the lever can be verified. An aesthetic field of tension is similar. Therefore, an analysis of a work of art which discloses the presence of a definite law of vector composition is objective analysis, i.e., a demonstration of the objectivity of the field of

aesthetic experience. The existence of a law of pictorial balance to guide analysis of composition in the art of painting has been established. According to Miss Puffer, whose theory is summarized in H. S. Langfeld's work,<sup>3</sup> the law of pictorial balance happens to be an exact analogue to the law of physical balance. If we let the center of a picture play the part of the fulcrum, we find, in conformity with the law of the lever, that an image half the weight of another balances the latter when placed twice as far from the center. To verify the law we must know how to compare images with respect to weight. Miss Puffer's research has led her to the following conclusion. The relative weight of images, other conditions being equal, depends on six factors. The weight increases with (1) greater distance from the center, (2) suggested movement away from the center, (3) enhanced psychological interest, (4) larger size, (5) darker color, and (6) representation of depth. Let us observe that the use of the term "pictorial weight" is no more objectionable than the generally accepted use of the term "pictorial balance." It must be admitted that the connotation of a downward direction remains after the term "weight" has been transferred from the vocabulary of physics to that of aesthetics. But then there is a corresponding change in the use of the term "balance"; we say that physical balance keeps bodies from falling down while aesthetic balance keeps the composition from falling apart. If we should prefer terms that do not connote a downward direction, we can always replace the term "weight" by either "tendency" or "vector."

Let us see how the six factors of weight co-operate toward the balance of composition in Brueghel's *Winter*. Our concern is with the total balance, which depends upon the representation of depth, and not with the symmetry of pattern in the plane of the picture, to be considered later. To follow the analysis let us visualize the center of the picture, the point *O* in Figure 1, at the intersection between the last tree of the front row and the line which divides the painting into the upper and the lower halves, the line *EF* in Figure 1. The lower left quadrant, with the group of hunters and dogs, holds the principal psychologi-

cal interest. The weight of the group is further increased by the darkness of color that makes the figures stand out silhouette-like against the background of the snow. By contrast the upper right quadrant appears to be almost empty. To keep the two quadrants in balance there must be a powerful pull of weight toward the right side and into the depth. This pull is generated through the co-operation of several factors. The factor of movement is one of them. The hunters with their dogs are moving toward the



**Fig.1**

center, a movement that reduces the weight of the group. On the other hand, the crow that is strikingly conspicuous in its relative detachment from the other figures adds much weight to the nearly empty quadrant partly because the flight is away from the center. Another factor is size; the distant hills occupy a large expanse of the painting. But these two factors require the support of still another, which is far superior to either of them. This support is supplied by the factor of recession, which deserves our special attention because it is the main structural feature of the whole composition.

The effect of recession is primarily responsible for the balance between the lower left and the upper right quadrants of the picture. This effect is an outcome of the powerful thrust produced by the triangle reaching across the landscape toward the distant hills and resembling a gigantic arrowhead wedged into the depth. The triangle, to be referred to as the triangle T and not to be confused with any of the triangles represented in Figure 1, is identifiable as follows. The tree nearest the observer

is the base; the line which would connect the three most conspicuous crows is one of the converging sides; and the line that would run through the bases of the trees in the front row is the other. Once the triangle *T* is visualized, the decisive, dynamic effect of its thrust is evident. But the remarkable feature of the effect is that, since not all the contours are explicit, it depends upon the imaginative act of visualizing the outline. For we must not disregard the fact that the lines making up the shape of the triangle are, except for the base, implicit, i.e., not actually drawn on the canvas. The fact not only prompts us to count the presence of implicit lines as the seventh factor of weight—in addition to Miss Puffer's factors—but indicates that implicit data are especially significant for the dynamics of art.

The analysis could be easily continued to include the other two quadrants of the Brueghel. I shall restrict myself to two observations concerning the lower right quadrant. These will show that Miss Puffer's list is open to further additions. First, the illusion of circular movement, exemplified by the skaters on the frozen lake, adds to the weight of the image. Second, its location below the horizontal dividing line of the painting makes the image heavier.

In art other than painting we must resort to some test of contextual objectivity other than the balance of images. The recurrent effect of resolved tension or suspense is a test of particular significance. An example of the effect is given, in connection with a discussion of one of Blake's poems, "To the Muses," in §18 of Chapter Three. For the present a schema will serve to introduce the subject. Let the sequence of elements  $a \rightarrow b \rightarrow c \rightarrow d \rightarrow e$  represent the beholder's mounting tension of suspense, with the climax at  $d$  and the resolution at  $e$ , during his first experience of a certain work of art, *A*. Suppose that at some later time the beholder is exposed to the influence of *A* again. The question is, Can he experience again the same mounting tension of suspense with the subsequent resolution? One might think that the answer were No because, when repeated, the sequence of elements is no longer unexpected. Actually, the answer is Yes. A great work of art continues to surprise us over

and over again; repetition does not wear out either the suspense or the resolution of tension. But why should we not grow immune to surprise if we know what there is to come, i.e., if we anticipate the whole sequence of elements? The answer is that we deceive ourselves in thinking that we can anticipate the sequence. We expect the climax of tension with the element *d* and the resolution with the element *e*. But the *d* and *e* that we can expect are detached from the vectors (represented by the arrows of the schema) by which they are empowered within the context of an actual aesthetic experience. This is to say that in art suspense and resolution are contextual vector qualities. An attempt to anticipate them arrests them outside the dynamic field of their context. And if arrested, they cease to be dynamic contextual qualities; they are no longer the same. The fact that the dynamic effect recurs only within the objective framework of art means that an experience of such contextual recurrence is objective.

## 6. THE AESTHETIC EFFECT

A defense of the aesthetic postulate requires a digression into ontology because the contention that a work of art is both a particular and an experience raises an ontological difficulty. For since an experience is also a particular, and since particularity connotes instantiality (i.e., the numerical exclusiveness of a single instance, of *this* as opposed to *that*, however similar in character the two may be), no two particular, aesthetic experiences should be identified with the same work of art. If you and I count the same work of art as one, we cannot identify it with our experiences, which are two.

One way of dealing with the ontological difficulty is the class-theory of art proposed by S. C. Pepper.<sup>4</sup> As it happens, he reaches, in the process of elaboration and qualification, a position which is not far from the alternative to be discussed later. According to the class-theory, the aesthetic object is not a single percept—nor is it the material thing that may repeatedly stimulate perception—but the whole class or series of perceptions

associated with the material source of stimulation. For example, Brueghel's *Winter* may be said to consist of an intermittent series of visual perceptions, among which are listed some of the Flemish master's own perceptions as well as yours and mine, or of any other admirer of the picture. The theory is a complete solution of the ontological difficulty because the particularity of a collection cannot possibly conflict with the particularity of its members. Unfortunately the basis of the theory, the notion of a class, is not unobjectionable. The term "class" has been employed either, as in formal logic, to designate a certain kind of conceptual construction or else, as in ordinary discourse, to stand for an actual aggregate or heap of things. To understand the distinction in use compare the class of cats with the class of feline species. In the nontechnical sense of an aggregate there is only one class here, the actual conglomeration of all individual lions, tigers, leopards, and domestic cats, including my own pet cat, that exist. But there are also two conceptual constructions based on the same aggregate. One is the class consisting of individual cats; the other is the class consisting of feline species (not of individual animals), such as the species of lion. A conceptual construction is not a particular; therefore the term class as used in formal logic cannot be applied to a work of art. But class in the other sense, referring to an actual collection, is also objectionable because of its variable membership. I am looking now at Brueghel's *Winter*. Suppose I identify the picture with the intermittent series of perceptions up to, and including, my present percept. Should I say that the picture did not exist yesterday because the actual collection of perceptions yesterday, although correlated with the same canvas, did not include the percept of today and therefore was a different collection? Or, to ask a slightly different question, if tomorrow a newcomer detects in the painting something that no one else has been able to discern so far, should we conclude that the work of art, with centuries of appreciation behind it, can suddenly change in the space of a single day? Or shall we go one step further to contend that a work of art is something incomplete because the corresponding class of perceptions is always

open to new members? Whatever we say, if we cannot recognize a work of art as something definite, fixed, and complete, the aesthetic postulate is not satisfied.

The difficulty of the class-theory prompts an examination of the alternative solution, according to which particularity does not mean singularity of an instance. The contention to be considered is that a work of art is a particular essence—not a universal—which remains literally the same through the change of context that occurs when one particular experience is succeeded by another. The contention is based on Bertrand Russell's treatment of particulars.<sup>5</sup> Russell allows the same particular to be *this* and *that* and to exist both *now* and at another time. To mention his own illustration, if an exact replica of the Eiffel Tower were built in New York, there would be no two instances of the same architectural design, no two particular buildings, one in Paris, the other in New York; the same particular Eiffel Tower would be present in both places. The particular, in this case, is a bundle of specific qualities, but a single, specific sense quality might serve as an illustration just as well. Take, for example, a specific shade of green. Many philosophers would let the same shade be recognizable here and there, now and then, and they would call the recurrent shade a particular universal; but they would not admit that the particular universal were a particular because they would contend that recurrence implied the existence of numerically distinct instances. But what does the existence of distinct instances mean? If there are distinct instances, they would answer, each instance occupies an exclusive region of space and time. Russell accepts the answer, and rejects the existence of distinct instances because he rejects the notion that they literally occupy an exclusive region of space and time. Such occupation, if interpreted literally, would require space and time to be some kind of a medium or receptacle. Russell, on the contrary, proposes an adjectival theory of space and time. Occupation of an exclusive region means, in terms of the adjectival theory, that the specific sense quality, or bundle of qualities, concerned appears in conjunction with a single spatio-temporal quality. Similarly, in dealing with recurrence,

Russell points out that to say that some definite shade of green recurs does not involve specification of places or dates, but refers to appearance within a variety of contexts, or bundles, of perceptual qualities, each context having a different spatial or temporal constituent quality.

I shall not follow Russell further, except to say that I am not unreservedly committed to his theory of particulars. As a matter of fact, I believe, on the grounds of my understanding of the theory of relativity, that physical space-time is a medium or receptacle of a kind in which there are particular instances of universal qualities. But I am prepared to differentiate between two kinds of particulars and to argue that works of art, unlike things of nature, are particular essences in Russell's sense because they are independent of natural space and time, or physical space-time, and therefore are not tied up with instantiality. The fact that the identification of a work of art does not require registration of places or dates will be readily admitted; you do not look at your watch or at the house number as you are about to undergo an aesthetic experience. I may be reminded that the aesthetic effect occupies a definite duration of ordinary time and takes place in natural space, and I agree that from the point of view of an outsider, which is also the beholder's viewpoint before or after the experience, the observation is correct. But as it unfolds, the aesthetic process is, to a beholder, completely dislocated from the context of history and geography. The dislocation is complete not because the aesthetic effect is timeless or beyond space, but because the structure of space-time in art is not isomorphic with, but different in kind from, that of natural space and time. Each work of art carries its own space and time that cannot be assigned to any place or date in nature. This statement will be substantiated in Chapter Two, §14, and Chapter Three, §18; for the present I am prepared to argue that reference to space and time is irrelevant to the identification of a work of art on a more superficial level of linguistic, or semantic, analysis. I shall proceed to show that the word "identity" acquires a meaning, in application to art, which, though in a measure akin to recurrent identity in logic or mathematics, is

radically different from all other identities—exemplified by the identity of an event or continuant or sense quality—because the latter, unlike the former, involve spatial or temporal reference.

The identity of an event depends upon its occurrence at a certain place and date. The identity of a continuant, a thing, a plant, or an animal, depends upon the occupation of a continuous interval of time either at the same place or through continuous movement from place to place; this kind of identity is biographical. And the identity of a determinate sense quality (for example, of a specific shade of blue) can be defined by means of perceptual indistinguishability from a standard sense datum at a definite place and time. Consider, on the other hand, the identity of the proposition that two plus two is four. The equation may flash in the mind faster than the click of a camera, or else, as in the labor of counting by a child, linger through a protracted stretch of time. Also the fact that, in each case, the entertainment of the equation can be dated is of no consequence to its identification. The reader happens to entertain the equation now, but he knows that he has grasped the same truth on many previous occasions. Nor does identification depend upon the objects with which the proposition may be accidentally associated. We all assert the same proposition when we agree that two and two are four even if one of us associates his assertion with the image of two pairs of apples brought together while another uses the image of nuts.

Let us not be tempted, however, to identify the ontological status of a work of art with that of a proposition. For, as we have just seen, a proposition must be grasped and identified not only independently of spatial and temporal specification but in abstraction from sense data and imagery, whereas the aesthetic effect, as experienced by a beholder, is inextricably entangled in a display of sensory and imaginal contents. A proposition is an abstract universal, to be contrasted with the aesthetic effect, which is a particular, i.e., a concrete, specific, and dynamic agency. To oppose the particularity of a work of art not only to an abstract universal but to specific sense qualities, one must

emphasize that the aesthetic experience is dynamic. Even a universal essence, in Santayana's sense of a complex and specific sense datum, is a passive appearance, an object of the percipient's intuition, and a timeless entity. A particular work of art, on the contrary, generates, in transaction with the beholder, a distinctive structure of space and time. An aesthetic experience is an aesthetic process. And to control the course of the process the medium of space and time in art must be active. The field of an aesthetic experience is alive with tension and stresses.

So much for the differentiation between a universal, on the one hand, and a particular aesthetic experience, on the other. If I am asked to account for the particularity of a work of art outside of experience (i.e., during the time when no one happens to be engaged in a relevant experience), I can do no better than to refer again to the dynamic field of vectors, for I know of no simpler hypothesis. To say that the existence of a work of art is intermittent, that the work of art exists only at the time when someone perceives the aesthetic effect, is to resign ourselves to the complexity of the class-theory of art. Why not instead take advantage of the analogy with the physical vector field, which the physicist assumes to exist in a state of potentiality even when no test body that would explore the pattern of forces is available? In the analogy which I suggest an unobserved, particular work of art is a field of tension in a state of potentiality. According to this suggestion, the physical object produced by the artist generates a field of potentiality to be actualized, or felt, by means of the beholder's sensibility and imagination, in each and every relevant experience. And the fact that an exact duplicate of the physical source would generate the same aesthetic field of potentiality demonstrates that the particularity of the aesthetic effect is independent not only of a particular experience and a particular physical source but also of any place and date which the latter may happen to have.

One may object that the conception of an aesthetic effect in the state of potentiality is not at all what Russell intended in his treatment of particulars. For, one may argue, since the

aesthetic effect within a relevant experience is assumed to be literally identical with the unobserved effects from the same physical source, the sensory and imaginal contents of the observed effect, the aspect of actuality, must be equally indispensable to the unobserved effects. This argument, even if it be Russell's own, is fallacious. To see the fallacy, consider the aesthetic effect *E*, which is the same today in your percept *P*<sub>1</sub>, and tomorrow in your percept *P*<sub>2</sub>. Today *E* is actualized in *P*<sub>1</sub> but not yet in *P*<sub>2</sub>. Therefore *E*, today, cannot be actual in *P*<sub>2</sub>, and since by hypothesis *E* is literally the same in *P*<sub>2</sub> and in *P*<sub>1</sub>, it cannot be actual in *P*<sub>1</sub> either. Therefore *E*, the aesthetic effect, has the status of potentiality. The conclusion may be repugnant to a reader who has the linguistic habit of saying that an actualized potentiality is no longer potentiality but actuality. I think he had better revise his idiom. A disposition to be actualized in experience is not suspended but continues to be operative throughout the period of experience. While I am preoccupied with Brueghel's painting, the aesthetic effect appears in the form of an actual percept; but any onlooker about to join me in contemplation demonstrates that the actuality of my percept does not rule out the potentiality to be perceived by him. Nor does the state of potentiality make the part played in art by sensory and imaginal contents any less important. The most that can be said is that when no one is engaged in the aesthetic process, while the work of art is in the state of being unobserved, sensations and images are not yet apparent; and this is not to deny that sensations and images are observable. The point is that the aesthetic effect always exists for the sake of experience. And if (for example, with the extinction of the human race) the condition for actualization in experience were removed altogether, works of art would no longer exist, not even in the mode of pure disposition. As to the relevant sensory and imaginal contents of an actual aesthetic experience, we can only reassert that they are indispensable. And, to the same degree, some physical source of sensory and imaginal manifestations, whether an external thing or process or the beholder's own body, is also indispensable.

The hypothesis of the aesthetic effect in a state of potentiality explains, better than any alternative account, the fact that even relevant aesthetic experience varies from one beholder to another or, with the same person, from time to time. The explanation is that, in each case of variation, the measure or degree of actualization through discerned sense data and images is not the same, and yet, even when actualization is incomplete, the corresponding experience is relevant so long as nothing is imputed to the work of art that is not potentially there. The growth of critical appreciation is similar. When, either guided by an expert or through my own effort at analysis, I manage to discern excellence in some relevant detail of a masterpiece, I do not doubt that the feature has been there all the time although (in relation to myself and up to the moment of discernment) in the mode of potentiality. By comparison with the hypothesis of potentiality the class-theory is at a disadvantage not because it restricts the variety of aesthetic experience but because it is too liberal. Unless the theory is further qualified (and such additional qualification would be difficult to defend against the charge of arbitrary definition), a collection of percepts corresponding to a particular work of art is liable to contain, in addition to relevant aesthetic experiences, other experiences that any competent judge would discount as inadequate, irregular, and subjective.

If the reader is prejudiced against metaphysics and wishes to weigh the hypothesis of potentiality in art against the class-theory, let him consider these alternatives as exemplifying the respective advantages and defects of two basic types of theoretical interpretation, the procedure of reifying, on the one hand, and the procedure of composition, on the other. To clarify the logic of the two procedures, let us leave the unexplored grounds of aesthetics to take up a familiar illustration, the definition of a point, in the field of geometry. We find Euclid's reification, a point as a single and elementary entity without parts or dimensions, opposed by Whitehead's composition, a point as an infinite and complex class defined by means of "equivalent" series of volumes. Euclid's definition has been criti-

cized because it appears to be unempirical. As Whitehead points out, there is nothing in nature, however small in appearance, that would not turn out to be, upon closer examination, a divisible volume with discernible parts. In his own definition Whitehead dispenses with inferred or unobservable entities altogether; he defines a point in terms of observable volumes, as in a Chinese nest of boxes, with the aid of the purely formal concepts of class and infinity. Yet Whitehead's need not be the last word. We can favor Euclid to the extent of observing that Whitehead's conception of a point as an infinite class of infinite series of volumes requires simplification in order to be theoretically manageable, not to speak of the difficulty of applying such a conception in the fields of engineering, architecture, and astronomy. Whitehead himself resorts to simplification when he tells us to disregard everything in the composition of points except what he calls the converging tails of the corresponding series. And as we follow his prescription we are, in effect, on the road of perceptual approximation to what would be a reified, extensionless point.

Even if we agree with Whitehead that an entity with no counterpart in experience is without justification, we need not conclude that all reification is objectionable. And a simple experiment may convince the reader that Euclid's notion has a counterpart in perception if not in nature. Let the reader take a good look at a corner of this page. If he does not perceive an exact picture of a Euclidean point, at least he is unable to discern there, at the corner, a definite length, width, or depth. Granted that there is nothing in nature like the reader's percept, approximation in perception should suffice to justify the inferring of an extensionless point. We may generalize to formulate the principle of legitimate reification. Reification is legitimate if, and only if, there are successive, observable approximations which, under favorable circumstances, approach an exact exemplification of the inferred entity so closely as to be perceptually indistinguishable from the latter. Adherence to naïve realism has been generally responsible for the failure to recognize the principle. The moment we realize that the notion of a material

thing is itself a reification that stabilizes, within the human perspective, an inherently plastic world, the uncompromising opposition to reification appears to be pointless.

The moral to be drawn from the disagreement about the definition of geometrical points is clear. Composition is preferable to unempirical reification, but a procedure in accordance with the principle of legitimate reification has the decisive advantage of theoretical simplicity. Let us apply the moral to the issue in aesthetics. We have already established that the class-theory of art suffers from an excess of complexity that makes identification of particular works of art questionable. And we can easily understand that in practice identification would mean restriction of class-membership to aesthetically relevant percepts on the basis of a standard of relevance that is unmistakably akin to a reified aesthetic essence. On the other hand, the hypothesis of a particular work of art in the mode of potentiality is frankly a reification. But the recurrence, under favorable circumstances, of the same aesthetic effect with a variable degree of actualization in experience makes our reification legitimate. For we may arrange the series of relevant aesthetic experiences in the order of successive approximation to what would be, under favorable circumstances, complete actualization. Let us be on guard, however, as we acknowledge the superiority of the hypothesis of potentiality, not to lose sight of the advantage of expository simplicity by turning the phrase "under favorable circumstances" into a license for unlimited qualifications and exceptions.

#### 7. THE MASTERPIECE

The convention of confining the study of art to masterpieces has the advantage of theoretical simplicity because it reduces the number of reservations needed to qualify the statement that the aesthetic effect is actualizable through successive approximation in experience. The convention does not mean that nothing short of a masterpiece deserves to be called art. We simply disregard lesser works of art. And we can further justify our

disregard by adding the observation that to be fully understood and appreciated art must be taken at its best.

The reason why the proposed convention simplifies the matter is clear. A masterpiece is a masterful creation. This means that a masterpiece can control the beholder's experience better than an inferior work of art. The artist is the master provided his work compels the beholder's perception and imagination to follow an antecedently prescribed course. By contrast inferior art may be said to be no more than a source of stimulation for the exercise of the beholder's own imagination. At its greatest the contrast is between entertainment, on the one hand, and great art, on the other. And the mark of entertainment is the subjectivity of the beholder's imaginative response. An instrument of entertainment, exemplified by the regular run of detective stories or motion pictures, is a bare framework for an experience to be filled out from the private resources of the reader's imagination. The nature of the contrast gives the reason why art is superior to entertainment. The reason is not the amount of satisfaction—the sense of importance that we derive at a display of our own imagination in the medium of entertainment may be a great pleasure—but the understanding that our imagination is no match for that of a great artist. The moment we yield to a masterpiece we raise the imaginative level of our experience. We are ready to renounce our private contributions and follow the leadership of a Shakespeare or Beethoven because the superior power and quality of their imagination is intuitively evident. With the opportunity to enrich experience with the aid of a masterpiece there is no point to indulging in a subjective departure from the intended, communicable aesthetic effect.

Let me continue with the opposition between entertainment and great art. Entertainment shares with ordinary life the indefinite course of experience, i.e., indeterminacy, vagueness, and blurredness of presentation. And entertainment emulates ordinary life, although in its own manner, by managing to conceal the fault of perceptual indefiniteness behind a preoccupation with overt action or movement. The principle of concealment

is that with the increased amount or speed of the exhibited activity the percipient's attention is distracted from the corresponding loss of definiteness in perceptible qualities and outline. Accordingly a work of entertainment relies for its effect upon fast-moving scenes and offers only a minimum of specification and precision. In order to compensate for meagerness of characterization and description, a writer of detective fiction crams his "thriller" with violent and speedy developments—the greater the number and the more gruesome the murders, the better—and works for an effect of suspense. The deception works only once, however. When we already know what to expect, we are in a position to pay closer attention to the details of the presentation. But the manner of presentation in a work of entertainment would not stand scrutiny. Therefore we do not ask for a repeated performance. We do not read the same detective story twice. Even if we take a different book, we are likely to read it with a disturbing sense of familiarity—a sense that we have already read something like it—because the limited variety of the patterns of suspense rules out the possibility of a startlingly novel development. Lack of originality is at the root of entertainment.

Let us not misunderstand. I am not saying that suspense is not used in great art. The point is simply that in art, as I have already explained, entertainment is of a different type because the experience of contextual suspense does not depend upon the accident of an utterly unexpected turn of events and therefore does not wear out with repetition. And the recurrence of our interest in the contents of a work of art is conditioned by their contextual specificity and particularity. For example, although the prospect of seeing something green is hardly exciting, the urge to see again the specific greyed green that pervades the landscape of Brueghel's *Winter* may be very intense. Contextual specificity marks off objective art because it protects the aesthetic experience from subjective importation where specifiable but not specific appearances would fail to do so. For example, the determinate shade of blue in a landscape but not the determinable color in nature resists the percipient's temptation

to perceive a distant hill as if it were green because of the green vegetation that one would naturally imagine to grow there.

Specificity of presentation is, of course, not sufficient to distinguish a masterpiece from inferior art. Furthermore, we must face the fact that the degree of excellence varies from one work of art to another, so that there are intermediate and borderline cases between art at its best and a failure. To persevere with the determination to base our aesthetics exclusively on the evidence of great art we may disregard doubtful examples and consider nothing but works of objectively unquestionable excellence. But then we must know how to tell when a work of art is an indubitable masterpiece. Suppose we say that continuous recognition through the ages by the majority of expert opinion singles out masterpieces from doubtful art. Is our statement circular? Can we define expert opinion by other means than the critic's ability to tell a masterpiece when he sees one? I admit circularity. But I want to point out that circularity, contrary to a common misconception, need not be vicious. A procedure of legitimate circularity is known in physics under the name of the method of successive approximation. And I think that a similar procedure enables us to define or identify a masterpiece.

The better to understand the logic of legitimate circularity let us take advantage of two explanations, each by an authority in the philosophy of physics. V. F. Lenzen explains the matter as follows:

We first define a quantity, that is we describe a method of assigning a number to a property, upon the assumption that conditions as estimated qualitatively are invariable. Then we discover laws correlating the physical quantity and qualities. These laws then enable us to define quantitatively to the first approximation the conditions under which the quantity is defined to the second approximation. . . . We may define the length of a body as the number obtained by an operation with a standard rod whose qualitative temperature is that of ordinary conditions on the earth. One then discovers a correlation between the length of a rod and its hotness or coldness. We may then define a scale of temperature in terms of the variations in length of some standard rod. This enables us to define quantitatively the con-

ditions of temperature under which the standard of length is defined to the second approximation.<sup>6</sup>

According to this passage, circularity, the successive definitions of length by means of temperature and temperature by means of length, leads to an increasingly greater precision of specification. Russell, in his explanation, emphasizes the function of a law of correlation.

Scientific ways of estimating distance use these [three common-sense] ways as their foundation, but correct them by means of physical laws inferred by assuming them. The whole process is one of tinkering. If common-sense estimates of distances and sizes are roughly correct, then certain physical laws are roughly correct. If these laws are quite correct, the common-sense estimates must be slightly amended.<sup>7</sup> ["Tinkering" is Russell's word for circularity.]

The logic of legitimate circularity in the process of identifying or defining a masterpiece is similar. We begin with a list of generally recognized classics of art. We have, to mention only a few titles, *Oedipus the King*, the *Venus of Milo*, Dante's *Inferno*, *Don Quixote*, the Sistine frescoes, *Macbeth*, *Faust*, Beethoven's Third Symphony, the *Firebird*. Selections from these can be offered to a prospective art critic to test his acumen. Such tests enable us to establish general correlations between the frequency of successful criticism and the qualifications of the critics. For example, we find the frequency of success increased when the critic is unusually sensitive, open-minded, appreciative, interested in the work under examination, and familiar with the technique and conventions of the given art. General correlations are subsequently refined and enlarged, on the basis of the theory of aesthetics, to form the more exact rules of art criticism. One such rule may be, in fact, derived from the next section to require the critic to understand the difference, and to know how to differentiate, between the aesthetic effect, on the one hand, and the aesthetic antecedents and aftereffects, on the other. With the aid of such rules or laws we can narrow down our panel of judges to eliminate critics who do not conform to these rules or laws in their prac-

tice of art criticism. The new judges form a group of super-arbiters who decide on the classics to be retained from the original list as well as on additions from modern art. The new selection provides more exacting standards for testing critical ability and competence. The process leads to art criticism of progressively higher orders. And a work of art that has survived through all the successive stages of the process is unquestionably a masterpiece.

#### 8. THE AESTHETIC AFTEREFFECT AND THE INTENT OF THE ARTIST

The distinction between the aesthetic effect and aftereffect is analogous to the familiar contrast between a percept and an afterimage. If you look directly at a lighted electric bulb and then close your eyes, the original image of the yellow light is replaced by an afterimage of the complementary color, blue. The point of the comparison is not that aesthetic experience must be followed by a complementary correlate—although, if Aristotle is right, catharsis is an inevitable, complementary relief that replaces aesthetic tension—but that the existence of an invariable association between a work of art and a subsequent psychological manifestation, even if the invariable association is a causal connection, does not mean that they are identical. To confuse the aesthetic effect with the aesthetic aftereffect is like confusing an image with an afterimage. Yet in the case of art confusion is prevalent. Prominent mathematicians believe mathematics to be akin to art, if not one of the arts, because their elation at a “beautiful” solution of an intricate problem is like the beholder’s thrill in the wake of an aesthetic experience. Nor is confusion confined to the ranks of mathematicians. Tolstoy confuses the aesthetic effect with the aftereffect when he argues that unless morally uplifting the artist’s work is not good art. The converse of Tolstoy’s contention, the belief that art must be amoral, is a confusion of the same kind. To expose confusion in each of the two converse contentions let me point out that no contents whatsoever, moral, amoral, or otherwise,

are excluded from art provided they are relevant to other constituents within the context of an aesthetic effect. In particular, political or social propaganda and art are not incompatible. If an example of their compatibility is in order, let me mention *The Possessed*, by Dostoevski. And let me add that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* might have been well written.

The artist's own statement of intent sometimes helps the beholder or critic to disentangle the aesthetic effect from the complex of psychological aftereffects or antecedents, but such a statement is sometimes misleading. For the intent of the artist is to be counted as one of the antecedents to the aesthetic effect. And, unless preserved within the work of art as one of the objective constituents (i.e., unless discernible by beholders without the benefit of the author's coaching), an antecedent is no more relevant to the actual work of art than an aftereffect. The antecedent intent of the artist which is not communicable through his accomplishment is just as irrelevant as the antecedent intention to make money by selling the work of art upon its completion. This is not in disagreement with the common opinion that there is no better way of understanding art than by following the artist. For to follow the artist is to analyze his work for what it is rather than to accept uncritically his statement of intent. It is often the case, however, that the artist is better at his art than at analyzing or interpreting it. We can take the composer's word for it when he tells us that the idea of Fate knocking at the door inspired the writing of the Fifth Symphony. But an analysis in which the inspiring idea is regarded as a formal element of the composition, even if the analysis is Beethoven's own, is faulty because the total tonal effect of the piece would be the same not only if the idea of Fate but if any visual image or literary subject were to vanish from human experience without leaving a trace. To protest that association with visual images or literary ideas may enrich or enhance the effect of music would be wrong even if it were not to disregard the aesthetic postulate. For if there were anything to the protest at all, composers would be preoccupied with writing nothing but program music. The truth is that music,

like any of the major arts, is, at its best, sufficiently complex to require the beholder's undivided attention. If the composition is a masterpiece, association with extramusical contents is, necessarily, a distraction that impoverishes and weakens the aesthetic effect.

Neither the artist's word nor the critic's judgment is to be accepted blindly but must be confronted with the direct evidence of aesthetic experience. For a work of art, unless incomplete and therefore inferior, speaks for itself. Accordingly, analysis and criticism of art are acceptable or helpful only if verifiable. Verification may be easy and beyond dispute when it is a matter of sensory inspection. The beholder's perception is directed to a particular feature within the aesthetic effect, and his discernment and recognition of the feature are its verification. For example, we verify beyond dispute that each group of apostles in Leonardo's *The Last Supper* has the shape of a triangle by simply looking at the picture. But verification is not so simple when it is a matter of differentiation between the aesthetic effect, on the one hand, and the aesthetic antecedents or aftereffects, on the other. In this matter verification may require the aid of an imaginative experiment. Suppose, for example, that you are told that the image or idea which you associate with a certain work of art is an aesthetic aftereffect. To make up your mind whether to agree or not, you should try to imagine the questionable image or idea removed and then observe whether the removal causes the work of art to disintegrate or fall apart. If the integrity of the aesthetic effect is preserved, if the vectors within the field of aesthetic experience continue to be interlocked in a recognizable pattern, the removed content belongs to the aesthetic aftereffect. Considerable effort of the imagination, and repetition of the experiment, may be needed for the beholder to determine with confidence what belongs and what does not belong to the work of art. But the psychological difficulty of establishing it is not evidence against the existence of a discernible difference between the aesthetic effect, on the one hand, and the aesthetic antecedents and aftereffects, on the other. Perhaps, in inferior

art the difference is blurred. But in a concern with masterpieces internal integration of the elements of an aesthetic effect is an observable fact of their mutual dynamic relevance. And once observed, in the mode of a definite pattern of tension within the field of experience, the fact is incontrovertible. This is not to say that to arrive at an incontrovertible judgment of aesthetic relevance—and the differentiation between the aesthetic effect and an antecedent or aftereffect is a species of such judgment—is to convince others. Each beholder must judge for himself. But vector analysis, a subject to be introduced in the next chapter, may turn out, upon further refinement and development, to be a major tool for demonstrating to the uninitiated the correctness of an aesthetic insight.

## T W O

### *The Aesthetic Vector Field*

#### 9. THE AESTHETIC ATTITUDE

In contemporary literature aesthetics has been defined as the study of the field of the beholder's disinterested attitude, of contemplation and discernment of objects for their own sake with complete disregard for any practical consideration. To accept such a definition is to commit oneself to aesthetics in the broad sense of the term, for an attitude of appreciative contemplation which is detached from practical concern can be taken not only toward a work of art but toward many other things as well, for example, in the presence of an attractive appearance or sight in nature. But even if we are asked to consider the proposed definition on its own merits, outside the question of preferable terminological conventions, we arrive at an unfavorable conclusion. Not that there is no element of truth in the current references to the "aesthetic attitude," but the phrase is misleading and vague. And to disengage the element of truth that it contains, we need both reinterpretation and correction.

There is no doubt that the aesthetic effect would not take place if it were not for the beholder's disposition to engage in an experience of appreciative contemplation of the work of art for its own sake. And if the disposition is to be identified with the aesthetic attitude, there is no denial that the attitude is a prerequisite for aesthetic experience. But prerequisites must be classified with other preliminaries. And preliminaries, under the name of aesthetic antecedents, have already been removed from the theory of the aesthetic effect. To define aesthetic experience in terms of the aesthetic attitude, on the other hand, is not only to countermand the removal but to treat the aesthetic effect as the function of the attitude. The treatment promotes an objectionable ontological scheme. Ac-

According to the scheme, there are the beholder, on the one hand, and the physical carrier of art, on the other, confronting each other as two independent agencies. This is to say that if the beholder does not assume and maintain the aesthetic attitude, the physical carrier continues to remain in the state of a neutral material thing. But the mere trick of assuming the aesthetic attitude is supposed to turn the neutral object into a work of art. What is wrong with this scheme of subject-object dualism? It is perverse. If the scheme were true and if the physical object of art were altogether neutral, the beholder would be able to transform any physical object whatsoever into a work of art by turning upon it the heat of his contemplative interest and concentration. According to the scheme, the work of art interests us not because it is inherently or intrinsically interesting but for the simple reason that we take an attitude of interest toward it. The truth is, however, that we would not persevere with the aesthetic attitude were it not for the power with which the work of art has been charged by the artist to attract and hold our attention. If it were not for the objective appeal of art, we should shrink from the considerable effort which the maintenance of aesthetic contemplation requires on our part. The aesthetic effect alone can account for the beholder's preoccupation with it. To take it the other way around is to put the cart before the horse.

Let me strengthen the criticism on the grounds of semantics. The term "disinterested" has been generally understood to mean, among other things, the percipient's self-forgetfulness. Accordingly, aesthetic experience has been described as a selfless state, i.e., one in which the subject and the object of contemplation are no longer distinguishable, a loss of the percipient in the percept. The term "attitude," on the other hand, connotes a reference to the self, i.e., to the person who assumes or takes the attitude. But we cannot have both. We must choose between a notion of the aesthetic attitude that would relate the object of contemplation to the subject and the conception of an impersonal experience of the aesthetic effect, with no subject to be related to. The identification of an aesthetic experience with

a selfless state appears to me to be essentially correct. Hence I must reject the subject-object dualism which is usually assumed in the phrase "aesthetic attitude."

To reject the subject-object dualism is not to deny that the beholder continues to exist as a particular person throughout the period of his aesthetic experience. The point is merely that he ceases to be aware of himself or, at least, that self-awareness is not contextually relevant to the aesthetic experience. Again I do not wish to deny that an aesthetic experience takes place within the perspectival frame of natural space and time with the percipient self necessarily present at the observational standpoint. For example, I know that in order to let a picture exercise its aesthetic effect on me I must begin, at a definite time of the day, by looking at the canvas on the wall, which is at a definite distance from me. As the statement of the example shows, a repeated reference to the beholder, to myself, is indispensable. But my contention is that with the aesthetic effect already engaged and under way, the perspectival frame of nature and the observational standpoint are no more relevant to the aesthetic experience than the frame of a painting is to the percept of the picture. In the case of sculpture the independence of the aesthetic effect from the beholder's position in space and time, and therefore from reference to the beholder's self, is evident for the simple reason that there is no such thing as a single position. The spectator walks around the statue to perceive it from all sides, and therefore moves from one position to another. The resultant aesthetic effect is not the corresponding sequence of partial views but an imaginative synthesis of these into an integral, dynamic whole which no longer depends upon any perspectival standpoint. Sculpture, of course, is no exception. Pictures are perceived in pictorial space. And—if the considerations of §14, in Chapter Two, are generally correct—the four-dimensional dynamic structure of pictorial space is altogether different from any perspective correlated with a percipient standpoint in ordinary three-dimensional space. Similarly with time. We shall find in Chapter Three that all the arts—not only the so-called temporal arts—are subject to the aesthetic

process and that the aesthetic process institutes an experience of time in which, in contrast with natural time, there is no provision for such personal manifestations as the assumption or change of attitudes.

In deference to the well-established usage I shall continue to speak of the change in attitude, from the practical and self-centered through intermediate stages to the aesthetic or disinterested. But the customary manner of speech is not to be understood literally. The change under consideration is actually from one objective type of experience to another. I call an experience objective if it is identifiable with a dynamic structure or pattern which is public, i.e., accessible to every normal human being. The leading hypothesis—to be developed in the course of this chapter—is that dynamic structure depends upon the distribution of vectors or tension within the field of experience. According to the hypothesis, each basic pattern of experience corresponds to a different field of tension. For example, the pattern of vector distribution, i.e., the field of tension or stress, of an aesthetic experience distinguishes the latter from any type of experience outside of art. The differentiation between aesthetic space and time, on the one hand, and space and time in nature, on the other (a differentiation which rules out personal reference in art) is one aspect of the contrast between the vector field of aesthetic experience and the vector fields of other types. Our hypothesis enables us to make use of arrow-graphs. Different vector fields of experience are represented by different patterns of arrows on a graph. For example, Figure 2 is intended to be the arrow-graph of the basic field of experience (to be called the egocentric vector field) outside of art. Figure 3 is the arrow-graph to be correlated with the aesthetic field. The major difference between the two fields—the reference to the self of a nonaesthetic experience as opposed to the selfless state of art appreciation—can be read off the two graphs with the minimum of interpretation.

A comparison between figures 2 and 3 would show at once the distinctive distribution of arrows in the former. The arrows are distributed along two directions, the inward and the out-

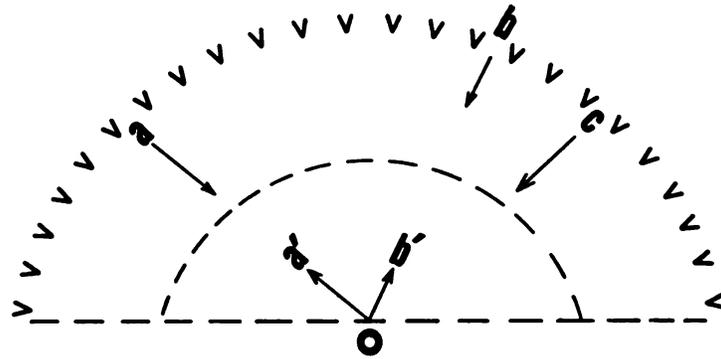


Fig. 2

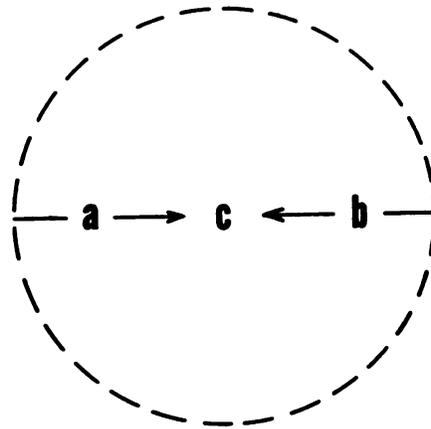


Fig. 3

ward, one radially converging upon, the other radiating away from, the percipient standpoint at  $O$ . The duality of direction implies the reference to the percipient self because the duality represents the dynamic or vectorial opposition between self-awareness, on the one hand, and the experience of the external world, on the other. According to this interpretation, the differentiation between the self and the external world takes place within, and is a function of, a single type of experience, the egocentric type. Consequently, a transition from one type of experience to another—in particular, from the nonaesthetic to the

aesthetic—cannot be treated as a function of the self, at any rate, not of the self as known through experience. And this is another way of saying that “the change of attitude” must not connote or mean the change of personal attitude.

An arrow-graph is not, however, a map of an experience. Its limitations are the limitations of an explicit visual datum. An arrow-graph is adapted to represent the experience of visual art, for example, of painting, but not the experience of tonal sequences in music. For this reason the present chapter is confined, both in theory and in the choice of examples, to the art of painting. But the restriction is a matter of expediency only. We must not be misled to conclude that vector analysis has no place in other arts. Even more misleading is the fact that an arrow-graph is an explicit drawing. Let us examine the matter.

To say that an arrow-graph is an explicit visual datum is to say that the pattern of arrows is actually drawn in such a way that nothing is left to the imagination. And this means that for the purpose of representation or portrayal an arrow-graph is overexplicit. For in a field of tension many vectors are not embedded in explicit sense data, such as colors or shapes, but are experienced as if they were tying the latter together, i.e., as factors of integration. In aesthetic experience vectors that appear unattached to any explicit manifestation take the leading part. To let an explicit drawing of an arrow portray such an unattached or latent factor is to distort. The distortion is in the nature of a deadening of the effect of the original; we may call it “anesthetizing distortion.” The point is that an explicit and specific sense datum has no life or movement to it because it is fully exploited and stabilized. And a field of sense presentation would be lifeless and static if it were not for the operation of factors that are not localized within the boundaries of explicit lines. Unquestionably, latent or implicit factors are the dynamic agencies of art. In the analysis or criticism of art, as well as in the present general account of the nature of aesthetic experience, arrow-graphs help, but only if we correct for the inevitable anesthetizing distortion.

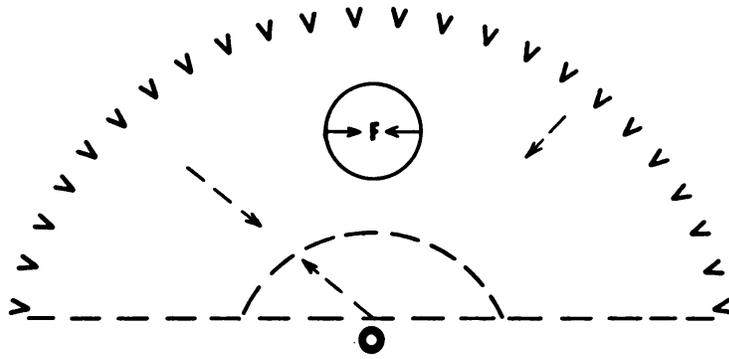
## 10. EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT FACTORS

A sense datum is an explicit manifestation of perceptual actuality. Let me add, as a matter of linguistic convention, that there are degrees of actuality, and that a sense datum will be said to be fully actual when it is not only explicit but completely specific or determinate. A glance at a precious stone, for example, may show that it is green, but it may take more attention to see the color specifically as emerald green. The earlier sense datum, a perception of a determinate green, is different from the later percept of a determinate shade of green.

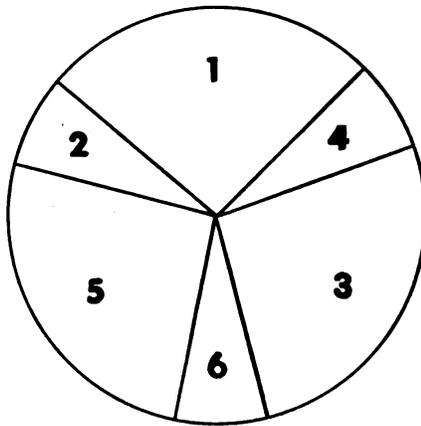
To introduce the distinction between explicit and implicit data, i.e., between sense data and other factors within the field of perception, let me make use of Figure 4. Compare the two appearances of the letter A. The contour of the letter on the left side of the figure is fully actualized; it is both specific and explicit. The shape on the right is also a specific A; but five out of the twelve segments that complete the outline are not explicitly drawn. We may say that we do not see, although we feel, five invisible lines; and, of course, we cannot see explicitly a line that does not appear explicitly. Nevertheless, since the invisible lines co-operate with the explicit lines to complete the specific shape of the letter, the feeling of their presence is so definitely localized within the area of the visual datum that to say that the felt outline is seen, although not explicitly visible, would seem to be unobjectionable not only as a convention of semantics but as a description of empirical fact. Actually the contrast between the explicit and the implicit segments is more difficult to notice than their similarity. To emphasize the contrast with actuality, we shall say that implicit manifestations within the field of vision exist in the state of power, as localized tensions or stresses. To say that an implicit datum is in the state of power is appropriate not only because the datum can be turned into a sense datum by means of additional drawing (and therefore has the potentiality to become explicit), but also because the presence of implicit factors adds to the impressiveness and intensity of the total perceptual effect. The letter on the



**Fig.4**



**Fig.5**



**Fig.6**

right in Figure 4, for example, stands out more prominently than the A on the left, no doubt because of the functional contrast between implicit and explicit lines. The part of implicit factors in art—the controlling power which they exercise in the formation of the aesthetic effect—may now be considered at some length.

In art, to oppose vectors to colors or shapes is to observe the differentiation between specific nonexplicit and specific explicit data. Such observation would be a matter of considerable difficulty if vectors were always attached, in a one-to-one correlation, to distinct, explicit images. But many vectors within the field of aesthetic experience are unattached to separate sense data. These vectors must be discerned in contrast with explicit appearances as the implicit factors of tension and stress. And they must also be perceived as factors of structural integration because they cut across the explicit boundaries that separate one sense datum from another and thereby counteract the process of fragmentation. The unifying function of implicit data can be readily demonstrated in painting. The implicit triangle that cuts across the explicit outlines of the landscape in Brueghel's *Winter* to bring the upper right quadrant of the picture into balance with the lower left quadrant is one example. Another example is Luini's *Madonna Addolorata and Christ with the Cross*. The artist has enclosed his painting in a peculiar frame with a vertical bar in the middle that explicitly separates the image of Christ from the image of the Madonna. Nevertheless, the aesthetic effect is that of a single picture. For implicit lines carry over from one image to the other across the bar, as if the latter were a bridge, to overpower explicit separation by joining the figures of Christ and the Madonna. The power of implicit connection is felt with specific location because the connecting lines function as prolongations of certain explicit lines on both sides of the bar. For example, the longer arm of the cross is perceived as extending, without interruption, from the right to the left because its direction coincides with the diagonal axis of balance, although only parts of the arm appear explicitly on both sides of the bar. Similarly, on each side of the

bar we see explicitly a part of the guard's right arm. And the two parts tend to be fused the more powerfully because of a contrast in depth, the contrast between the sidewise pressure of the arm against the Madonna's shoulder and the vertical plane of the main figures.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of implicit lines and their unifying function in painting could not remain altogether unnoticed in aesthetics. In a comment on Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* R. W. Church writes: ". . . the line of the shin of Ariadne's right leg carries over into the flow of the drapery of Bacchus. And the expression of this line is strengthened by the contrast in which it stands against the thrust of Ariadne's body, as well as against the lines of the drapery. This felt contrast brings Ariadne into relation with the right-hand side of the picture."<sup>2</sup> The line that relates the two sides of the picture in this manner is, of course, an implicit line. In an analysis of Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples* Erle Loran uses a diagram in which solid lines represent Cézanne's explicit drawing, whereas dotted lines indicate the presence of implicit lines that "carry through from the edge of one object to that of another."<sup>3</sup> There are, of course, other aestheticians who have remarked upon the distinction between implicit and explicit lines. What is surprising, however, is that no one has capitalized on his findings to treat the teamwork of implicit and explicit data as a principle of artistic dynamics.

To appreciate the part of implicit factors in art we must not imagine them to be always in the form of a line. Even if we disregard for the present every art except painting we may single out implicit shapes, for example, the triangle that we have already discerned in Brueghel's *Winter*. In fact an implicit factor need not be a specific datum at all. Consider in Brueghel's painting the strip of snow that divides the frozen lake \* into two skating rinks. The strip functions in three perceptibly distinct ways. First, as a bridge across the rectangle of ice; second, while we examine the details of the upper rink, as the lower band in a frame of snow that encloses the upper rink; and, third, as the

\* To be exact, the rinks are on the wide segment of a frozen river rather than on a lake.

upper border of the lower rink. Since in each case the explicit components of the visual datum are exactly the same, the difference in function must be attributed to different implicit factors. Each implicit factor makes us see the same strip of snow within an alternative context of organization. And it would seem obvious that such a factor of contextual organization cannot be assigned to any specific and exclusive locus within the total region of the context. For if each of the alternative implicit factors were specifically localized as part of the corresponding context, the outcome of their joint operation would not be ambiguity—which is a characteristic feature of great art—but disintegration into a set of contexts having nothing in common with one another except convergence upon the same sense datum.

On the other hand, we must resist the temptation to discern implicit data that are not relevant factors of the composition as a whole. In a painting, for example, there is a temptation to connect any two explicit dots by means of an implicit line simply because two distinct points always generate some linear tension between them; but if we should yield to the temptation, the composition would soon disintegrate because there would be too many implicit lines to be held together in a perceptually unified pattern. If the reader will examine my references to implicit lines, he will notice that in each case the presence of an implicit line has been discerned because of contextual concurrence with some independent factor of composition, as in the case of the longer arm of the cross in Luini's painting.

Although in the field of vision all vectors exist in the mode of stress or tension and not as sense data, we distinguish between explicit and implicit vectors in a derivative sense and by convention. A vector with no specifiable location or shape will be called implicit. In the case of specific visual data a vector will be said to be implicit if it appears unattached to any particular or exclusive sense datum. All other vectors are explicit in the sense that they are inseparable from their explicit sense

vehicles except, as an abstraction, by representation in a pattern of arrows in an arrow-graph.

#### 11. THE EGOCENTRIC VECTOR FIELD

The field of perception outside of art is open to overt action; it is the field of behavior. This statement, however, is insufficient because it does not account for the cognitive function of percepts in contemplation. And a disregard for the latter is responsible for the false opposition between the practical and the aesthetic attitudes in terms of the contrast between action and contemplation. Even the emendation that would make allowance for practical contemplation (provided the latter were undertaken for the sake of eventual action) and that would serve to distinguish it from aesthetic contemplation, which is disinterested and enjoyed for its own sake, does not settle the matter. For ordinary perception can sometimes be enjoyed with no ulterior purpose in mind—for example, when we admire a fountain pen because of its streamlined shape and attractive color. Admittedly this kind of perception may be treated as aesthetic by a writer who employs the term in its broad sense. But such latitude is not available to us. We must also point out that contemplation which would be recognized as practical by all concerned may serve to prevent rather than prompt overt action. When a weasel attacks a rattlesnake, the fighters remain nearly motionless watching each other for an opening. This unrelaxed watchfulness, which is a species of contemplation, keeps the enemies from striking. The question is, What distinguishes such a preventive or defensive state of contemplation, which is as common with men as it is with animals, from aesthetic perception? As far as the percipient's behavior goes, there does not seem to be any distinguishing peculiarity. In either case we find the same tense posture of concentrated attention or the same facial expression of preoccupation. To say that the attitude of preventive contemplation is assumed with a view to forestalling some impending action may be true, but it is at the same time

unverifiable except when the attitude fails to ward off the action.

The present attempt to differentiate between the fields of perception in and outside of art is based on the difference of dynamic pattern, which will be represented by means of different arrow-graphs. We begin with the pattern of cognitive perception or contemplation outside of art. To avoid unnecessary complication we restrict perception to the field of vision. To dissociate the pattern from any vector of overt action, we take into consideration the fact that action always requires some time to be performed and resort to the idealized abstraction of a momentary visual field. To simplify further we shall disregard emotive vectors of attraction toward a pleasing sight as well as vectors of empathy that enliven the field with incipient movement. And finally we abstract from the unusual impressiveness with which certain sense data force themselves upon our attention—from the bright orange of a California poppy against the background of a sunburnt hill, or the grotesque cross of a cactus that stands upright in the desert, or the furry sleekness of a squirrel flattened against the trunk of a tree. In short our abstraction reduces the field to a homogeneous distribution of stimuli. But the reduction does not rule out dynamics. There remains the experience of determinable or generic stimulation. This is to say that a visual datum may appear instantaneously, without the qualitative richness and determinacy that it would have in time and still be susceptible of perceptual specification. The momentary appearance is a challenge to perceptual discernment and determination. The datum is unstable but determinable, a call upon the percipient for stabilization through progressive development of specification. A quick sidewise glance at a newcomer may report the existence of a dark tie without telling whether the dark color is green or blue or, if blue, whether navy or midnight blue. The experience is not, however, one of ultimate indeterminacy but, on the contrary, an awareness of the capacity of a color to undergo specification and, generally, of a stimulus to be susceptible of perceptual discernment. And the experience is typical. Any visual entry

is an imposition upon the percipient's attention, a pressure exerted upon him in order to bring about complete actualization, i.e., both specificity and explicitness of detail. In fact the percipient would naturally yield to the pressure if it were not for the presence of other, equally pressing things. The process of specifying a particular presentation is inevitably interrupted by the distracting appeal of other determinable data. And since each datum claims the percipient's undivided attention, the outcome is a dynamic state of perceptual competition. Perceptual competition determines the basic vector pattern of the field. Pressure exerted by data converges upon the percipient from all visible directions. Visual data, regardless of their qualitative diversity, are all alike in being convergent vectors; each is a tendency to monopolize the beholder's attention. The pattern is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 will be referred to as the egocentric pattern of perception because all explicit vectors in the momentary field of vision, represented by such arrows as *a* or *b*, are directed inward: i.e., they converge upon the center *O* of the percipient's standpoint. The length of the shaft of an arrow symbolizes the impressiveness or magnitude of pressure of an inward vector. And magnitude, in abstraction from impressiveness, which varies with the character of a datum, depends on susceptibility to specification and accessibility to touch. For example, in a forest, with appearances in every direction looking alike, the trees that first draw attention are those that one can examine in detail without walking toward them, in particular those that one can reach with the hand. The example shows that in a field of vision, other conditions being equal, vectorial impressiveness is equivalent to apparent distance. As an extreme case, a datum beyond the range of specifiability and practical accessibility appears indefinitely distant and dynamically negligible. Except for a faint scintillation there is nothing to discern in the stars on a clear night. With no inward pressure calling for discernment the picture of serenity is perfect; and since all stars are equally inaccessible, they appear to be equally remote even when their actual distance from the observer differs on an astro-

nomical scale. In Figure 2 extreme remoteness is represented in terms of its dynamic equivalent by means of arrows without shafts on the outer semicircle, where tension is vanishing. As they approach the inner semicircle, the shafts increase in length and thus indicate the increasing intensity of the vectors. Arrows of the same length, for example, *a* and *c*, are equidistant from the inner semicircle and represent equal vectorial intensities.

At the time when Einstein announced that the physical world is finite but unbounded many laymen were puzzled. And yet the same phrase, "finite but unbounded," describes with precision the familiar field of vision. On the one hand, whichever way we look at the spread of space, it does not appear to be endless; on the other hand, the panorama is not enclosed within a discernible frame of boundaries. The sky may be the limit, but we do not perceive it as a boundary surface everywhere at a fixed distance from us. The field ends outwardly not because of perceptible termination but because of a gradual passage into a marginal area where our sight is lost in the absence of discernible and specifiable data. Similarly with perceptual indeterminacy in the neighborhood of the spectator's standpoint. I am not concerned here with the area including the explicitly visible parts of the percipient's body, for example, with the perceptual area involved as my hands are engaged in typing these lines. The parts of the body that are visible to their owner are carriers of explicit inward vectors and definitely belong in the field of vision. I am concerned rather with the invisible bodily parts, not as they occupy a physical region but as they are represented in the egocentric vector field and symbolized by the inner semicircle in Figure 2. The contention that the inner semicircle is not a blind spot but a part of the field is a puzzle only if we take an invisible region to be, by definition, outside the range of visual data. And we shall not be long puzzled if we reconsider what we already know about the existence of implicit data.

Even though the invisible region of my body presents no explicit visual appearance and therefore no explicit vectors, I experience it with vectors that are implicitly felt and that are,

therefore, integral parts of the total field of vision. In fact the implicit vectors in question are felt to be specifically located within the field because each of them is experienced as a reaction, as a strain of resistance, to the pressure from one of the inward vectors. It would seem that the law that the force of action is equal to and opposite in direction from the force of reaction is valid for perception as well as physics. Every inward vector is to be correlated with an equal, outward vector; i.e., the percipient resists external pressure that tends to monopolize his attention. The percipient may, of course, exert an effort to persevere in his preoccupation with a particular presentation, but then he is forced to increase the resistance to the distracting influence from other appearances. Or else, if he yields to distraction, as when he turns to an irresistibly attractive sight, the outward vector takes the form of a disposition to move in order to remove the inward vector of distance, or some other obstacle, that separates the beholder from the object of interest.

In Figure 2 outward vectors are represented by arrows that are drawn from the point  $O$ , the percipient standpoint, and have the same length as the correlated inward vectors. This is, for example, the form of correlation between  $a$  and  $a'$  or between  $b$  and  $b'$ . The separation between the regions of inward and outward vectors is symbolized by a dotted line, indicating the absence of any explicit boundary. Even the dotted line is an inadequate representation because its location is fixed, whereas the regions under consideration overlap in a kind of no man's land that may be occupied at one time by outward strains only to become later a locus of inward stresses. Suppose, for example, that you raise your arm to pluck an apple. The visual area of the arm is felt momentarily with an outward tension. But as the upraised arm is about to fall under the pressure of gravity, it feels, again momentarily, like a foreign body, no longer subject to your will, and, like any external manifestation in the field of vision, appears to be a carrier of inward vectors. On the other hand, as William James's example of the blind man with a cane shows, familiarity with implements extends the range of outward tendencies beyond the limits of one's body. Let me add

that regional indeterminacy, which depends on intermittent, or even concurrent, occupation by both inward and outward vectors, is different from indeterminacy of vectors at the outer fringes of the visual field: i.e., from indeterminacy as a lack of specificity, although the same device of dotted lines is used in Figure 2 to single out indeterminate regions of either kind.

The egocentric pattern of perception is the empirical basis for the differentiation between oneself and others. Inward vectors, the agency of external pressure, give the percipient an idea of something that is dynamically independent of himself. By contrast the experience of spontaneous resistance to inward pressure accounts for the idea of oneself. For if it were not for the feeling of reaction, of an opposition between an inward and an outward vector, there would be no direct evidence for the presence of things that can oppose the percipient in a demonstration of independent existence; therefore there would be no empirical evidence against solipsism. The point is not only of fundamental significance in epistemology but of considerable interest in aesthetics; for if we acknowledge that the differentiation between self and others is derived from the characteristic dynamic pattern of ordinary perception, we can better understand why the aesthetic experience has been described as a selfless state. We cannot expect that the radical redistribution of vectors through the change from the practical to the aesthetic attitude does no more than alter the relation between the self and the environment. On the contrary, we are confident that in the presence of an aesthetic effect the egocentric field has been replaced by a vector pattern with no trace of reference to the percipient self.

The egocentric pattern of experience to which we have been led in the course of abstracting a momentary and uniform distribution of stimuli has a considerable measure of support in psychological experiments with Metzger's apparatus. In these experiments, described in Kurt Koffka's *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*,<sup>4</sup> the observer is seated at some distance from and facing the whitewashed surface of a wall which undergoes gradual illumination. At first there is complete darkness; then

the area is illuminated, and the illumination increased until the intensity of the neutral light turns the grain of the whitewashed surface into a homogeneous source of perceptual stimulation. The percipient does not perceive the plane of the flat wall. Throughout the experiment there appears a mist of light receding into depth, and, with the increased intensity of illumination, the space-filling mist expands into the shape of a curved, filmy surface. The dependence of the appearance of the mist on the intensity of the reflected light has been described by psychologists in terms of impressiveness. And the factor of impressiveness has been defined as "the power with which sensory impressions attract our attention"—a definition which fits in with my own conception of inward vectors. We also learn (and this is a further point of similarity with inward vectors) that the factor of impressiveness involves reference to the self. Metzger points out that as the field of the mist expands, the percipient feels a decrease of inward pressure, "as if he could again breathe freely." Koffka's remark on this experiment with a primitive or basic visual field is characteristic: "It is significant that we cannot even begin our discussion of the environmental field without being forced to refer to the Ego."<sup>5</sup>

Recognition by psychologists of impressiveness—to be identified with the inward vectors of the egocentric field—refutes the common opinion that visual data are passive and have no objective claim to prompt discernment and specification. But the prevalence of the refuted opinion needs explanation. I suggest that people develop a measure of immunity to the impact of sense data. They have found an easy substitute that enables them to dispense with the effort and time needed for the process of careful, perceptual discrimination. The substitute is, of course, classification and labeling on the basis of a mere sensory sketch, i.e., of perceptible hints or clues, rather than of adequate perception. The surprising fact is that so many adults are unaware that the screen of labels and general concepts conceals the specifiable, dynamic reality of the world. And so we come to the spectator who ridicules the painting of a landscape because he happens to be familiar with the countryside and knows

that the hills out there are green with vegetation and therefore cannot possibly be, as in the picture, violet and blue. With his assumption that he knows the determinate character of familiar things, the spectator would not allow that they enter his field of vision as determinable entities with a dynamic request for specification. To realize the extent to which people carry out perceptual evasion consider, by contrast, the exceptional testimony of individuals with no opportunity to indulge in the general practice. Let me quote the words of a man blind since his early childhood, who had his sight restored. "At first the myriad of detail demanded so much attention I had to try not to look at things. There was, and still is, no ugliness in things that can be seen."<sup>6</sup> The reader will note that, according to this testimony, the demand upon the percipient's attention was so intense that, the beauty of sense data notwithstanding, he had to try not to look around. The beauty that exists in such intense dynamics is likewise noteworthy. And I do not think that we can discredit the experience on the ground that it is unusual. It may be unusual for an adult, but with children perception would seem to be just as vivid and intense. We can only regret that a skeptic has buried the memories of childhood so thoroughly as to be unable even to recognize that, for him, "there hath passed away a glory from the earth."

## 12. THE DOUBLE-CENTERED VECTOR FIELD

The egocentric pattern of cognitive perception and the selfless pattern of aesthetic experience do not stand apart unbridged. There are transitional or intermediate forms between the two extremes. To designate the variety of intermediate patterns I shall speak of double-centered vector fields because in each of these patterns a second center, the focus of perceptual attention, is added to that of the percipient self by means of a differentiation between the figure (the area of focal interest) and the general visual background which preserves the form of the egocentric field. A shift of dynamic emphasis from one center to the other distinguishes one intermediate pattern from another.

As the prominence of the figure increases, the background of the egocentric pattern fades out. The aesthetic effect takes place if and when, in the process in which the space of the figure is dislocated from the space of the vanishing background, the figure succeeds in monopolizing the total field of experience.

The process of formation and segregation of distinct shapes (the extreme case of which is the prevalence of one such shape, the figure, at the expense of others) is characterized dynamically by the operation of transverse vectors against the background of the radial distribution of inward and outward vectors. Transverse pressure is the factor of perceptual cohesion that holds visual data together in the appearance of a unified bundle of qualities or *Gestalt*. In this connection I accept the findings of Gestalt psychology without reservation. And I recognize the relevance of these findings to art: A work of art has the dynamic unity, conditioned by the operation of transverse vectors, of a *Gestalt*. I want to point out, however, that the principles of *Gestalt* formation are not identifiable with the principles of artistic composition. For the *Gestalt* that is also a work of art is of a different type from the *Gestalten* of psychology. A psychological *Gestalt*, as contrasted with the aesthetic effect, is always only a part of the whole field of perception. Accordingly, the *Gestalt* appears with a definite location in perceptual space, that is, at a perceptible distance and direction from the observer. We may say that the psychologist's *Gestalt* takes place within the context, and fits in with the structure, of natural space and time. This would mean, if it were not for perceptual prominence at the expense of other data, that an ordinary *Gestalt* were an object of cognitive contemplation outside of art. Perceptual predominance of the configuration makes it clear, however, that the experience of an ordinary Gestalt exemplifies the intermediate, double-centered pattern. The *Gestalt* outside of art is the figure that appears against the background of the egocentric field, however faint the field may become as the percipient becomes preoccupied with the *Gestalt*.

Figure 5 is the arrow-graph of an intermediate vector field. In accordance with the preceding remarks the graph represents

the superposition of a *Gestalt* pattern, i.e., of a figure in the focal area *F*, upon the egocentric pattern of Figure 2. The figure of the focal area is symbolized by two solid arrows that converge upon the center of the inner circle and are transverse to the local radii of the background. Convergence within the small circle represents concurrence through opposition or contrast, the kind of *Gestalt* cohesion which is typical in art because it meets the requirement of aesthetic ambivalence. The solid arrows point in opposite directions and thereby indicate a measure of opposition. At the same time functional co-operation, the meeting at the center, within the context of the inner circle, resolves opposition into accord. The *Gestalt* resolution, in this case, exemplifies a principle of artistic composition according to which enclosure within, or incorporation into, a context may counteract tendencies of confusion and disruption by charging the set of sense data with alternative functions. The egocentric pattern in Figure 5, unlike the same pattern in Figure 2, represents the background of the visual field. To indicate the difference (i.e., to show that in a double-centered field of experience the intensity of inward pressure is reduced), the arrows that portray inward vectors are shown in Figure 5 as dotted lines.

The presence of the egocentric pattern, even though in the perceptual background, accounts for the characteristic instability of an intermediate vector field. In the idiom of attitudes we may say that a spectator is never completely absorbed in the perception of a *Gestalt* unless the latter happens to be an aesthetic object. Reference to the self, however attenuated, acts like a watchman ever ready to mobilize, at the slightest provocation, the dynamic array of inward and outward vectors. The sense of danger, for example, would lift the level of tension, and the egocentric pattern would cease to be merely a background. We understand the hunter who tells us how the striking appearance of a tiger in the jungle made him forget all about hunting or safety. Nevertheless we may be sure that the attitude of admiration did not prevent the hunter from keeping his finger on the trigger. The observation is relevant to the problem of beauty in nature. Why is a beautiful object of nature essentially

different from a work of art? One reason is that the former is embedded within the egocentric field of experience. We are often struck by the splendor of a sunset. And the sunset, like the aesthetic effect of a work of art, exists beyond the range of practical transaction. Nevertheless, unlike the aesthetic effect, the sunset appears within the field of vision which is the field of practical transaction. The sunset is out there—in a definite direction from the spectator—and within the same framework of space and time that encloses the spectator's own post of observation. A sudden appearance, say of a bird silhouetted against the sunset, readily and easily turns the sunset into a mere background for the silhouette because all three, the percipient, the sunset, and the silhouette, belong to the same course of nature. Participation in the same context does not allow the spectator to take advantage of irrelevance as an excuse for disregarding the intruding appearance.

To stabilize the field of experience—without letting it slip back into the egocentric pattern of Figure 2—the percipient must continue to concentrate upon the perceptible *Gestalt* at the expense of the background until the latter vanishes altogether, i.e., until the *Gestalt* monopolizes the total field. This is the way of art. Whereas outside of art a *Gestalt* is the figure that appears against a background, the aesthetic *Gestalt*—the work of art—rules out the figure-background contrast except as a detail of differentiation within itself. Inclusion of the total field within the object of perceptual preoccupation is equivalent to perceptual dislocation. For to be completely detached from the background of the egocentric field the image, or the object of perception, must be dislodged, i.e., must not occupy any particular place within the field. Suppose we look at a picture. At first we see a rectangular patch of colors as a definite part of the wall where the painting hangs, at a definite distance and in a definite direction from the post of observation. But this participation in the arrangement of the egocentric field of vision ceases the moment our imagination transforms the rectangular patch of colors into the intended aesthetic effect. If the aesthetic effect is a landscape, it cannot be part of the room; the land-

scape is dislocated from the canvas as well as from the perceptible surroundings of the latter. To the question, What power enables the percipient to dislocate an image from the ordinary field of vision? the answer is evident: the power of the imagination.

But what do we mean by the imagination? We have defined an aesthetic experience as an imaginatively reconstructed percept. And we have now specified one condition of imaginative reconstruction, the condition of dislocation. But we must proceed with an account of the imagination that will entail perceptual dislocation as a matter of course. The close connection between imagination and freedom from many restrictions of nature and perception is a commonplace. And there is no doubt that the primary dictionary definition of the word—to the effect that imagination is the faculty of forming images or ideas of things that are not present to the senses at the time—entitles us to generalize and say that imagination confronts the order of actuality with alternative orders of things. Over and against the overt and explicit sense data the imagination sets or discerns the order of latent or implicit agencies, of things that are absent to the senses. We generalize further to define the imagination as the power to envisage, or visualize, ambivalence and ambiguity. Let us see how the definition provides for imaginal dislocation. Let the image be an ordinary memory image. For example, I now make an effort to visualize the familiar face of an absent friend. If I resist the temptation to close my eyes, the image of the absent friend appears among the visual data of my actual surroundings. This institutes ambivalence. For the memory does not become involved with percepts because, unlike the latter, it has no particular place within the field of vision. The image is not altogether disconnected, however, from perceptual space—if it were there would be no ambiguity. On the contrary, the image is in space because it appears at some distance in front of me. But the perceptible connection between the image and space, unlike the relation between the latter and the sense data within it, is not specifiable. I cannot perceive the distance between myself and the image of the absent friend,

even approximately, whereas I can roughly estimate how far an actual object happens to be from me. Nor can I perceive any definite relation of the image to positions occupied by visual data in my vicinity.

Lack of specifiable direction, distance, and place is only one form of perceptual dislocation that institutes ambivalence. A more striking form—to be called multiple location—may be exemplified in a dream. In dreaming I sometimes perceive myself from outside as one among other people and objects. The duality of appearance, in respect to myself as an onlooker and as an object of vision, is perceptual ambiguity that violates the rule of definite location, that no percept can be located at once in two different places. Both kinds of ambivalence and dislocation, the kind exemplified by memory images as well as the kind exemplified in dreams, have been fully exploited in art.

Ambivalence may be present in nature even without the aid of the imagination. Figure 6 is a case in point. There are two alternative ways of perceiving the six radii of the figure. There is the pattern of three wide segments, 1, 3, and 5, against the background of the circle; and there is the pattern of three narrow segments, 2, 4, and 6. Let the two patterns—between which perception alternates—be distinguished as *A* and *B*. The evidence of psychological experiment demonstrates that an observer who happens to perceive *A* as the figure will soon see *B* instead of *A*, in the foreground, and vice versa. The process of perceptual replacement continues indefinitely not only without the aid of the imagination but even against the imaginative effort to resist the shift from *A* to *B* or from *B* to *A*. And the process establishes ambivalence in nature because the figure cannot be described exclusively as either *A* or *B*, but must be described as both, although *A* and *B* are mutually exclusive patterns. The experiment also proves that ambiguity can be objective. Any percipient, regardless of his subjective make-up, becomes engaged in the process of alternating between the two percepts of Figure 6. The proof is of interest to a student of aesthetics as it makes clear that the presence of ambivalence in

art need not be a subjective distortion and therefore does not undermine the aesthetic postulate.

But in one essential respect ambivalence in nature, as exemplified by Figure 6, differs from ambivalence of the imagination. In nature alternative aspects of the same object can take place, for the same percipient, only in succession. For example, in Figure 6 the alternative patterns *A* and *B* are perceivable in turn but never at once. On the other hand, alternative presentations of the imagination, as exemplified by imaginal dislocation or multiple location, take place simultaneously within the same field of perception or experience. Ambivalence of the imagination is a simultaneous entertainment of alternatives.

Ambivalence in art is imaginative, and a work of art enacts perceptually incompatible alternatives in a simultaneous display. This fact contributes to the contextually controlled integration of the experience of art and therefore makes for the objectivity of aesthetic ambivalence. The simultaneous enactment of alternatives which would be incompatible in nature necessitates the segregation of the work of art from all the disrupting or distracting forces of the egocentric field and is in this way a means of integration. The aesthetic field must stand apart, and be to that extent unified, as it combines orders of presentation which cannot be combined elsewhere. If the alternatives which outside of art are mutually exclusive were not simultaneously displayed, they would be experienced—as are the patterns *A* and *B* in Figure 6—in a sequence of disconnected stages. Of course, to be susceptible of simultaneous enactment in art, alternatives must cease, through contextual transformation, to be mutually exclusive. But how can the joint presence of alternatives, which in detachment from context would be incompatible, strengthen the unity of a work of art? The answer, to be elaborated in the following section, is that opposition is contextually transformed into concurrence provided the opposed alternatives play the parts of complementary agencies. Complementary agencies may continue to be individually opposed to each other and yet serve the cause of total unity if each alternative only partially expresses or realizes the potentialities of the

whole. The party in power and the party of opposition exemplify complementary agencies in democracy. The particle-like and the wave-like behavior of an electron exemplify complementary functions of the same physical agent. In any case, complementarity is a contextual or dynamic quality.

### 13. AESTHETIC AMBIVALENCE

Our definitions of an aesthetic experience, “the beholder’s objective but imaginatively reconstructed percept,” and of the imagination, “the power of the mind to introduce ambiguity into experience,” entail the principle of aesthetic ambivalence. If our conception of aesthetic experience is correct, ambivalence is fundamental in great art. The same conclusion can be reached through a different approach. There is general agreement that poetry—in the broad sense of poetic quality or beauty, as distinguished from versification—and great art are not separable from each other. But what is the poetic quality of a work of art? If we are allowed to begin with a negative formulation, the answer is easy. Poetry is the agency of effective opposition to the prosaic. The prosaic, of course, is a matter-of-fact, habitual setting with everything arranged on the surface and open to inspection, in short, the overt and explicit manifestations of actuality. And to oppose and overcome the prosaic setting we must resort to, or cultivate, the sense for latent factors; i.e., we must expose implicit action that takes place behind the common scene. Poetry is a vivid sense of the implicit or latent. The poetic quality of a work of art is the effect of confronting the order of explicit things with the order of implicit agencies. For such confrontation is a simultaneous enactment of both orders that makes for the impression that the world is rich with mystery, complexity, and depth. In other words, poetry is an outcome, or expression, of ambivalence. We may say that aesthetic ambivalence is a principle of art because it is the mainspring of poetry.

The principle of aesthetic ambivalence accounts for the element of truth that we may concede to the popular notion—exemplified by Freudian aesthetics—that art is a way of escape

from reality. For if reality is understood in the narrow sense of overt and explicit actuality, aesthetic experience is an escape because it is an experience of contextual transfiguration that makes the familiar and plain features of actuality look strange and significant. But escape in art is not unconditional abandonment of the order of actuality for the sake of the order of things that are altogether fantastic or otherworldly. Unconditional escape would defeat its own purpose. This is to say that no presentation can be completely disengaged from the solid grounds of actuality without a loss of the intended depth and complexity. Thin or transparent, the disengaged presentation could be no more than a pretense to mystery. Great art, as a matter of fact, is never a headlong flight into the realm of unadulterated fiction or phantasm.

To expose the inadequacy of theories of unconditional escape let me point out that, as a rule, tales of mystery and horror—even those by Edgar Allan Poe—belong to entertainment rather than to art. At the same time, let us note that on the rare occasion when the writer manages to intimate alternative interpretations (one in terms of the supernatural, the other in terms of accident or coincidence) for an effect of weirdness, the presence of ambiguity makes for the unusual appeal of the story. Consider, for example, the lasting success of W. W. Jacobs' "The Monkey's Paw." The story pleases us because it sets the natural and the supernatural interpretations in a balance that we feel to be the historically conditioned balance of our own mental disposition. For the modern mind is divided within itself. While sufficiently impressed by the age of science and technology to approve of a natural solution of any apparent mystery, we still harbor in the back of our mind a disposition to superstition, a credulity that derives from an earlier stage of civilization. Nevertheless, even though we respond to the ambivalence of the tale because it exploits a duality within our own mind, we recognize our response to be subjective, i.e., a historically conditioned weakness. This explains why a story like "The Monkey's Paw" is only a minor work of art. We do not recognize the

balance of the natural and the supernatural interpretations to be objective, i.e., to be objectively part of the story, because we know that if it were not for the historical accident of our mental heritage or development, the alternative interpretations would be too much at variance with each other to allow for contextual co-operation or teamwork. In other words, the alternative interpretations are not intrinsically unified or integrated.

But if ambivalence, in the sense of a copresence of contextually controllable and integrable alternatives, is a prerequisite of great art, why is the principle of aesthetic ambivalence not yet generally recognized in aesthetics and art criticism? I am not entirely in agreement with the implication of the question. In contemporary literary criticism, at any rate, much attention is given to the major part played by ambiguity, irony, or paradox in literature. The title of W. Empson's book, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, is symptomatic of the trend. In an even more recent publication, *The Well Wrought Urn*, Cleanth Brooks has analyzed ten great English poems to show that each of them resolves the ambiguity of some basic paradox. But, of course, there were forerunners to the contemporary trend. Robert Louis Stevenson is one of them. In his essay, "On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature," Stevenson introduces the topic of ambivalence by elaborating an analogy between the artist and the juggler.

The conjurer juggles with two oranges, and our pleasure in beholding him springs from this, that neither is for an instant overlooked or sacrificed . . . ; and the artist, seeking, so to speak, a peg to plait about, takes up at once two or more elements or two or more views of the subject in hand; combines, implicates, and contrasts them. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Stevenson proceeds to tell us that there are five alternative orders, five oranges in a simultaneous display, in a poem. Two of these he describes as two simultaneously enacted orders of rhythm. To illustrate his description he shows that the same line of Milton is heard at once as a sequence of five iambic feet and also as a sequence of four groups of words.

We have been accustomed to describe the heroic line as five iambic feet, and to be filled with pain and confusion whenever, as by the conscientious schoolboy, we have heard our description put in practice.

“All night/the dread/less àn/gel ùn/pursued,”

goes the schoolboy; but though we close our ears, we cling to our definition, in spite of its proved and naked insufficiency. Mr. Jenkin was not so easily pleased, and readily discovered that the heroic line consists of four groups, or, if you prefer the phrase, contains four pauses:

“All night/the dreadless/angel/unpursued.”

Four groups, each practically uttered as one word: the first, in this case, an iamb; the second, an amphibrachys; the third, a trochee; and the fourth, an amphimacer; and yet our schoolboy, with no other liberty but that of inflicting pain, had triumphantly scanned it in five iambs. Perceive, now, this fresh richness of intricacy in the web; the fourth orange, hitherto unremarked, but still kept flying with the others. What has seemed to be one thing it now appears is two; and, like some puzzle in arithmetic, the verse is made at the same time to read in fives and to read in fours. . . . Variety is what is sought; but if we destroy the original mould, one of the terms of this variety is lost, and we fall back on sameness. Thus, both as to the arithmetical measure of the verse, and the degree of regularity in scansion, we see the laws of prosody to have one common purpose: to keep alive the opposition of two schemes simultaneously followed; to keep them notably apart, though still coincident; and to balance them with such judicial nicety before the reader, that neither shall be unperceived and neither signally prevail.<sup>8</sup>

Stevenson’s analysis furthers our understanding of complementarity. To be complementary each scheme must not only be an alternative way of envisaging the same explicit data—in Stevenson’s illustration the same sequence of words with the same distribution of accent—but expose and exploit potentialities that are objectively present within, or implied by, the overt sensory manifestations. We may say that the unity of complementaries is dramatic, for in a play the dialogue develops the latent unity of a complex of complementary tendencies by

letting each of the principal characters voice one of them. We may wish, in deference to the topic of conflict between tradition and the individual (a topic with which the majority of plays are concerned), to reserve the term "dramatic" for the special exemplification of complementarity in that conflict. But even with this reservation we are entitled to apply the term dramatic to the balance of "two schemes simultaneously followed" in poetry. Consider again the same line of Milton. We read the line in fives because of its contextual participation, with other lines, in the mold of five iambic feet. The mold is a standard of convention and therefore a form of tradition. At the same time, we read the line in fours because the individuality of words, the distribution of their particular meanings, forces us to articulate the line in four groups. The double articulation, let us note, would be impossible if it were not for the objective duality of implicit or latent factors. Contextual control is the implicit factor that enables us to read the line in fives. Four momentary pauses are the implicit factors that organize the line into four groups of words. Of course, within an aesthetic process a pause is not a gap between sounds but, on the contrary, a latent bond of cohesion because its function is either to mark off a measure of time as a definite part within the total pattern of rhythm or else to increase the tension of suspense.

The principle of ambivalence in art outside of literature has not been generally recognized. Yet the range of the principle is not limited to one art. For an application of the principle to a different art let me now turn to painting. I am going to demonstrate that aesthetic ambivalence in a picture is identifiable with the peculiarity of pictorial space.

#### 14. PICTORIAL SPACE

A marked perceptual discontinuity between the object of contemplation and the surrounding, nonaesthetic sense data enables the percipient to dispense with the natural field of vision and to let the figure that has arrested his attention absorb the total range of experience. Discontinuity by means of dislocation

—with the figure endowed with a structure of space which is heterogeneous or nonisomorphic with perceptual space—is particularly effective in this respect. Hence the dynamic space of art. In painting, for example, the painted surface of a canvas presents an assemblage of sense data to be apprehended as a coherent whole through an imaginative reorientation of the presentation in depth. The spectator is confronted with the dual pattern of plane and space. And, in accordance with the principle of aesthetic ambivalence, perception can be drawn behind the plane of the canvas, not to be lost in depth but to return, in a circular movement of self-contained and therefore selfless progress, back to the frontal plane. In the tradition of Western art, at any rate, a picture is seen at once, although not instantaneously, as a design on a plane and as an arrangement in recession. The interplay between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional orders requires the integral space of the pictorial effect to be dynamic or four-dimensional. This is to say that the factor of time, or process, must intervene to resolve what in a momentary, or instantaneous, perception would appear as an ultimate incompatibility between flat shapes and figures in relief. The summary statement of this paragraph needs elaboration and argument.

There exists a variety of devices or contrivances to induce the beholder to make the imaginative effort that starts the process—later taken over by objective vectors that are intrinsic in the development of the aesthetic effect—of segregation between art and nature through spatial dislocation. A statue is segregated because it is monumental and placed on a pedestal. Rhythmic tonality separates music from noise. Rhythm and rhyme prevent a poem from being confused with conversation. The frame brings into focus the picture plane to be incorporated into pictorial space. But the means of initial detachment may not be as obvious as these. For example, pictorial simulation of the actual area around the canvas—as when the picture gives momentarily an illusion of being an annex to the space outside—is an effective, although more subtle or sophisticated, way to set the representation in contrast with nature. If an illustration

is in order, consider Merezhkovski's account of the reaction of a spectator to Leonardo's painting, *The Last Supper*, in the refectory of Santa Maria della Grazie in Milan.

When Giovanni looked at it, at the first moment it seemed to him that this was no mural painting before him, but an actual ethereal depth, a continuation of the monastery refectory,—just as though another room had opened beyond the drawn curtain, so that the longitudinal and transversal beams of the ceiling entered it, narrowing in the distance, and the light of day blended with the peaceful light of evening over the blue summits of Zion, which could be seen in the three windows of this new refectory, almost as simple as the one of the monks, save that it was covered with rugs, and was more cozy and mysterious. The long table in the picture resembled those at which the monks ate,—with precisely the same sort of table-cloth ornamented with narrow stripes, its ends knotted, and with quadrangular folds still not straightened out, as though a trifle damp yet, just this moment taken from the monastery storeroom; with the very same sort of tumblers, plates, knives, glass vessels filled with wine.<sup>9</sup>

The illusion of a prolongation into another room, however, is not so much a matter of faithful representation of fixtures and articles in the adjoining actual room as the pictorial effect of recession. Linear perspective—that gives the room in the picture a funnellike appearance, with the horizontal lines along the side walls receding toward the vanishing point behind the central figure of Christ—enriched with the art of chiaroscuro, at which Leonardo excels, unquestionably produces the intended effect. But the illusion that the painted room is part of the actual scene outside of the painting, can be, unlike the lasting impression of depth, only momentary. This is so not because it is impossible to conceal the fact that the fresco is on a flat wall (a termination and not a prolongation of the actual room), but because the artist has taken measures to counteract the effect of an excessively funnellike composition in order to lead perception back to the frontal plane. The artist's reason for wishing to disguise the funnellike effect (the reason for his dissatisfaction with linear perspective in a picture, that is) can be easily understood. The fault with the funnellike representa-

tion is, on the one hand, that at the narrow end of the funnel, the vanishing point, the picture appears to be punctured, so that vision is lost through the hole in the void behind the pictorial background, and, on the other hand, that at the wide side of the funnel, all lines seem to fan out of the painting toward the spectator. In short, unless disguised, a funnellike composition undermines the unity of a picture because it tends to restore the egocentric field of perception.

Leonardo prevents pictorial disruption by cutting the funnel across with broad overlapping bands, which are parallel to the plane of the fresco, to form barriers against perceptual "stepping out" of the picture. There are the band of the table, nearly the length of the painting, that resists the pressure of expansion toward the spectator; the band of the figures of Christ and His disciples; and finally, the band of the back wall that keeps the converging lines of the funnel from receding into a hole. The overlapping of the bands contributes to the impression of depth; but their parallelism to the picture plane—in conjunction with such factors of integration (and ambivalence) as the display of light and shade that cross the boundaries of the central band to make the figures appear to melt into the background, and the contrast between the advancing warm and light colors of the sky and the contracting dim tints of the interior—prompts perceptual return from the depth of the painting to the surface of the actual wall. The resultant effect provides an instance of the ambivalence of pictorial space. The picture is seen both as a surface design of colors and shapes and as a three-dimensional scene. Such major parts of the picture as the parallel bands, even if we examine each in detachment from the rest, appear to be infected with the same ambiguity. For example, although it is flat, the band of the table is also perceived with the plane of the top at a right angle to that of the side. Or, again, the central row of five triangles (with three figures in each except for the triangle of the single figure of Christ—an exception that makes His figure dominate the others) makes up a flat band; at the same time, the figures within the triangles look like bodies in the round because of foreshortening and shading.

Let me enumerate the principles of natural space with which pictorial space has been frequently at variance. First, the same region of natural space cannot be both a surface and a volume. Second, the same object cannot appear at once in two different places. Third, the same place cannot be seen simultaneously, by a single percipient, in the guise of alternative shapes or configurations. This is to say that the field of ordinary perception does not combine aspects which would normally belong each to a different perspective. A photograph, as we see it in the stereoscope, exemplifies the three principles to perfection. For natural space is space arrested, as if by a snapshot, the momentary or timeless space, that is, which a quick glance around would illustrate with a close perceptual approximation.\*

The first principle of natural space breaks down in art because the composition of a picture in a school of Western painting is both, and at once, on a plane and in depth.† I should like to emphasize “both” in order to differentiate pictorial space from an artificial reproduction of depth on, or through, a plane by means of a mirror or with the aid of a stereoscope. There is no denying that perceptually a mirror image is behind the polished glass; and recession visible in a mirror resembles pictorial depth. But the surface of the mirror, unlike the plane of the picture, is not kept in sight along with the appearance of receding images. Similarly with the stereoscope: The illusion of distance takes place at the expense of the plane of the double photograph. In painting, on the contrary, the surface of a picture must be visible—to be enjoyed as we enjoy a colorful design of abstract art—even as perception penetrates, in pursuit of receding images, behind the frontal plane. This is so for two important and not

\* Natural space may be identified with the three-dimensional space of classical physics but must be distinguished from both the four-dimensional manifold of relativity physics and the actual space of perception. Space-time is dynamic because it includes the dimension of time. Perceptual space is dynamic because of its entanglement with the factor of duration.

† Other ways may be used to separate pictorial space from natural space. For example, as G. Rowley has explained in his *Principles of Chinese Painting* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1947), the main factor of space integration in Chinese pictures is perceptual movement as opposed to formal geometrical construction.

unrelated reasons. First, the painted surface provides the imagination with anchorage in the ground of sense data; this meets the requirement of contact between art and nature. Second, if it were not for a sustained, perceptible relation to the picture plane, the range of vision would be launched on a course of indefinite expansion into depth. As the sight of the plane is never lost, perception is continuously prompted to complete its progress through pictorial space by a return from depth. The violation (required by these two reasons) of the first principle of natural space is feasible in art because of a co-operation of explicit and implicit factors. The appearance of depth in painting is a dynamic effect, a pulsation of perceptual expansion and contraction which, even though visible, is not explicitly seen and therefore does not preclude correlation with an explicit presentation on a plane. This is to say that in a picture visual data can be viewed at once within the explicit context of a design on the plane and within the implicit context of pictorial depth.

Let me illustrate by reconsidering the Brueghel. The implicit triangle discussed on pages 40 and 41 generates such a powerful thrust into depth that one would lose sight of the frontal plane if it were not for a whole system of counteraction. Several factors keep the picture plane conspicuous. First, there is the factor of parallelism. Figures and configurations are set in rows that appear to be parallel to the surface of the painting. For even when, as in the case of the hunters, some figures are explicitly oblique, their silhouette-like appearance has the effect of bringing them into line with the parallel rows. The fact that the rows are parallel to one another but placed at different heights on the canvas accounts for the illusion that their distances from the spectator differ. This fact is therefore a contribution to pictorial depth. But, at the same time, the fact that the rows are parallel to the picture plane results in a kind of perceptual reverberation that keeps the vision of the plane alive. Note, in this connection, an additional ambivalence in the strip of snow that divides the frozen lake into two skating rinks. As a detail on the lake the strip participates in the recession of the

latter. On the other hand, the white of the snow connects the strip with the snowbank in the foreground and makes them both stand parallel to the picture plane. And, of course, the white of the snow in the picture is of a warm and therefore advancing shade. This means that the whole expanse of the distant hills advances—a fact of dynamics that explains the return of perception from pictorial depth to the foreground. Another, equally important factor that helps to keep the frontal plane in sight is the geometrical design of the plane. Figure 1 represents the surface design of the Brueghel.

The pattern of Figure 1 is a set of triangles symmetrically arranged with respect to the line  $EF$ , which divides the rectangle into an upper and a lower half, and the diagonals  $AD$  and  $BC$ . Symmetry on the picture plane is, perhaps, the main factor that enables us to visualize the painting as a surface design. The diagonals are dotted lines because they represent two lines which are implicit in the picture. The arrows along  $BC$  exhibit the ambiguity which they are intended to symbolize; the diagonal appears both as a line that proceeds from the point  $C$  to the right and upward on the plane and as a path leading into space. Now let me show how the abstract pattern fits the actual picture.

The dividing line  $EF$  runs along the bottom of the distant hills just above the bank of the upper skating rink. Actual measurement shows that on the canvas  $BF$  is longer than  $FD$ , but the lack of equality does not mean that the symmetry of Figure 1 breaks down in the case of the actual picture. In art, appearance is the only thing that counts. And in appearance the upper and the lower half of the picture are equal in size. Perhaps the accumulation of figures of interest, of men, dogs, trees, and houses, within the area of the lower half, increases its impressiveness just enough to make up for the inequality. A similar consideration applies to one of the diagonals. Although it happens to be slightly off to the right, the implicit line that connects the row of trees at their base and carries over into the ascension of crags appears to coincide with the diagonal  $BC$ . The pull to the left exerted by the group of dogs below and by the largest crag above no doubt accounts for the appearance.

If the identification here in question is granted, a doubt may be raised about the double function of *BC* in the landscape. The recession along *BC* is obvious, but its function in the capacity of a surface diagonal requires some demonstration. Let me point out two factors that counteract the impression of recession and make us see the diagonal on the frontal plane. First, both ends of *BC* are held in the vertexes of triangles *BOF* and *COE*, which are related to the surface by the advancing shade of white of their areas. Second, the diagonal *BC* is related by symmetry to the other diagonal, *AD*, which is to be identified with the implicit line that connects the point where the tree nearest the observer begins to branch off with the point *O*, where the tree farthest from the observer intersects the left bank of the frozen lake. And since the diagonal *AD* definitely appears to lie on the surface, it lends something of its character as a surface feature to its correlate, *BC*.\*

Let us turn to another illustration. *The Origin of the Milky Way*, by Tintoretto, is a rectangular canvas, with the two diagonals clearly discernible even though they are implicit lines. The diagonal from the lower left corner to the upper right, like the corresponding diagonal of the Brueghel, plays the double part of leading upward on the surface and of receding in perspective. This diagonal, to be recognized as the prolongation of the length of the leg of Jupiter (descending from Olympus to snatch from Juno her infant son Hercules) through the head of the eagle and the vertex of the blue cover on the couch, is the axis of perceptual recession. Such factors as the impressive effect of Jupiter's flight and the foreshortening of the couch activate the diagonal all along with a dynamic of intermittent advance and retreat, a movement out of and into depth. The diagonal does not appear exclusively as a path into space, however, because it happens to co-operate with the other diagonal

\* The aesthetic ambivalence of the Brueghel enables us to discern alternative surface designs. For example, there is the pattern of three triangles one of which is wedged between the other two. The wedged triangle can be identified as follows: Its base is the right-hand edge of the painting, and one of its sides follows the slope of the distant hills while the other coincides with the incline of the frontal snowbank.

in the formation of a design on the picture plane. And, again as in the case of the Brueghel, the second diagonal—which proceeds from the figure of Cupid at the lower right corner through the head of Hercules to the fur trimmings of the curtain on the upper left—appears to lie entirely on the surface. The two diagonals meet at the hub of intersection with lines that fan out, along the divergent directions of Juno's limbs, to form—as A. Barnes has justly observed—the spokes of a wheel that turns counterclockwise in the plane of the picture. Simultaneous participation in the orders of plane and space is even more striking in features of some detail. Observe, for example, the spurt of stars that represents the origin of the Milky Way from the breasts of the goddess. Each star is attached by the Milky Way to Juno, who appears to be just behind the frontal plane; therefore the constellation as a whole stands out as a shape on the surface. Yet, at the same time, the constellation must be perceived in the plane of the background for the simple psychological reason that one cannot help expecting stars to be fixed in the distant sky. Another of Tintoretto's ways of bringing together planes that are also pictorially distant from one another is to relate them by color; the same shade of red that distinguishes Jupiter's mantle on the right appears in the center of the painting on the blanket and to the left in the draperies.

A third example is a painting by Andrea del Sarto, *The Annunciation*, in the Pitti. The arch of the building in this painting belongs to a plane in the foreground—because the arch appears there as a link between the figure of Mary on the left and the group on the right—and also, as the small size of the figure of a man on the steps of the building indicates, to another plane at some distance behind the first.

The number of illustrations can be increased at will, for the display of images on a plane and the use of the plane as a transparent medium for the perception of depth characterizes all great painting of the West. Of course, different schools of art shift the emphasis from one order of dimensions to the other. Modern painting after Cézanne, in a reaction against the repre-

sentational values of classical art, has tended to conceal the representation of depth, although the disguise is never so complete as to prevent us from discerning the presence of subtle means to keep alive the ambivalence of pictorial space. And even in classical art, as Heinrich Wölfflin has conclusively demonstrated, the emphatically planimetric painting of the high Renaissance must be contrasted with baroque art concerned with depth values. The contrast does not mean, however, that the masters of the Renaissance had no regard for recession. As Wölfflin himself has explained: "Every picture has recession, but the recession has a very different effect according to whether the space organizes itself into planes or is experienced as a homogeneous recessional movement."<sup>10</sup> As used in this monograph, the phrase "planimetric organization of space" means representation in parallel planes. Such parallelism brings the frontal plane into prominence when—as in the art of the Renaissance—figures of interest are placed together in a central plane which lends a measure of its impressiveness to the surface plane because both planes are parallel. In a recent essay, "Concerning Edges," Isabel Bishop writes:

The idea of the plane can be kept strongly to the fore, though, even if illusion be carried to the point of creating a sense of the detachment of forms, when the arrangement clearly echoes the directions of the surface. An idea of plane presents itself to your mind when you take in the forms in parallel rows, even if each form and each row are felt to be separate and unattached. So with Michelangelo, Raphael, Signorelli, Bellini, and, I think, Poussin.<sup>11</sup>

So far I agree. But Isabel Bishop mentions only five representative names, presumably because she is inclined to assume—an assumption which would be more obviously at odds with the work of other men—that an emphatic planimetric organization must exclude the sense of movement into space. Of course, the assumption is unwarranted and happens to be inconsistent with Isabel Bishop's own earlier statement in which she recognizes the essential ambivalence of pictorial space. In a passage on page 172 of the same essay she even takes advantage, appar-

ently independently of Stevenson, of the simile of the juggler who keeps several objects simultaneously in the air.

And if the painter wants to make the thing painted on look different from what it is, he has to keep several balls in the air at once—that is, he has to create several sets of suggestions—one set always keeping you aware of what the thing painted on is like, while other suggestions are persuading you of depth, movement, weight, and what not. . . .

The artist who has successfully brought together the picture plane and space with equal emphasis on each—as Erle Loran’s monograph proves with abundant evidence—is Cézanne. Cézanne’s resourcefulness, in this respect, seems to have been inexhaustible. Loran mentions, among other things, that Cézanne’s “fused or lost edges create a merging of foreground with deep space,” that he always eliminates funnellike representation, and that he often emphasizes the background by enlargement.<sup>12</sup> In a statement on page 77 Loran sums up as follows:

The conflict and dualism of static and dynamic axes, the plane tensions resulting from the shifting of eye levels, the action of three-dimensional space forced to maintain its relation to the picture plane—these are the elements of the inner life of Cézanne’s art.

Enough has been already said to demonstrate the contrast between pictorial and natural space. Therefore we need no more than a brief comment on the violation in art of the other two principles of natural space. No object can be visible at once in two different places. And yet, in order to enhance the impression of circular movement in *The Creation of the Sun and Moon*, Michelangelo places the figure of God on the right side of the picture, facing us but about to turn, and also on the left side, where He is seen as a figure speeding away into space. It is not to the point to observe that Michelangelo’s double representation is a highly irregular expedient. Actually the artist merely revived a tradition of mediaeval painting. And if further support for such dynamic impressionism is in order, compare the expedient with the representation of motion by a

child. To portray a pivoting dancer the child draws many arms that are spread out in a circle from the dancer's body.

The third principle of natural space—that rules out dynamic integration of alternative perspectival aspects—has been systematically violated, in many different ways, in contemporary painting. For example, there are Picasso's attempts to combine in one portrait a profile with a fullface view. These are ventures into the fourth dimension, for Picasso's portraits can be "true" to the sitter only by opposition to the "falsehood" of a photograph or of any other arrested representation divested of time and movement. A portrait, we have been repeatedly informed, must intimate the essential unity of the sitter's character. But such intimation would be impossible if it were not for the fact that variable appearances of a face can yet be perceived as congruent. Perception of congruence, however, requires a measure of familiarity with the person and therefore a certain amount of time. This is evident by contrast; a glance at an unfamiliar profile leaves us inevitably surprised to find how different the stranger looks the moment he turns to face us. The true shape of a face, the shape that expresses character, is, like the shape of a dance, a four-dimensional phenomenon. In three dimensions of natural space—with time and movement excluded—an explicit profile cannot be at the same place with a fullface appearance. Actually there is no such thing as an exclusive, momentary view of a familiar face, of a person whom we know and understand; the shape that we perceive is composite or dynamic because we continuously fill in the gaps between incomplete and transient aspects with anticipation of incipient turns and expressions. Or so Picasso tells us.

Of course, many artists never resort either to double representation or to superimposition of aspects. Nor do I contend that simultaneous representation in plane and in depth, characteristic as it is of Western art, is indispensable. But each of these expedients has the same effect of transforming static space into space-time, i.e., into a dynamic field of images. And I know of no evidence that would conflict with the contention that

pictorial space is four-dimensional. Nor does the analogy between pictorial space and physical space-time commit us to the identification of one with the other. As a matter of fact the two are obviously different. Curvature makes the physical manifold transcend perception altogether, whereas in art the existence of spatio-temporal percepts—as apprehended, for example, in the shape of a dance that requires a duration of time to be exhibited—is indubitable. Moreover (and this is a point that will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter), the aesthetic process, which will be found to take the part of the fourth dimension in the medium of art, is essentially different from the dimension of time in physics. Nevertheless, even as we keep pictorial and physical space-time apart, the analogy happens to be suggestive.

Let me take advantage of one suggestion to further our inquiry into the problem of the aesthetic vector field. The mathematics of tensors, which may be described as four-dimensional vectors, enables the physicist to establish the identity of geometrical structure with physical content, i.e., the equality of the tensor of space to the tensor of matter. This suggests that in art likewise the structure of space-time is identifiable with the vector pattern of the sensory and imaginal content of an aesthetic experience. The suggestion, admittedly, is no more than a hypothesis. But, so long as we do not encounter adverse evidence, adherence to the hypothesis enables us to telescope two inquiries, one concerned with space-time, the other with the aesthetic vector field.

#### 15. THE AESTHETIC VECTOR FIELD

Our excursion into aesthetic ambivalence and pictorial space makes it clear that we cannot expect an arrow-graph to be an adequate representation of the aesthetic field; the arrow-graph is even less adequate in this case than it is in the representation of other types of perception and imagination. At best we can hope to have a suggestive, symbolic diagram. If all art were regulated by the conventions of Western painting, our resolu-

tion to identify pictorial space with the vector organization of images would lead us to the arrow-graph of Figure 7, which is more than a symbol. The rectangle  $ABCD$  of the figure stands for the picture plane. The dotted edges of the picture box appear to recede and therefore represent the pictorial effect of depth. The arrows are bent along the walls of the picture box to indicate that perception proceeds from the picture plane to the background  $EFGH$  and returns from there to complete a circu-

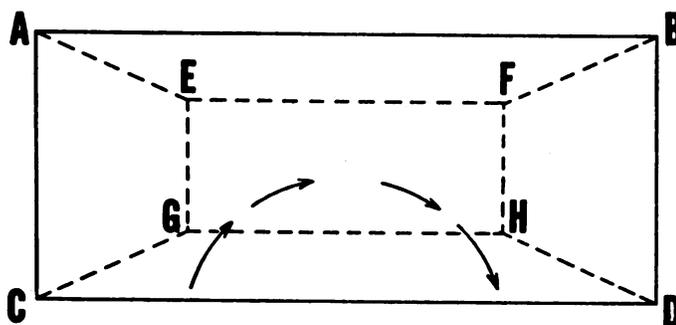


Fig.7

lar movement (with the circle taken as a symbol of integral dynamic unity). The framework of Figure 7 is to be filled in by alternative sets of additional arrows, each set arrived at through analysis of a particular painting. A similar device is used by Erle Loran, who analyzes Cézanne's art by using a picture box in which the different distributions of arrows correspond to different paintings.

Even as a framework to be subsequently supplemented by additional arrows, Figure 7 is incomplete because of its failure to represent the picture plane  $ABCD$  as a surface design which is perceived simultaneously with the appearance of recession. In other words, the figure does not do justice to aesthetic ambivalence. But the main weakness of the representation is the limitation of its range. Even if Figure 7 were representative of all painting, and not only of the tradition of the West, one would have to ask: What about other forms of art? Possibly the use of the figure can be extended from painting to sculpture and archi-

ecture. For, if we follow Hildebrand, “. . . it is required in all these arts that we should have a definite idea of a frontal plane and that we should read off the details of form as depth values from front to back.”<sup>18</sup> But further extension does not seem to be possible. In literature, for example, with nothing in the space of the imagination to correspond to the picture plane, Figure 7 is completely useless.

An arrow-graph of the aesthetic vector field which will serve the purpose of analysis in art may yet be devised. For the present, however, we must be satisfied with a representation which is no more than a suggestive symbol. The circle with radially converging arrows—but without the background of the egocentric pattern—would seem to be particularly appropriate because it is easily adjusted to represent art of any type and also because it can be interpreted in connection with Figure 5, the figure of the transitional vector pattern of experience. Let us settle then on Figure 3, which is a reproduction of the *Gestalt F* of Figure 5, except that a dotted circumference has been used instead of the solid outline of the *Gestalt* in order to indicate the elimination of the background. But in making this decision let us not overlook the fact that in application the figure may require adjustment. And by adjustment I do not mean adjustment for analysis of particular works of art; I have already admitted that a figure which can represent all arts is useless for such analysis. My concern here is with adjustments that are indispensable even within the limits of general consideration of features common to different works of art. But, to make the matter clearer, I had better mention some of the adjustments in question.

First, the arrows in Figure 3 suggest an extreme degree of opposition or contrast between the converging elements. This suggestion must be modified in order to do justice to such subtler forms of the aesthetic experience as thematic variation in which contrast, in the attenuated mode of variegation, is combined with subordination of opposed elements to the leading agency of a theme.

Second, the convergence of arrows upon the center *C* of Figure 3 can be interpreted only as the presence of a central dominating factor within the aesthetic vector field. In art, however, such presence is common but not without exception. Take a symphony in three movements. It is seldom that we can single out one movement, or one theme within the movement, as the most prominent part of the symphony.

Third, when a dominant factor happens to be present in a work of art, it need not be placed, as Figure 3 indicates, in a central position—at any rate, not in the literal or geometrical center. Let me quote, in this connection, Wölfflin's comment on *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, by Raphael.

With marvelous skill, the occupants of the boats are all brought into one great line, which rises by the rowers, mounts over the bending forms, finds its culminating point in the upright figure, then suddenly sinks and finally rises once more in the figure of Christ. Everything tends towards Him, He gives the movement its object, and, although insignificant in mass and placed quite at the edge of the picture, His figure dominates all the others.<sup>14</sup>

I do not expect disagreement with Wölfflin's analysis; and if there is no disagreement, the conclusion, that the center of the picture (in the case under consideration, the figure of Christ) may not coincide with the geometrical center, has been established. Wölfflin's illustration not only exposes the main reason why arrow-graphs are inadequate (showing that they cannot record the effects of impressiveness and centrality, which are largely the results of implicit factors), but contributes to a better understanding of pictorial balance. Since balance depends upon the relation of all the elements of a picture to the center, and since the elements may happen to be displaced from the center of the canvas, the question as to whether the picture is balanced or not cannot be answered on the basis of the explicit geometrical pattern of colors alone. Perception of the underlying, implicit vector field is indispensable.

## 16. AESTHETIC EMOTION

Emotion, as the etymology of the word indicates, is a dynamic state, an experience of tension and agitation. Emotions are moving and fluid. Hence the inevitable question: How are emotions related to vector fields? My thesis is that in experience a vector is an element of feeling and that an emotion is therefore identical with the vector pattern of an experience. There are two corollaries to the proposed definition. First, since the selfless field of aesthetic experience and the egocentric field are different vector patterns, aesthetic emotion is different from such ordinary emotions as joy, hate, sorrow, and the like. But, second, since both patterns are varieties of the vector field of experience, we are entitled to use the same generic term, "emotion," both in and outside art. As this preliminary statement indicates, I am in agreement with the influential group of aestheticians who believe that art is emotive, i.e., that a work of art is an expression of emotion. But the identification of emotion with vector field enables me to use the term "expression" with a measure of precision that I have not found elsewhere. The majority of aestheticians imply—when they assert that art is emotive—that it is not cognitive, and I disagree. In fact I shall attempt to show in a later chapter that the identification of aesthetic emotions with vectors representing implicit or latent factors in art enables me to argue that meaning and truth are essential elements in a work of art. For the present I am concerned with clearing the ground.<sup>15</sup>

In a common-sense view of the matter—if the majority of unscientific opinion can be regarded as common sense—feelings or emotions are subjective states. An emotion is commonly said to be in the mind or body of a person who happens to be excited or upset. And the common-sense notion is often shared by aestheticians who contend that art is an expression of feeling. But the notion and the contention are incompatible. For "expression," unless the term is grossly misused, means that what is expressed, in this case an emotion, is in the medium of expression, for example, in the object of art. I may be charged with a

misuse of the word "emotion," because in rejecting the common-sense notion I must speak of objective and therefore objectified emotions. And I am prepared to concede that because the word "emotion" is a noun, it induces reification and connotes exclusiveness of location or residence. If I had to choose between the two alternatives of exclusive location, between the two statements, "An emotion resides entirely in external objects" and "An emotion resides entirely within the mind or body of a person," I should, no doubt, favor the second statement—at any rate, in dealing with ordinary emotions outside of art. But I do not have to use the noun or make the choice. I can always communicate the intended meaning by using instead of the noun the adjective "emotive." Nor do I think that the issue is to be settled by semantic considerations alone. In my departure from common sense I have the support of science.

Prominent psychologists treat an emotion as a function of the total situation of experience, with both the subject and the object included, instead of regarding the emotion as the private property of a person. Take fear as an example. Psychologists who are close to my own position would point out that to report that somebody is afraid is to tell only one side of the story. To complete the account the reporter must add that somebody is afraid of an objectively fearful sight. And so with other emotions outside of art. To quote from Dewey,

An emotion is implicated in a situation, the issue of which is in suspense and in which the self that is moved in the emotion is vitally concerned. Situations are depressing, threatening, intolerable, triumphant. Joy in the victory won by a group with which a person is identified is not something internally complete, nor is sorrow upon the death of a friend anything that can be understood save as an interpenetration of self with objective conditions.<sup>16</sup>

Objectification of emotion does not mean that there is no such thing as an intense sense of personal involvement. Occasionally the sense of personal responsibility may even interfere with objectification. One may feel the contrast between oneself and the external object as the opposition between the source of the

emotion, on the one hand, and a mere stimulus or expedient for projecting a subjective state, on the other. For example, we sometimes know that the scenery appears gloomy only because it reflects the gloom of our own mood. But the experience of dissociation between self and emotion is at least as frequent as the other. To mention Koffka's example,<sup>17</sup> we often recognize our surroundings as gloomy without at the same time feeling in the least depressed ourselves. One may disown an emotion even while locating the latter within oneself. For instance, a man swayed by a passion may call himself "possessed," and discharging the passion through action would be like freeing himself from bondage. But objectification of emotion is complete only if dissociation from the self is also dissociation from any reference to the self. Accordingly, completely objectified feelings must be distinguished from such ordinary emotions as joy, anger, fear, and the like. The differentiation is of major importance for aesthetics because emotions of art are completely objectified.

Granted that emotion can be objective, and therefore objectified by, or embedded in, a work of art, what is the relation between aesthetic emotion and other objective contents of art? Let me restate the question. We have defined an aesthetic experience as the beholder's imaginatively reconstructed percept. This means that among the objective contents of art there are sense data and images. Our present contention is that art expresses emotion. The question is, How are expressed emotions related to sensory and imaginal contents? The question need not be confined to art. In its unrestricted form we are dealing with the problem of the relation between a sensory quality or qualities, on the one hand, and the corresponding objectified feeling, on the other. Let us use the hyphenated phrase, "feeling-tone." The phrase is convenient for an inquiry into our problem: The word "feeling" designates the emotive quality of an objective presentation, the word "tone" stands for the sensory quality of the same presentation, and the hyphen intimates a close connection between the emotive and the sensory qualities. But how close is the connection?

Incidental recognition or taking cognizance of sensory qualities in the course of some practical transaction—for example, a cursory acknowledgment of color and size in locating a book on the shelf—does not stir feeling in any appreciable degree and is not here in question. Our concern is with real perception in which discernment of, and dwelling upon, sense qualities is not secondary to other interests, i.e., with direct awareness of colors, sounds, or other sensations, each with a distinctive appeal of its own. This means that we are concerned with feeling-tones. For there is a general agreement among philosophers and aestheticians to the effect that definite perceptual attention to sense qualities is emotive. For example, Whitehead writes in his *Adventures of Ideas*: “We enjoy the green foliage of the spring greenly: we enjoy the sunset with an emotional pattern including among its elements the colours and the contrasts of the vision. It is this that makes Art possible.”<sup>18</sup> And, in a similar vein, D. W. Prall asserts in *Aesthetic Analysis* that “. . . pale blue feels milder than flaming red just as definitely and accurately as it feels pale blue.”<sup>19</sup> But neither Whitehead nor Prall nor, as far as I know, any other writer has attempted to analyze the relation between a sense quality and the associated feeling. Is the association indissoluble or is the sense quality separable from feeling? If separable, is one of them the cause of the other? And if not separable, may they not be simply identical?

One thing is clear: An objectified feeling has the same perceptual location and duration as the associated sense quality. And it is equally obvious that the relation between quality and feeling is much more intimate than mutual occupation of the same place and time. We can easily understand, moreover, that a percipient can not isolate the quality from the feeling if he has ever experienced them together within the same feeling-tone. For the feeling-tone plays the part of a context which conditions the component quality. Isolation from feeling would therefore turn the contextual quality into an absolute one, i.e., into something which would be no longer the same. It follows that the special form of separation—in which one of the two is the cause

and the other the effect—is likewise out of the question. Inseparability may be taken to mean that quality and feeling are to be identified with each other, and I think that the foregoing quotations show that both Whitehead and Prall favor the alternative of identification. Yet, intimate as the relationship between them is, the feeling and the sense quality within the same feeling-tone cannot be the same thing. The evidence against the alternative of identification is not only of considerable interest because it is conclusive but also because it turns out to be evidence in favor of my own alternative, according to which the emotive and the qualitative aspects of a feeling-tone are, respectively, equated to a vector (i.e., to an implicit or latent agency) and to an explicit or overt manifestation of the latter. Let me now introduce the evidence.

Consider a complex of feeling-tones. The complex may be, for example, a pattern of colors and shapes in a painting. Each quality of the complex is perceivable as a separate sense datum, a distinct color or shape. The corresponding feelings, on the other hand, are fused into a single emotion. Whereas sense qualities form a plurality, the associated feelings merge in a unity. Obviously a blendable entity cannot be identical with an entity that resists fusion. Therefore a feeling cannot be identical with a sense quality. At the same time, the fact that feelings blend whereas the associated sense qualities remain perceptibly distinct has a well-known analogue in physics. And the analogy makes plausible the hypothesis that feelings are vectors because the analogue is concerned with the composition of forces, i.e., with vectors. Suppose two men are pushing a heavy stone. Three forces are involved in the transaction; each man exerts a distinct effort against the weight, or force, of the stone. But although the men and the stone are distinct physical bodies, the three forces combine, in accordance with the parallelogram law, into a single force that determines the resulting movement of the stone. The analogy between the composition of feelings and the composition of forces is remarkably close. For example, just as the existence of the resultant force does not rule out of existence the component forces, so the existence of

the composite feeling does not obliterate the plurality of component feelings. A complex mood may make us feel at once gay and sad. In art, especially, the integral aesthetic emotion—the so-called aesthetic quality of the work of art taken as a whole—involves a simultaneous awareness of the contribution to unity from each of the principal constituent feelings even though some of them—like the push exerted by the men against the resistance of the stone—are matched against one another in the form of contrast or opposition. Unity in plurality, or even in opposition, would be altogether puzzling if feelings in transaction were not, like physical forces, vectors or implicit factors but fully actualized, explicit manifestations. By definition, explicit actual manifestations, whether of physical bodies or of sense qualities, are set either side by side or in opposition. The alternative of unity is excluded. This is not so with the latent agency of vectors, for a balanced, and therefore unified, field of tension may contain any number of conflicting tendencies or vectors. This seems to me a good reason for treating a composite emotion as a vector field and each of the component feelings as a single vector.

The proposed treatment is very simple. The three major types of vector field, the egocentric, the double-centered, and the selfless or aesthetic, correspond to three kinds of composite emotion. Ordinary emotions with a strong sense of personal involvement, such as joy, hate, and the like, are variations of the egocentric pattern. Disowned emotions, like the feeling of objectified gloom in Koffka's example, belong to the double-centered field. Finally, integral aesthetic emotions are species of the aesthetic vector field. Aesthetic emotions vary from one work of art to another because the intensity, number, and distribution of component feelings in each work of art are not the same. But the basic distinction is between composite aesthetic emotions, on the one hand, and all other composite emotions, on the other. The component, objectified feelings—considered in abstraction from the change which they must undergo within context—may be the same in and outside of art. However, the basic distinction in question is functionally correlated with the

fact that an objectified single feeling increases in intensity, not to speak of other contextual alteration, in the medium of art. This explanation of the matter makes necessary a digression concerning the relation between emotion and action. But the digression, in addition to having explanatory value, provides a confirmation of the hypothesis that feelings are vectors.

An emotion is a state of suspense, whether resolved or unresolved. And since suspense can be relieved through action, we must act to discharge an emotion. People possessed by passions are literally driven to action. But a haphazard or misdirected action would be useless. In order to bring relief action must be directed by feeling. This means that a feeling has direction. The scheme invites translation in terms of vectors. For a vector is a tendency. And so long as a tendency remains unactualized, it keeps one in suspense. Directed action is a mode of actualization and therefore relieves tension. Accordingly, the directedness of the vector coincides, in the present case, with the directedness of the feeling.

Let the feeling contain an element of aggression. This usually means that action is directed to establish contact with the provoking agency or object, for with contact (for example, in assaulting an enemy) the discharge of emotion is on the way. But suppose an obstacle prevents the establishment of contact. The result is inhibition of action which—unless it end with the sense of frustration—raises the level of emotional intensity. For example, remoteness of the object prevents immediate contact with it and may easily raise the intensity of the aggressive feeling. As a rule, perceptible distance within the range of human transactions stimulates emotion. However, if the distance is definite, or—what amounts to the same thing—if the object of an emotionally directed action is perceived with a definite location, eventual contact is practically assured, and emotive intensification is therefore likely to be negligible. An indefinitely located sense datum, on the contrary, is likely to stir feeling much more perceptibly. For this reason colors and shapes are seldom charged with the emotive power of an indefinitely located sound. As Bergson once remarked, a musical tone unexpectedly

heard in the quiet of the night is singularly moving. The indefinite location of the unexpected sound signifies to the hearer an elusive source that defies action on his part. However, in order to intensify feeling the indefiniteness of location must not counteract the sense of remoteness. Data perceivable within the body, however indefinitely located there—for example, odors and tastes—are not subject to the percipient's action and therefore are emotionally flat. Incidentally, this may be the basic reason why there is no art of odors or tastes in addition to the arts of colors and sounds (i.e., painting and music); odors and tastes are emotively negative because they are not amenable to the artist's control.

Remoteness together with indefinite location accounts for the extraordinary intensity with which sense qualities are felt within the medium of art. Take painting, for example. We know that pictorial space is dislodged from the receptacle of ordinary space. This means that in a picture figures are not at definite places except in relation to one another. Therefore, like Bergson's unexpected and isolated sound, a pictorial figure has the emotive appeal of a remote and elusive appearance. The reader may wonder whether, in the absence of reference to a percipient standpoint, visual appearances should be called remote at all. But let him consider that in pictorial space different figures appear to be at different distances from the plane of the picture. And since the picture plane is like a gate that opens upon the expanse of pictorial space to shut out of sight the natural space of definite places and distances, it is the gauge in accordance with which the spectator must perceive all portrayed figures alike to be indefinitely remote, although some of them at a greater distance than others. But whether or not we are satisfied with the description in terms of indefinite remoteness and location, the important point is that images appear in pictorial space in a way that paralyzes action and therefore keeps emotion undischarged and alive. The remarkable thing about it is that the pressure of emotion, with no outlet in action, not only does not cause frustration but, on the contrary, makes for the spectator's desire to maintain or prolong the state of excitement.

This brings us to the essential difference between an aesthetic emotion and emotions outside of art. There may be a close affinity of mood—as when we listen to the funeral march of the *Eroica* and when we attend a funeral service—but the fact remains that we are elated with the aesthetic emotion whereas the corresponding emotion outside of art would make us miserable or depressed. More generally, we enjoy an aesthetic emotion and do not want it to be discharged, whereas outside of art even an enjoyable emotion becomes intolerable unless given an outlet through action. Dewey has described the same difference in *Art as Experience* (page 78) as the contrast between expression of emotion and discharge of emotion. But Dewey failed to specify the meaning of the term “expression” in this connection. And his failure keeps him from realizing that an expressible aesthetic emotion must be different from a dischargeable, ordinary emotion; he contends that the same emotion can be either expressed, in art, or discharged, in life.

Expression in the medium of art does away with the urge to have the emotion discharged. But why? My answer is that expression is complete objectification of emotion and that completely objectified feelings are disconnected from the egocentric field of experience and therefore from selfish urges, including any urge to discharge anything or to have it discharged. Accordingly, it is in the nature of an expressible emotion or feeling to be free from involvement in self. And freedom from personal involvement is sufficient for the differentiation between aesthetic emotion and others. Let me restate the matter in terms of vectors. By hypothesis, emotions or feelings are vectorial, or are analyzable into vectors. But only outward vectors (i.e., tendencies that are directed away from the percipient self) are operative along the channels of discharge. Within the aesthetic vector field there are no outward vectors and therefore no tendency or disposition toward emotive discharge. The aesthetic process is directed by transverse vectors. This means that a composite aesthetic emotion is a drive that moves the beholder's perception from one image or presentation to another in an objectively prescribed cycle of a particular composition of art.

A composite aesthetic emotion is the dynamic counterpart of an integral, objective composition in the medium of sensory and imaginal contents. And the integral, objective composition expresses, or embodies, the composite emotion. Nothing of the kind can be said about emotions outside of art.

Expression of a composite aesthetic emotion by a work of art as a whole must not be confused with an incidental portrayal of emotion by some part of the whole. The portrayed emotion is an ordinary life-feeling like joy or anger. And the portrayal may be said to express emotion in the sense in which the verb "to express" is employed in the statement, "The face of the patient expresses suffering." But expression, in this new sense, need not move the onlooker. A doctor had better not suffer at the sight of a patient. And we must not be infected with Achilles' wrath if we want to enjoy Homer's description. Aesthetic emotion, on the contrary, is the one that is to be felt in the course of the aesthetic process. The facial expression of people around the body of Christ, in Raphael's *The Entombment*, in the Villa Borghese, is unquestionably grief. But, of course, to an admirer of Raphael's art the picture is a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The aesthetic emotion is enjoyment and not grief. If the spectator should be moved with grief at the representation, the spell of art would be broken. I do not deny that empathy—to be defined as "feeling into" something other than oneself, i.e., as an imaginative entry or ingression into the feelings of other agencies or beings—plays an important part in art. Nor do I deny that empathy complicates the matter and may require the present account to be qualified. I am sure, however, that the portrayal of a facial expression does not call for the spectator's response by empathy. For a facial expression often does not convey the feeling which the owner of the face would have if he could see his own face. Hence, if our feeling is derived from the sight of his facial expression, the feeling is not empathy, which, by definition, enables us to feel with the man the way he would have actually felt himself. If the facial expression of grief infects the onlooker with grief, the emotion is derived by sympathy and not by empathy. When and if

empathy contributes to aesthetic experience, the induced emotion is never coextensive with the total aesthetic effect and therefore is distinguishable from the composite aesthetic emotion. Whether by empathy or portrayal, an ordinary emotion may have its place in art but only in association with a part, not with the whole work of art, i.e., only as one constituent in co-operation with other components of content. Consequently, we must not say that a work of art expresses an ordinary emotion. At most we can say that a part of the work of art expresses an ordinary emotion. And even that would be only approximately correct. Since, in art, components in co-operation contextually modify one another, a constituent emotion is not, strictly speaking, the same as it would be outside of art and therefore is not ordinary.

The affinity of mood between an aesthetic emotion and a life-feeling is one reason for confusing them. For example, as the title "Funeral March" suggests, we are likely to mistake the aesthetic emotion expressed by, or embodied in, the second movement of the *Eroica* for the feeling of grief or sorrow caused by death and burial. But, to repeat an earlier observation, when we are aesthetically moved by Beethoven's symphony, we do not sink into a state of personal depression. Furthermore, the evidence of testimony is that personal bereavement fills out the sounds of a funeral march with irrelevant and painful associations that wreck the aesthetic effect. The truth is that an aesthetic emotion—much as it may appear to be akin to grief—must be pleasant to engage the beholder's interest and attention. Whether the kinship of mood is anything more than the correspondence between the slow and halting tempo of the march and the solemn yet jerky movements of bereaved people I do not know. But I am certain that the kinship does not extend beyond a similarity of generic traits. For, on the one hand, the life-feeling of grief can be said to be a generic emotion, the same emotion that countless bereaved men and women, generation after generation, have re-enacted with a negligible variety of manifestation. An aesthetic emotion, on the other hand, is always some distinctive specification of the generic mood. This

is to say that each of the alternative specifications of the same mood in the medium of art is a different aesthetic emotion corresponding to a different work of art. For example, the emotion expressed by the funeral march of the *Eroica* is not the emotion expressed by the funeral march of Chopin's sonata. And even if one of the number of funeral marches in music could be described as an expression of the life-feeling of bereavement, no other would be so describable since each of them expresses a different emotion. Let me sum up. Information to the effect that a composition is a funeral march tells us no more about Beethoven's funeral march than it would about a composition by Chopin or Grieg. In fact, any piece by Beethoven, even of a joyful mood, is emotively closer to his funeral march—at least we recognize the emotional style of the composer in both pieces—than to a funeral march composed by some other musician. Moods other than grief can be treated similarly. The life-feeling that belongs to a general mood is itself incurably generic. An aesthetic emotion of the same mood, on the contrary, is so specific that only one particular work of art can express it.

I have mentioned empathy in connection with art several times. I have also related aesthetic emotion to the experience of indefinite location or remoteness. Therefore I shall be called upon to explain how aesthetic emotion is related to empathy, on the one hand, and to psychical distance, on the other. Clearly, psychical distance can be interpreted in terms of, or even identified with, indefinite remoteness and location. The difficulty is that psychical distance and empathy appear to be, and have been generally considered as, incompatible with each other. Therefore it would seem that if I connect aesthetic emotion with psychical distance, I must repudiate the existence of a connection with empathy. A closer examination of the matter will show, however, that my conception of aesthetic emotion enables me to bring empathy and psychical distance together. Hence the prevalent opinion, according to which empathy and psychical distance cannot co-operate, is a mistake.

The experiencing individual is in a state of empathy when he feels himself into the object of experience. This is to say that empathy enables the percipient to feel *with* what appears in the field of perception rather than, as in the case of practical transaction, *toward* it. In *The Aesthetic Attitude* H. S. Langfeld illustrates the point by considering a statue with an outstretched hand. Our practical habits would prompt us to meet the gesture with a handshake. There is no such impulse in aesthetic experience because empathy intervenes to make the spectator assume the emotive attitude represented by the statue, i.e., to enable him to feel what the gesture expresses. As Langfeld's illustration shows, empathy is an emotive state of imaginatively disowning the emotion as if the latter were felt by an agency or body that appears within the field of perception. The state—which has been also described as the state of projecting the percipient's feeling into his percept or as the fact that the antithesis between myself and the object disappears—may be better understood by contrast with sympathy. To sympathize with another we must be aware that we stand apart from the object of our compassion; we need only imagine how we should feel ourselves if we were in his predicament. With empathy, on the contrary, the sense of separation between self and the object of empathic experience disappears. The absence of the sense of separation from the object of perception would seem to be interpretable as the absence of psychical distance.

Psychical distance has been defined by E. Bullough as the beholder's mental disengagement from the object of perception. According to Bullough, psychical distance is established with the imaginative withdrawal from the object and takes the form of "the marveling concern of the mere spectator." \* If we rush to conclude that empathy causes the absence of psychical distance, we admit that empathy and psychical distance are incompatible with each other. But consideration of Bullough's subsequent explanatory comments does not warrant the conclusion.

\* Quotations in this and the following two paragraphs are from M. Rader, *A Modern Book of Esthetics* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1935).

The gist of Bullough's explanation is that the separation between the beholder and the object of perception, or phenomenon, which makes for psychical distance, is a separation between mental factors or elements that are, respectively, relevant and irrelevant to the object or phenomenon. In the course of separation what is relevant is objectified within the experience, while what is irrelevant is completely disregarded. We set ourselves at a psychical distance from the phenomenon, Bullough points out, "by permitting only such reactions on our part as emphasize the 'objective' features of the experience, and by interpreting even our 'subjective' affections not as modes of our being but rather as characteristics of the phenomenon." With this interpretation of psychical distance we see that empathy and psychical distance are not opposed to each other but, on the contrary, in co-operation. A translation into the language of vectors shows that the theories of empathy and psychical distance are, in effect, telling us the same thing.

The absence of reference to self within the aesthetic vector field satisfies the condition of empathy, i.e., the fact that the antithesis between myself and the object disappears. This is to say that in aesthetic experience the beholder's feelings are identified with the vectors of the field and therefore objectified. The result of objectification, however, is the indefinite distance or remoteness of all presentations in art, and this is a form of psychical distance. For, on the one hand, a distance in aesthetic space or time is clearly not physical or measurable distance. And, on the other hand, since aesthetic remoteness makes for inaccessibility to practical transaction, aesthetic remoteness is exactly what Bullough means when he asserts that psychical distance puts the phenomenon "out of gear with our practical, actual self." Accordingly, at least in aesthetic experience, psychical distance, by setting our practical self outside the field of experience, turns out to be identical with empathy, which abolishes the distance between the emotive self and the object by objectifying the emotion. As Bullough puts it, the beholder empties himself of "subjective" affections to feel them in the guise of objective characteristics of the phenomenon. Therefore

—if we must answer the objection that the experience of psychical distance involves reference to self—we can point out that the self referred to is only an empty shell. The self as a distinct, practical and emotional agency is absent in the states of empathy, psychical distance, and aesthetic experience alike.

## T H R E E

### *The Aesthetic Process*

#### 17. AESTHETIC IMMEDIACY AND PROCESS

The aesthetic effect is felt as an immediate experience. Among most aestheticians, there is no disagreement on this point, and one writer, D. W. Prall, even defines aesthetics as "the science of the immediate."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, aesthetic immediacy is questionable. Much depends on the interpretation, of course. We may say that to meet the requirement of immediacy every element of the aesthetic effect must be embodied in a sensuous or imaginal presentation. The requirement excludes indirection of representation. But such exclusion may mean at least two things. It may mean, first, that every part of the aesthetic effect must be known through personal inspection. In this case the effect of a partly screened painting would be considered impaired even if the missing parts were described to the spectator; so far we are on firm ground. But if it is meant, second, that representation by memory is to be excluded and that aesthetic immediacy requires simultaneous presentation of all elements in the aesthetic effect, the interpretation is inconsistent with the aesthetic process. For if it takes time to go through all the parts of a work of art, if the work as a whole cannot be grasped at once, the requirement of simultaneous presentation cannot be met, and it would seem that only memory images can make up, at the completion of the experience, for the parts that have slipped into the past. The difficulty might be dismissed as purely academic if the aesthetic process were invariably short. When we are about to complete the reading of a short poem, the contents of the earlier lines may be present in our memory with such clarity and energy as to be almost indistinguishable from the impressiveness of their original presentation. "Music, when soft voices die, vibrates in the memory. . . ." But the aesthetic

process often takes a considerable amount of time. It may take a year or more to read all the volumes of Marcel Proust's novel, and toward the end the memory of an early chapter is likely to be inaccurate and uncertain. The longer the aesthetic process, the more apparent the discrepancy between direct presentation and representation by means of memory images. In an attempt to reconcile aesthetic immediacy with process we must try something better than memory or any other kind of representation.

Immediacy is a general problem of aesthetics. To confine the problem to the temporal arts one must accept—something that I am not prepared to do—the common differentiation between temporal arts, such as music, and spatial arts, such as painting. I should argue that, in some form or other, process is inevitable in painting or in any other spatial art. A Chinese scroll landscape, which must be slowly unrolled to give the spectator an impression of a journey through the unfolding countryside, is obviously organized in time as well as in space. And even when—as in Western art—the total area of a picture appears at a glance, it takes time to discern details of color and shape and to correlate them according to their place and function in the order of composition. Aestheticians who would concede the existence of process in any kind of aesthetic experience are, nevertheless, likely to argue that time is essential, and therefore in conflict with immediacy, in temporal arts only because there alone the order of succession is invariable and prescribed—you cannot begin a poem in the middle and read the first line last—whereas inspection of a picture may start at any point and proceed from there in any direction. But why should a variable order of process be any less damaging to the experience of immediacy than an invariable one? And even if it were, the argument does not convince me. On the one hand, I often find prescribed order in spatial arts. To take an example, as the spectator looks at Michelangelo's *The Creation of the Sun and Moon*, his eye invariably follows the same path of portrayed movement, advancing with the figure of the Creator, on the right side, and then, on the left side, moving back into depth after the

receding figure. In the process of learning, on the other hand, we sometimes disregard the prescribed order of succession, even in the so-called temporal arts. In order to master a difficult passage in a poem, or in a piece of music, we may connect the passage with others, however distant they happen to be in the normal sequence of context. This is not to say that consideration of the order of process, or of anything that indicates the existence of special types of experience, is irrelevant to the problem of immediacy. To recognize a variety of aesthetic experience is to allow for different conditions of correlation between process and immediacy, each corresponding to a different type of experience. Accordingly we need not be surprised if we fail to find a general solution of the problem; readjustment for different kinds of art is to be expected. But the relevant difference is not the dubious opposition between temporal and spatial arts.

The variety of aesthetic experience, to be taken into account in dealing with the problem of immediacy, can be established even within the range of the same art. Consider music, for example, and compare a musical experience of the ordinary kind with the unusual experience described by Mozart.

All this fires my soul, and, provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodised and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once.<sup>2</sup>

Other musicians have questioned the truth of this statement, not because the letter from which the statement is quoted may be spurious but because their own experience has convinced them that such features of temporal development as suspense and, after the climax has been reached, resolution are essential to music. Mozart, his critics charge, does not solve the problem but merely reasserts aesthetic immediacy at the expense of process. And one of the critics, D. F. Tovey, describes a musician's typical experience as follows: "While a tune is completing its symmetry the mind follows it expectantly from point

to point, comparing the past with the present and anticipating the future, but if the phrase is memorable to a normal musical mind it thereafter vibrates in the memory as a unit.”<sup>3</sup> We may, of course, try to minimize the difference between the two descriptions, and point out that Tovey’s admission that a musical phrase can appear as a unit is, except for a possibly mistaken interpretation of unity in terms of memory images, essentially the same thing as Mozart’s contention that the parts of a piece of music can be heard not in succession but all at once. But since Tovey is concerned with relatively short units of music, his interpretation need not be mistaken for such units; in fact he is in complete agreement with the sentiment expressed in the line from Shelley, “Music, when soft voices die, vibrates in the memory. . . .” And even if Tovey were mistaken, any other interpretation would still imply, in order to fit in with the general tenor of his account, a concern with a type of experience that differs from that of Mozart. There is the difference between the unity of a single musical phrase and the unity of a piece of music in its entirety. And, even more essential, while Mozart describes immediacy that can be felt antecedently to performance, Tovey’s unified musical phrases, even if not products of memory, are retroactive; each appears as a unit at the moment of its completion in performance.

The hypothesis that the same aesthetic effect can appear with a different degree or measure of actualization in experience allows for a variety of aesthetic experience that would do justice to both Mozart and Tovey, without damage to the aesthetic postulate. The permissible variety ranges between two extreme types, one belonging to the order of learning, the other to the order of acquired familiarity. The first recital of a poem exemplifies experience of the order of learning. Each line of the poem comes to the hearer as a novelty, and he must follow them all, in their standard order of succession, before he can become aware, at the completion of the last line, of the poem as a whole. His awareness of aesthetic immediacy or unity can be only retroactive. And, as a rule, a retroactive actualization of the aesthetic effect is markedly incomplete. Some lines of the poem, if

not the whole work, must be read over again, and sometimes studied or analyzed, before correction of faulty impressions and understanding of the more difficult passages can be assured. On the other hand, in contrast with the incompleteness of actualization in the period of learning, consider the experience of mastery and control that comes with complete familiarity, for example, when a poem has been memorized. We immediately recognize the poem that we know by heart; therefore, we must be aware of its aesthetic immediacy the moment we hear a single line, and the quoted line need not be the last one, but may be picked out from any place within the total context. And, as our sense of the whole effect is no longer dependent upon the sequence or completeness of a performance, we are enabled to abstract any passage, in order to trace its bearing upon others, regardless of their original place in the context, without bringing about distortion or falsification. The contrast between the order of learning and the order of familiarity would be more striking if it were not for the existence of intermediate forms, some closer to one extreme and some closer to the other. In fact the majority of our aesthetic experiences belong to the order of intermediate forms. And most of them, including a normal experience of music as described by Tovey, bear marked family resemblance to the extreme of the order of learning. This is one reason why so many critics are skeptical about the other extreme. And skepticism with regard to Mozart's own account is particularly strong because, as I am ready to admit, the degree of independence from the order of an actual performance that familiarity incorporates into our aesthetic experience falls short of the complete independence that Mozart claims. One may concede that Mozart's experience was extraordinary, but his command of music was also extraordinary. To the mastery that a beholder acquires because of familiarity we must add the creative control in the experience of a great musician. Although the former is not equal to the latter, an approximation to the ideal may be expected.

G. F. Stout's theory of cumulative disposition <sup>4</sup> gives a plausible account of the aesthetic process of the order of learning.

The theory, in application to the first reading of a poem, can be stated as follows. Let the sequence of lines of the poem be designated by the sequence of natural numbers. It is then seen that the poem as a whole is not represented by the sequence of numbers, because the latter fails to represent the residue that each line leaves behind in the mind of the reader. Cumulative disposition is the mental residue from all the lines that have been already read. Take the process at the completion of the second line, for example. The effect of the line is modified by the active residue from the first line. And so with subsequent lines: The effect is always the product of co-operation between the given passage and the cumulative disposition from the preceding lines. If we denote a disposition by a subscript, the effect of the second line is represented by the symbol  $z_1$ , and the total experience of the poem  $n$  lines long by the sequence of symbols  $1, z_1, z_2, \dots, z_{n-1}$ . The subscript  $n-1$  stands for the experience of aesthetic immediacy with regard to the poem as a whole. The experience takes place only at the occurrence of the  $n$ th line, the last one; and even then in the mode of a disposition, since the only actual term at the time is the last line. Similarly with the experience of immediacy in reading a novel. Only the current chapter is the reader's immediate actuality; nevertheless, cumulative disposition from the preceding chapters gives him a sense, or impression, of fusion of the present with a retroactive immediacy. Obviously the theory can be applied to other arts. Even Tovey's account of the experience of music fits in, provided, of course, that his "memorable phrase" is reinterpreted in the sense of Stout's cumulative disposition. Let me add, in favor of the theory, and in order to dispel the air of mystery about cumulative disposition, that we may identify the latter with the vector field of the aesthetic experience. This is to say that we are prepared to treat the sense of aesthetic immediacy not as an explicit sense datum but as a field of tension to be resolved only at the end of the process of the order of learning.

Cumulative disposition is the residue of an actual process. Hence a different explanation is in order for an aesthetic ex-

perience that dispenses with process. Consider, for example, an aesthetic experience of the order of familiarity. Our problem here is the occurrence of the aesthetic effect within the span of a single present, in complete or partial independence of the process of performance. To appreciate the significance of the problem let us note that consideration of a protensive present is not altogether avoidable even when the experience is of the order of learning. We have granted to Stout that such running items in a temporal series as the line that has been reached in reciting a poem exemplify the actual present. But on Stout's own account such running items are, in their turn, analyzable into sequences of shorter intervals. According to Stout, as we read a sentence or a paragraph, we grasp the complete meaning only when we reach the last word, which is the sole actual datum, and understand it in relation to the cumulative disposition from words that are no longer present. It would seem, however, that the last word is not an actual datum or present either, since it too can be analyzed into a temporal sequence of syllables or sounds. No matter where we stop, short of a durationless instant, we must face the problem of an actual present coextensive with a temporal series of shorter terms, although in the case of a single word the included series happens to be very brief. And the difficulty is unavoidable because no sensory or imaginal datum is ever strictly instantaneous. There is hardly any shorter duration, in an aesthetic experience, than a single sound in a staccato musical phrase; but as every student practicing staccato learns, to produce the required illusion of a sequence of unextended tonal units is to demonstrate a high degree of skill. And that is not all. There is another consideration, in connection with Stout's account, which leads away from the concept of cumulative disposition toward the requirement of a protensive present. Whereas cumulative disposition, at every stage of the aesthetic process, represents the past, anticipation—something that Stout has surprisingly overlooked—represents the future. Anticipation, even at the first reading of a poem, may be quite accurate in some respect, for example, with regard to rhythm, measure, or tempo. Expectation of a development in content,

on the other hand, is usually vague and obscure; but if the reader is acquainted with other works by the same artist, the degree of accuracy may be greatly increased. And, of course, upon repetition of performance, anticipation, except for being directed forward, does not differ from cumulative disposition. Nevertheless, difference in direction remains and requires notational representation. Numbers with subscripts are not sufficient to render the complexity of the situation. Let us supplement them with superscripts to denote anticipations. For example, to represent what happens when the fourth line of a poem is reached, we shall not be satisfied with the symbol  $4_s$ ; we must use instead the symbol  $4_s^{n-4}$ , where  $n-4$  stands for the corresponding anticipation. The new complex symbol represents the complete series, the whole set of lines of the poem, and therefore may be used to symbolize the present which is coextensive with the total aesthetic effect. For, although the representation of the series is still associated with one of its terms at a time, familiarity with the work of art robs the single term of its prominence. The reason is clear. The more we are at home with a poem, the more insensitive we become to the difference between two such consecutive experiences as the symbols  $4_s^{n-4}$  and  $5_s^{n-5}$  designate. And the failure at discrimination can mean only that the original contrast between an actual datum, on the one hand, and the factors of disposition or anticipation, on the other, is no longer outstanding. This is to say that the opposition between the experience of a sequence, Tovey's kind of experience, and that of a single but inclusive datum, Mozart's kind, becomes with repeated performance progressively faint. The aspect of immediacy gains at the expense of the aspect of process. Therefore, reference to a protensive present is indispensable.

But to appreciate the importance of a problem is not yet to solve it. And since there is no available theory of time that would satisfactorily account for the protensive present, we must try our hand at working one out. Let us not be deterred by the objection against digression into the field of ontology. Aesthetics, as a part of the philosophy of art, must inevitably be in frequent touch with other branches of philosophy; and in the

present case aesthetics has the advantage of not being entirely indebted to philosophy, but of contributing to a better understanding of the nature of time. For, on the one hand, there is no abrupt discontinuity between aesthetic immediacy and the ordinary experience of the present outside of art. Yet the span of the present outside of art is too brief to encourage scrutiny or analysis. And, on the other hand, the experience of time in art is distinguished by a conspicuous interplay between the aspects of immediacy and process. The complexity of aesthetic time, similar to that of aesthetic space, serves to lift the aesthetic effect out of the framework of ordinary experience. But since there is no abrupt discontinuity, since aesthetic ambivalence is an interplay of aspects, each fulfilling a tendency already present in nature, the departure from nature takes in art the form of a heightened sense of time. This is not to say that the departure, so understood, is a small matter. On the contrary, according to the outstanding artists of our century, Proust and Mann among them, the sense of time is to be identified with the sense of reality. And there is no doubt that when, as is the rule with life outside of art, the flight of reality remains unnoticed, we are left with the impression of a dream. Conversely, we can expect art, as it brings out a vivid image of time, to make for an alert and concrete experience which is literally of a higher degree of reality. And we can be assured that in dealing with time in art we are about to open one of the most significant chapters of aesthetics.

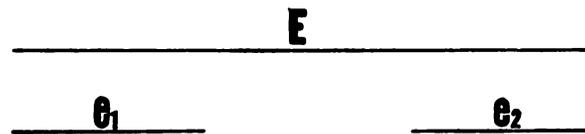
#### 18. THE PARADOX OF THE PRESENT

We have already accepted the proposition that the present in an aesthetic experience is never instantaneous. Let us now generalize: Whether in or outside of experience, whether in art or in nature, there is no such thing as an instant or durationless moment. There is an old puzzle that illustrates our generalization. Time consists of the present, past, and future; but the past no longer exists, the future does not yet exist, and there is no time within the instantaneous present; hence there is no time

at all. We must, of course, reject at least one of the premises of the puzzle in order to avoid the absurd conclusion. If we reject the notion of instants, the other premise (the contention that the past and future do not exist) is also, as we shall see later, no longer tenable. On the other hand, the stipulation of a momentary present can be criticized on independent grounds. If time were a series of moments, the series would be either discrete or a continuum. A discrete series would have gaps between any two consecutive instants. A gap of time is equivalent to complete annihilation of the world, which is to be reinstated into existence at the next moment. The notion of the intermittent existence of the world is not only fantastic but unempirical, because in experience temporal change is continuous. To be consistent with the evidence of experience we must ask, Is continuity of temporal change compatible with time taken as a series of instants? The answer is Yes, but only if the continuum is mathematical. If we assert that our experience does not have the continuity of a mathematical continuum, we must be prepared to argue against Russell's considered opinion to the contrary.<sup>5</sup> To avoid argument we turn to another point of criticism. The mathematical scheme requires that, given any two terms of the continuum, there be a third term between the two. But since, by hypothesis, the terms are moments, to be both given they must be copresent moments. And since two moments are present, it follows that there is an infinite number of moments, likewise present, between them. Therefore, if temporal sequence is a mathematical continuum, the present must be protensive.

A protensive present can be identified with a single event in the making, i.e., with an event while it lasts. The requirement of singularity is essential in order to exclude events which are, in fact, sequences of single events. We want to exclude events like the battle of Waterloo, with such subordinate events as the killing of five horses under Marshal Ney, because their duration is too long to be treated as a present. When Ney's fifth horse was shot down, the other four killings were in the past. To exemplify the indivisible present, let us take the occurrence

of a simple sense quality that endures just long enough to be perceived with no exhibition of internal change. Suppose a clap of hands is heard. The brief period of the sound belongs to the present. Are we entitled to assume the event to be a manifestation of unadulterated immediacy, with no trace of temporal succession discernible within it? Far from it. If no clap could take a shorter time, we should have the right to say that the event were not divisible into a sequence of occurrences. But so long as we are aware that the event does not happen strictly at an instant, the appreciable duration, however brief, is analyzable into a succession of terms. And comparison with other happenings, of shorter duration, demonstrates the correctness of such analysis. While the child was clapping her hands, and before the sound was over, we heard the click of a camera; a snap-shot was taken. To describe the situation we say: "The click was simultaneous with an early phase of the clap." Accordingly, we analyze the present event into a succession of phases which are called, respectively, earlier and later. Figure 8 is a diagram of the situation.



**Fig.8**

A single segment of a line represents a single event; and the length of a segment the duration of the event. While the present event  $E$  lasts, two events of shorter duration,  $e_1$  and  $e_2$ , occur one after the other. But a part of  $E$  is coextensive with  $e_1$  and another with  $e_2$ . Accordingly, we distinguish within  $E$  an earlier phase, the part coextensive with  $e_1$ , and a later phase, coextensive with  $e_2$ ; and, since  $e_2$  succeeds  $e_1$ , we say that the later phase of  $E$  succeeds an earlier phase. Hence the paradox of the protensive present. On the one hand, both phases within  $E$  are parts of the same present; they are copresent and exist together. On the other hand, the same phases are, in relation

to one another, earlier and later, and therefore exist in succession. Succession, in this connection, means temporal succession. If succession were spatial, like the succession of points, from left to right, on a segment of a line, there would be no paradox; the successive points of the segment are given together. In the case of a temporal succession, on the contrary, only one term is supposed to be given at a time. Temporal succession is replacement of one term by another in actuality, or, since only the present event can be actual, in the range of the present. This observation enables me to express the paradox in its most striking form. A protensive present both includes and excludes the same phases.

Once the existence of phases has been recognized, the restriction to occurrences of single unchanging qualities may be removed. There is a weaker condition of continuity of transition from phase to phase that would, likewise, keep the latter from falling apart into a plurality of distinct events. For even if one phase is qualitatively different from another, the inclusive event preserves its unity so long as the phases are not marked off into so many discrete joints but set in a pattern of continuous gradation. Let us say then that the present event exhibits either a single sense quality or a number of such, changing as well as unchanging, subject to two reservations; the pattern of change must be a continuum and, if the change is temporal, capable of an alternative (in this case, instantaneous) presentation in space. The solar spectrum may serve as an illustration. A picture of the spectrum in a physics text shows the familiar continuum, with the variety of hues shading off into one another, simultaneously. But a rapid projection of the spectrum upon a motion-picture screen would demonstrate the same pattern in succession, one hue after another, and yet, as the fulfillment of our two conditions entitles us to say, within the span of a single event. By way of further generalization, we may point out that our reservations can be dispensed with whenever the fulfillment of some other conditions ensures internal cohesion of phases equally well. In particular, the requirement of two alternative

presentations (one a simultaneous complex and the other a succession) restricts the span of the present to a short duration and would be out of place if the power of cohesion sustained the event during a considerable period of time. As to the effect of continuity, a fusion comparable in strength to that which comes with perceptual gradation can be a result of habit. Consider, for example, the result of a habitual association of words, such as "Good-by." Two successive utterances, two distinct events, are required to say "Good-by." But our familiarity with the combination makes us hear the two words "Good" and "by" fused into an undivided phrase, a single actual occurrence.

The conception of a protensive present has brought forth the idea that the span of the present may vary in length. And the fact of a variable span opens the possibility of an extensible span, and with it a better understanding of aesthetic immediacy. The expansion of the present in ordinary experience is, admittedly, negligible. Yet, if the present can easily expand beyond the duration of a "Good-by" to become coextensive with the somewhat longer "How do you do?" temporal expansion, under favorable circumstances, may continue. And, of course, the most favorable circumstances are to be found in the resources of art. For one way, though not the only one, of looking at the make-up of an aesthetic experience is to envisage each factor as a particular contribution to the expansion of the span of the present, for example, from a single musical phrase to a whole passage or even, as a maximum of aesthetic immediacy, to the work of art in its entirety.

Let me illustrate our approach by means of the factor of repetition, a refrain in a poem or a recurring phrase in music. The mechanism of repetition is compensation; the present is sustained despite expansion because of a concomitant contraction of the range of content. Or, to adopt the already established distinction between time in art and time in nature, repetition adds to the amount of ordinary time within the present (so many seconds must elapse through the recurrence of a phrase) at the expense of aesthetic time, in which the recurrent phrase brings

us right back into the past, to an earlier phase of our experience. The situation is exactly analogous to that of a squirrel in a drum. The squirrel remains at the same place (a symbol of the sustained present), in spite of the frantic movement forward (a representation of the advance of time), because advance is counteracted by the backward revolution (corresponding to contraction in aesthetic duration) of the drum. The mechanism of compensation has not been sufficiently understood because the usual interpretation of repetition, based on the experience of recurrence in ordinary time, outside of art, emphasizes duplication, or multiplication, of instances, in disregard of their essential aesthetic identity. Bergson's observation, that the memory of a past occurrence excludes the possibility of exact recurrence, is probably correct for ordinary experience or even for an aesthetic experience of the order of learning. But when a work of art has been already mastered, recurrence—if we disregard the case of an element repeated in immediate succession to increase emphasis—literally brings the beholder back to an earlier phase of his experience before that phase has slipped into the past.

The point can be illustrated by the refrain from Tennyson's "Mariana":

She only said, "My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

With each occurrence of the refrain there is exact repetition that serves, except for the word "aweary," which recurs for the sake of emphasis, to reduce change in order to keep the refrain as a whole within the immediacy of the present. And the refrain as a whole recurs, with only minor changes of a word or two, in every stanza of the poem, six times. Let me number the occurrences of the refrain, each in accordance with the number of the corresponding stanza, and, for the moment, disregard the slight variation of wording. The usual interpretation would distinguish between 1 and 2, 2 and 3, etc., on the ground that

aesthetic experience grows from one stanza to another. But suppose we reread the poem. What number shall we assign to the refrain in the first stanza, on the second reading? If the usual interpretation is followed, the number should be 8. But the aesthetic postulate, or the essential identity of the aesthetic effect on both readings, rules out any but the first seven numbers. And since there is no reason for preferring one particular number to others, there is no point to the assignment of numerals at all. This is another way of saying that the distinct occurrences of the refrain are telescoped into a numerically identical (i.e., single) aesthetic experience.

If the reader mistrusts a formal argument, let him turn to the contents of the poem. With her attitude of utter desolation, which the refrain is to express, Mariana envisages the regular course of life as if it were a confused and meaningless dream. To reflect the hopelessness of the outlook, the attitude remains invariant to the end; there is complete indifference to time, i.e., to the changing world. Hence the recurrence of the refrain does not mean each time a new statement of attitude on the part of Mariana, not even as a renewed protestation that her attitude is still the same—for that would add a damaging touch of insincerity. Each time the refrain recurs, we simply return to the same place in our experience of the poem. But what about the variations of wording in recurrence? Do they not force an advance in experience? Let us examine the variations of the “Mariana” refrain. The substitution of “night” for “life” is the only change in the second stanza; instead of “My life is dreary” we read “The night is dreary.” And that substitution does not change the contextual import of the refrain. For the context of the first stanza makes it clear that Mariana’s is a life of inaction, and night can be understood to represent the life of inaction. But the verbal change gives the opportunity for changing “night” into “day” in the third stanza; and the change, with the implication that Mariana’s life is dreary whether it be day or night, leads us back to the original wording. There are no other changes until we reach the refrain of the last stanza:

Then, said she, "I am very dreary,  
 He will not come," she said;  
 She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,  
 O God, that I were dead!"

Change would be apparent if this version were to replace the original refrain in the first stanza with no regard for subsequent development of content within the total context. "I am very dreary," as compared with the original "My life is dreary," is a more human and pathetic appeal. The future tense in "He will not come" adds an element of finality to the expression of frustration. But these changes are foreshadowed in the original version provided we take it within the context of the whole poem short of the last occurrence of the refrain.

Variation in recurrence, as this illustration is intended to show, does not impede a return to an earlier phase of the process—although the recaptured past must be viewed in a somewhat different perspective—because each occurrence merely brings into the open, or turns explicit, elements that in an antecedent version, taken within a sufficiently large context, are already present in a latent or implicit state. This is not to say that transformation of a latent factor into an explicit entity, or a change in the way of viewing the same contents, leaves to variation a negligible part. To prevent an early phase from fading into the past, the phase must be kept continuously interesting—a requirement that the dull beats of unvaried repetition would fail to meet. Nor do I mean that, in an account of the total aesthetic effect, contraction of aesthetic time, which sustains immediacy, can be divorced from the concurrent sense of expansion of natural time in the process of generating variations. And if my position appears to court paradox, let me remind the reader that the logic of art, with the display of ambivalence as an essential part of it, is not to be judged by the standards of elementary logic. We have already found ambivalence in pictorial space, a superposition of depth upon a surface pattern with a footing in natural space. And we need be no longer surprised to come across a similar ambivalence in the case of time in art. As aesthetic time contracts, while some

phase within the protensive present is being telescoped into an earlier one, our contact with natural time is preserved through the sense of the uninterrupted progress of the latter. We may admit that varied recurrence is a paradox, the paradox of the sense of identity that exists in spite of and because of variation. But this paradox is no more than a form of the paradox of the protensive present itself, of an experience that combines immediacy with process. And I have not yet come to a resolution of the paradox of the present. I have as yet established only that, by turning expansion of natural time into contraction of aesthetic time, art can maintain aesthetic immediacy through a period which, as in the case of a Mozart, may reach the length of a musical composition.

To make headway toward the resolution of the paradox we must consider another aspect of the situation represented in Figure 8. We have already identified actuality with the immediacy of the present. Figure 8, however, introduces the inequality of temporal spans and, with it, a complication. Suppose the span of my present experience coincides with  $e_2$ . The event  $e_1$  is in my past and therefore no longer actual. Nevertheless the past, the region or period of time occupied by  $e_1$ , is not unreal or nonexistent. For  $e_1$  is coextensive with (i.e., occupies the same period as) the earlier phase of  $E$ , and, since both phases within  $E$  are copresent and since one of them is simultaneous with the present  $e_2$ , the period of  $e_1$  still exists. We need not inquire into the ontological status of the past except for the observation that, from the standpoint of the present at  $e_2$ , the region of  $e_1$  exists, literally, in a state of potentiality or disposition. The past, in contrast to the present extension of the actual event,  $e_2$ , is the backward extensibility of the present, i.e., a potentiality to be annexed to the present by extension of the span of  $e_2$  backward to  $E$ . And, even from the standpoint at  $E$ , incorporation into the present in the guise of an early phase does not involve a complete loss of potentiality. An early phase is not in the past. And since copresence with later phases is an effect of reorganization—as the evidence of repetition in art demonstrates—the past recaptured is potentiality that has been trans-

formed into a contextual semblance of actuality. But, since the earlier phase of *E* is not a duplicate of the actual event  $e_1$ , actualization in that semblance remains incomplete. Copresence with other phases signifies, for each phase within *E*, partiality, whereas to be present, and therefore actual, means to be a complete event. A phase, in fusion with its neighbors, lacks the explicitness that marks off one complete event from others in a sequence. And to lack explicitness is to exist implicitly, i.e., in a latent state. Hence a phase within the context of *E* is not fully actualized but remains, in a measure, in a state of potentiality.

The common error of treating a phase within the present as if it were an actual entity comes from a confusion between the phase and some actual event when the two happen to be co-extensive or simultaneous in natural time. A "Good-by" from the leave-taking friend may serve as an illustration. The phrase is heard in two discernible phases; there are a disposition to hear the word "good" and a disposition to hear the word "by" as two separate words in a sequence. Such dispositions are potentialities that might undergo transformation in actualization. Suppose our parting friend stops short of uttering the word "by." The interruption would result in an actual occurrence of the word "good." And the difference between the actual occurrence and the corresponding phase of a completed phrase is undeniable. The speaker's "good," with no word following, would be naturally understood as an expression of approval or praise, on his part, whereas no such interpretation is placed upon the phrase "Good-by." Yet the difference has been generally overlooked because of a failure to distinguish between the speaker's and the hearer's "Good-by." The speaker's "Good-by" is a sequence of two actual events, the utterance of the sound "good" followed by that of the sound "by." The two sounds, on the other hand, are fused in hearing within the span of a present; and the hearer's misinterpretation of his own experience comes through assuming inadvertently the attitude of the speaker.

Correction, to the effect that phases are only would-be oc-

currences and that actualization would pulverize the extended span of the present into a sequence of shorter events, may be made by the hearer more readily on the evidence of poetry when he observes that diction, rhythm, and meaning co-operate to strengthen the fusion of words. Let me illustrate with a piece that is sufficiently familiar to the reader to be felt within the compass of aesthetic immediacy:

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from heaven or, near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

The sounds of Shelley's verse, especially the alliterative "t," contrive to present what the words describe, the impression of a spontaneous outburst of trilling. But the impression is sustained through the fusion of words. For, while recitation requires a sequence of distinct acts, to a hearer the words are copresent, and linked together, because they appear in a state of at least partial potentiality. Should the performer force his audience to dwell on the actual occurrence of separate words by deliberately pausing after the enunciation of each, the effect of aesthetic immediacy would be lost.

The resolution of the paradox of the protensive present is now in sight. Aesthetic immediacy, a togetherness of phases within the extended span of the present, is a fact of experience; on the other hand, the appearance of temporal succession, from an earlier to a later phase, must be discounted as an aesthetic illusion. So not only is Mozart's claim to an experience free from process entirely justified, but each of us, as soon as familiarity has brought the work of art within the scope of immediacy, can claim essentially the same thing. This is not to say that there is no variety in aesthetic experience, or that Mozart's particular variety is not extraordinary. Nor is this meant to deny that the regular type of aesthetic experience involves process. The truth, as I see it, is that a regular aesthetic experience is a correlation of two independent varieties

of experience, of which one yields immediacy while the other takes the form of a process. To take Figure 8 as the graph of a standard aesthetic experience, the inclusive present of *E* represents an experience of immediacy free from process; the two shorter presents, *e*<sub>1</sub> and *e*<sub>2</sub>, symbolize the correlated experience of succession; and the observable coextension of each shorter present with a different phase of *E* enables us to understand the reason for the illusion of succession within the inclusive span. As far as the function of time is concerned, the real correlation between *E*, on the one hand, and *e*<sub>1</sub> and *e*<sub>2</sub>, on the other, is simply that while the inclusive present endures, the shorter events replace one another in actuality; and the word "while" in this statement designates a period of natural time. The paradox is resolved the moment we differentiate—without losing sight of their correlation through a period of natural time—between the sense of togetherness and the sense of succession as mutually exclusive aspects within the complex of an aesthetic experience.

My position must not be confused with Stout's. Both Stout and I differentiate between the experience of immediacy and the experience of succession; and we both explain the former in terms of potentiality or disposition and the latter in terms of successive actual events. But, unlike Stout, who wants to connect the two component varieties of experience only at the moment of natural time that brings the process to a close, I believe that, in the case of familiarity with a work of art, the sense of aesthetic immediacy endures throughout the process. My objection to Stout's argument is that in it the total aesthetic experience is equated with its consummation. But to convince the reader that my position is more adequate, let me resort to the actual test of asking him to recite Blake's poem, "To the Muses":

Whether on Ida's shady brow  
Or in the chambers of the East,  
The chambers of the Sun, that now  
From ancient melody have ceased;

Whether in heaven ye wander fair,  
 Or the green corners of the earth,  
 Or the blue regions of the air  
 Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,  
 Beneath the bosom of the sea,  
 Wandering in many a coral grove;  
 Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

How have you left the ancient love  
 That bards of old enjoy'd in you!  
 The languid strings do scarcely move,  
 The sound is forced, the notes are few.

The shape of the poem—if we should, following Stout's reasoning, place the weight of actuality entirely on the last words—would have to be imagined as a line of ascension with the concluding phrase symbolized by a segment at the top. Our actual experience, however, proves that image to be a complete distortion. Actually the climax is reached with the break in the rhythm of the first three stanzas, at the words "How have you left the ancient love." The preceding stanzas roll up one after the other as three waves of rising emotion; the wide sweep of the climactic words releases the poet's accumulated tension of disappointment at the departure of the Muses—as in reciting we are forced, with the word "How," to let out a deep breath—so that the lines that follow, including the last one, far from occupying the foreground, serve as the foil to an anticlimax. The actual shape of the poem, the three waves merging into a single front to resolve themselves, as it were, at the shore of subdued lamentation, must be presented (to be perceived undistorted) within the span of immediacy that extends backward, beyond the moment of the concluding line, over the whole length of the poem. For the shape is four-dimensional: The distribution of emphasis that does justice to each and every line of the poem requires an extended stretch of natural time which cannot be telescoped into a brief stage of consummation at the last line with a momentary, and therefore,

negligible, prominence reserved for the final phase of an experience.

Contact with natural time enlivens the experience of aesthetic immediacy—and thereby keeps its span from disintegration—in a way which I can only conjecture. The basis of my conjecture, of which the concluding section of the present chapter is an exposition, can be summed up in a single statement as follows: Aesthetic immediacy is an aspect of the synthesis of the beholder's perspectives upon the work of art and may be compared to a dynamic image that integrates the profile of a familiar face with the front view and with other appearances corresponding to different angles of vision. But a perspectival synthesis in art cannot be left, at the mercy of the imagination, in a latent state but must be kept alive by actualization, i.e., by correlation with an actual shift from one perspective to another. My conjecture is that the perspectival shift takes place outside the span of immediacy along the direction of the flow of natural time, provided the latter acquires articulation and discipline through the combined effect of such technical devices as measure, rhythm, and redistribution of accent that resolve the growth of suspense at its climax. If the conjecture is workable, each one of the different phases within the span of immediacy must be understood to be correlated with one of the different perspectives that emerge, one after another, in the course of natural time. And we may assume that a kind of projection of the perspectival shift upon the span of the present endows the set of phases within the latter with the illusion of a temporal sequence. This much, at any rate, I take to be evident: Suspense and resolution through a shift of perspective do not wear out with repetition and familiarity. Let the reader recite "To the Muses" again. He knows the exact location of the climax. Yet, as the anticipated moment arrives, he is again taken by surprise and thrilled at the emotional outlet within the frame of the perspective that emerges with the reading of the climactic line. With the renewed surprise the beholder's interest in the work of art is kept alive; and the sustained interest sustains the span of immedi-

acy. Accordingly, the aspects of perspectival change and of immediacy are set to co-operate. All this, of course, does not completely explain why the beholder is not satisfied with the possession of the aesthetic effect in a latent state or why he wants to read a poem which he knows by heart. But even with our partial answer—with the conviction that to master time we must match its shifting perspectives against one another by means of art—we are in a better position to understand in the course of the next section the message of Proust's great novel in its relevance to our own problem.

#### 19. PROUST ON TIME AND ART

When a philosopher finds that within the range of his own ideas the usually divergent roads of philosophy and art happen to run parallel, when he discovers unexpected support in the work of a great artist, he may consider himself extraordinarily fortunate. In my case there is remarkably close agreement with Proust on the relation between time and art. As this statement is likely to be challenged, I am concerned to show that it is accurate. I shall begin by summing up in one sentence Proust's insight into the nature of time and art. I shall then make a point-by-point abstract of his ideas. Quotations from the source in support of the abstract will follow, and the account will conclude with some critical comment. I understand, of course, that to advance one major insight as the artist's message—a procedure that forces out of consideration a host of other important ideas—is simplification of about the same order as the artist's when, in order to refer to the intended meaning, he chooses a title such as *Le Temps retrouvé*. Nor do I expect the proposed abstract to be more than a skeletal rendering of the original source. The inevitable impoverishment and distortion increase when one is dealing with a masterpiece such as *The Past Recaptured*, which manages to communicate ideas by enacting them in the course of the story.

Art, according to Proust, transforms the ways of practical life by opening our eyes upon the dimension of time that

stretches backward to annex the past to the present, and, since time is the texture of reality, art—not life, which forces us to overlook the annexed past because of an exclusive concern with impending action—brings us into touch with what is real.

The following sequence of ideas develops Proust's thesis. \

- (1) Ordinary memory cannot restore the past because it is not true to the original experience.
- (2) For memory images are lifeless, whereas experience is alive.
- (3) In fact, memory is intentionally diverted, under the control of the intellect, from faithful reproduction toward distortion for the sake of practical expediency.
- (4) Only on rare occasions does the recurrence of a vivid sensation recover from the past (i.e., bring back into the present) the original setting of the sensation.
- (5) But to have the different settings, the present and the past, of the sensation included in a single experience, the connecting link, the sensation, must be strictly identical in both occurrences.
- (6) The recaptured setting tends to expand into a large fragment of time.
- (7) The outcome of temporal expansion, a simultaneous experience of the present and the past, discloses the extended dimension of time.
- (8) The experience is refreshing because the intrusion from the past purifies the stale atmosphere of the present.
- (9) And the disclosure of the dimension of time is an insight of the self into its own nature.
- (10) The disclosure is interpreted as an exhibition of timeless essences.
- (11) But the exhibition, outside of art, is brief.
- (12) And it is not public.
- (13) However, these faults of the exhibition can be corrected by means of art.
- (14) For one task of art is to record essences by extracting them from transient sensations.
- (15) But the paradox of the protensive present requires in addition to the aspect of timeless essence (i.e., of immediacy) acknowledgment of the complementary aspect of process and change.
- (16) A correction is introduced that leads toward the resolution of the paradox; the past is recaptured not according to the interpretation in point 10 (i.e., not in the form of timeless essences) but as a dimension of process, i.e., by means of a retroactive expansion of the span of immediacy of the present. Retroactive expansion transforms the past within the perspec-

tive of the present because it brings into the open, into explicit actuality, features that were latent at the date when the past was present. (17) The required transformation can be performed in art because art is not a copy but a creative transformation of nature. (18) The metaphor is the means of art to bring out the aspect of immediacy of essences. (19) To portray process art shifts or shuffles perspectives in an order of juxtaposition which does not correspond to their chronological order in the course of nature.

To quote from Proust in order to substantiate every point of the abstract would be an easy matter if it were not for the economy of space, which does not allow for the extraordinary length that his sentences usually have. For the sake of brevity, I have decided in every case on shorter quotations even when an alternative, long passage would have better illustrated the point of the abstract. Occasionally the more adequate alternative passages are indicated by page references. Each quotation is correlated by number with its corresponding statement in the abstract. My own interpolations are set off within brackets. The citations, all selected from *The Past Recaptured*,<sup>6</sup> are as follows:

(1) Stored up little by little in our memory, it [the past] is the chain of all the inaccurate impressions, in which there is nothing left of what we really experience. . . . (2) And I understand how one comes to judge life to be mediocre . . . because this judgment [is] based . . . on mental images which have retained no trace of life. (3) . . . the process which, during every minute that we live with our attention diverted from ourselves, is being carried on within us by pride, passion, intelligence, and also by our habits, when they hide our true impressions from us by burying them under the mass of nomenclatures and practical aims which we erroneously call life [p. 225; see also p. 195]. (4) The fragrance of the morning cup of coffee brings us that vague hope of fair weather which so often in former years smiled at us in the bright uncertainty of early day as we drank our coffee from a bowl of creamy white china, crinkled like coagulated milk [p. 217; see also pp. 193,

197, 199]. (5) Moreover, it was not merely an echo or a duplication of a past sensation which the sound of the hot-water pipe had just made me experience, but that very sensation itself [p. 200; see also p. 400]. (6) . . . the sensation common to both occasions, had sought to re-create about itself the former setting . . . [p. 200; see also p. 193]. (7) Merely a moment from the past? Much more than that, perhaps; something which, common to both past and present, is far more essential than either. . . . A miraculous expedient of nature by which a sensation . . . was reflected both in the past . . . and in the present, the physical stimulus . . . adding to the dreams of the imagination that which they usually lack, the idea of existence—and this subterfuge made it possible for the being within me to seize, isolate, immobilise for the duration of a lightning flash what it never apprehends, namely, a fragment of time in its pure state [pp. 197 f.]. (8) Yes, if . . . a past recollection has . . . remained in its own place and time, if it has kept its distance, its isolation in the depths of a valley or on the tip of a mountain peak, it suddenly brings us a breath of fresh air—refreshing just because we have breathed it once before—of that purer air which the poets have vainly tried to establish in Paradise, whereas it could not convey that profound sensation of renewal if it had not already been breathed, for the only true paradise is always the paradise we have lost [p. 195]. (9) The only way to get more joy out of them [out of the true impressions] was to try to know them more completely at the spot where they were to be found, namely, within myself . . . [p. 203]. (10) But let a sound already heard or an odour caught in bygone years be sensed anew, simultaneously in the present and the past, real without being of the present moment, ideal but not abstract, and immediately the permanent essence of things, usually concealed, is set free and our true self, which had long seemed dead but was not dead in other ways, awakes, takes on fresh life as it receives the celestial nourishment brought to it [p. 198]. (11) But this illusion, which brought close to me a moment from the past, never lasted any length of time [pp. 198 f.]. (12) To read the

subjective book of these strange signs [the sensations from the past] . . . no one could help me with any rule, for the reading of that book is a creative act in which no one can stand in our stead, or even collaborate with us [p. 206]. (13) The subjective impression is for the writer what experimentation is for the scientist . . . [p. 207; see also p. 205]. (14) My task [the artist's task] . . . was to re-establish the significance of even the slightest signs by which I was surrounded . . . long familiarity having destroyed their meaning for me [p. 227; see also pp. 204 f., 225]. (15) I was discovering this destructive action of Time at the very moment when I was about to undertake to make clear and to intellectualise in a literary work some realities that had no relation whatsoever to Time [p. 265]. (16) And since in spite of everything a certain resemblance persisted between the vigorous prince of the present and the portrait of his former self in my memory, I marvelled at the power of complete reconstruction possessed by Time which, while respecting the unity of the individual and the laws of life, is able to change the setting in this way and introduce daring contrasts between two successive aspects of one and the same person . . . [p. 271; see also pp. 258 f.]. (17) The duty and the task of the writer are those of translator [p. 219]. A book is a great cemetery in which one can no longer decipher the half-effaced names on most of the graves [p. 234]. This dimension of Time . . . I would try to make continually perceptible in a transcription of human life necessarily very different from that conveyed to us by our deceptive senses [p. 397]. (18) One may list in an interminable description the objects that figured in the place described, but truth will begin only when the writer takes two different objects, establishes their relationship—analogue in the world of art to the sole relationship in the world of science, the law of cause and effect—and encloses them in the necessary rings of a beautiful style, or even when, like life itself, comparing similar qualities in two sensations, he makes their essential nature stand out clearly by joining them in a metaphor, in order to remove them from the contingencies of time, and links them together with the indescribable



*The Tribute Money, Titian*

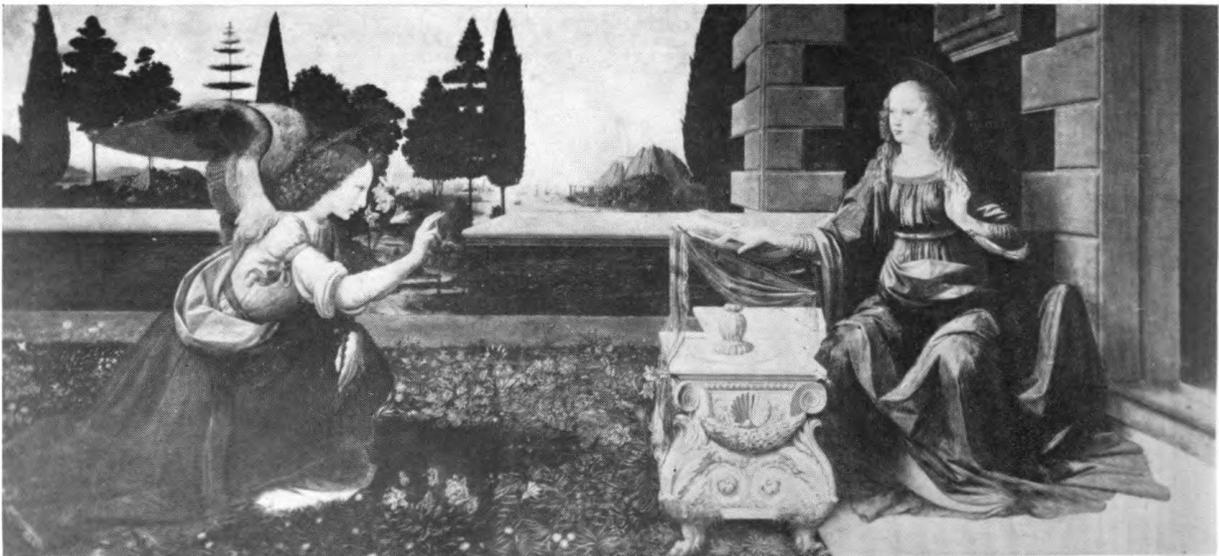
*The Last Supper, Leonardo da Vinci*





*The Creation of the Sun and Moon, Michelangelo*

*The Annunciation, Leonardo da Vinci*



bond of an alliance of words [p. 218]. (19) And in truth, all these different planes on which Time . . . was arranging the different periods of my life, thereby bringing me to realise that in a book which aimed to recount a human life one would have to use, in contrast to the "plane" psychology ordinarily employed, a sort of three-dimensional, "solid" psychology, added a fresh beauty to the resurrection of the past which my memory had evoked as I sat musing alone in the library, because memory, by bringing the past into the present unmodified, just as it appeared when it was itself the present, eliminates precisely that great dimension of Time which governs the fullest realisation of our lives [p. 382]. For I would be obliged to execute the different parts of it [the work of art] in somewhat different mediums. The medium suitable for recalling mornings by the sea would be very different from that required to describe afternoons in Venice . . . [p. 196; see also pp. 225, 398].

The phrase, "the paradox of the protensive present," although no part of Proust's terminology, is used in the abstract in order to bring out the major point of agreement between our theories. This point has been consistently misunderstood in essays on Proust. Even Santayana betrays the usual misunderstanding when he contends that, in Proust's opinion, art opens a view on the realm of timeless essences. Unquestionably certain passages, of which citation 10 is one, not only support the philosopher's contention but read almost like a piece of his own writing. Nevertheless, although the existence of such passages may be mentioned to excuse misinterpretation, let us not overlook the fact that a passage from a great work of art—and citation 10 is a case in point—need not mean in isolation what it means within the context. Consider the particularly significant setting of the quoted passage. The story tells us that momentarily, as he is about to join (after a long period of retirement) a social gathering, the narrator arrives at a Santayana-like conception of essences only to correct it the next moment at the shock of the spectacle which the metamorphosis of his friends and acquaintances into old people suddenly presents. I know of no other scene in literature that has—the

naturalism of Proust's narration notwithstanding—such a macabre effect. The effect is intentional—witness the profusion of metaphors that match the precision of a literal description and culminate in the somber mood of a meditation on death—because a scene that presages death is a spectacular means of demonstrating the reality of change. By setting the idea of permanent essences at the final and tragic turn of the story Proust intends to prove that, in order to complete our understanding and mastery of time, we must recognize that the complementary aspects of permanence and process are equally real. The recognition requires the extended dimension of time to take the place of the timelessness of essences.

It is questionable whether the idea that the extended dimension of time must exist in a state of potentiality to allow for variable spans or fragments of the past to be annexed within the actuality of the present was clear to Proust. But I am satisfied with the knowledge that the idea is implied in his treatment of art. According to Proust, by mixing perspectives, or mediums of exposition, and in order to set them with an effect of contrast, art brings into the open features which in the course of nature (in a gradual transition from one perspective to another, that is) are almost imperceptible, even though it is they, rather than the more conspicuous, common appearances, that induce in us the sense of reality.<sup>7</sup> Proust's contrast between the perspectival effects in art and the latent realities of life that become apparent only with the aid of art is, I believe, translatable into the language of philosophy in terms of the relevant opposition between actuality and potentiality. The relevant point of opposition is brought forth by an analysis of the relation of actualization. On the one hand, actuality realizes potentiality and therefore must not be described as distortion, for example, in terms of perceptual subjectivity. But, on the other hand, there is no doubt that a change from the state of potentiality into a manifestation of actuality is a definite transformation. I conclude that actualization transforms without distortion. The conclusion is in accord with Proust's declaration that art is both different from and true to life. Art

is different because an imaginative shift of perspectives is perceptual transformation. The extended dimension of time—a disclosure of art—is different from the piecemeal change that we observe in nature. Yet the perspectival effects of art have their objective counterpart in nature in the form of latent tendencies. The past recaptured in a medium of art is not a subjective aberration of the mind although it is not a duplicate of the past as the latter was experienced while it was present. Latent resources of reality inaccessible to an agent who is preoccupied with action are reserved for subsequent disclosure in art.

I agree with Proust that a shift of perspectives from their relative position in the order of nature brings together into fusion or interpenetration perceptions that in their natural state appear to be disconnected fragments. The agreement prompts me to inquire into the mechanism of imaginal interpenetration, i.e., into the function of dynamic images in art.

## 20. DYNAMIC IMAGES

Repetition, in the form of a refrain, enlivens the earlier phases of an aesthetic process and sustains them within the span of immediacy, i.e., keeps them from slipping into the past. Interpreted literally the return to an earlier phase signifies complete fusion by way of expanding the span of the present. Interpenetration of images, although short of total fusion, has the same function of protecting a protensive present from disintegration. Dynamic images exemplify the effect of interpenetration in art.

An image is called dynamic in distinction from an ordinary, static picture such as a photograph. The static image is fixed with a specific and explicit definiteness of detail. This means, among other things, a minimum of contextual interpenetration of parts within the whole. Suppose you have forgotten the shape of a friend's nose. A scrutiny of a photograph in complete disregard of other features restores the image to the mind. For other purposes, as in the apprehension of the murderer Schwartz, a measure of contextual correlation may be present even in photographs. But the presence of contextual

correlation in a static picture can be ascertained at a glance and does not call, as in the case of dynamic images, for the process of carrying over the imaginal effect from one part into another to keep the successive phases of an experience copresent. Limited contextual interdependence accounts for the fact that the specificity of a static image is the outcome of the terminating specifiability of its parts. This is to say that specification of every part of a static image can be performed one by one in a finite interval of time and that such piecemeal specification is all there is to the specificity of the whole. A static image can wait for the completion of internal perceptual discernment and determination. Internal specifiability is terminating because all parts of a static image are explicit; one can see everything there is to see. For example, the percept of the capital "A" with which this paragraph opens is a specific, static image because the specification of its parts is exhaustive. A static image of greater complexity, such as a photograph, may take considerable time to be exhaustively examined; but, in principle at least, complete examination is possible.

Terminating specification of a static image is objective in the sense that no effort of subjective imagination can prolong the process of perceptual discrimination or discernment after an exhaustive survey has been completed. This can be better understood by contrast with the objective but indefinite specifiability of material things. No matter how clearly and distinctly a tree stands out in the field of vision, a step forward enriches perception; for example, at close range one may discern a bug crawling along the crevices of the bark. And a piece of the bark under the microscope would open a world of new items that were invisible to the naked eye. Of course, by scrutinizing a photograph at close range we also enable ourselves to discern an additional detail such as a small scratch on the surface. But with this kind of scrutiny the image disintegrates since the details discernible at this distance belong to the material carrier of the picture, not to the picture itself. The contrast between the specific distinctness of a photograph and the

inexhaustible source of observation in a natural object accounts for the impression of unreality that vitiates the photograph. "The lake showing every ripple, the wood showing every leaf, or the stately neck with pearls are too deadeningly clear. It is more than colour they lack. Without their indistinctness things do not exist; you cannot desire them."<sup>8</sup> The deadening effect that Elizabeth Bowen describes is the result of excessive explicitness. Nothing is left to the imagination. There is nothing to be desired in an exhausted percept.

A dynamic image of art is moving or fugitive and yet continually felt throughout the duration of an aesthetic experience. An attempt to arrest such an image in order to specify it further by means of internal scrutiny inevitably fails. For any such attempt would involve isolation from context. A dynamic image, in distinction from static images, is a contextual entity and would not be the same if it were detached from the context. Nor does the dynamic image need specification. It is, like an exhaustively examined photograph, specific, i.e., closed to cumulative specification. But, unlike a photograph, the dynamic image is contextually specific. This is to say that perception does not linger in an internal survey of details but must proceed away from the image, in the direction which the latter indicates, to establish contextual contact with other images. An attempt to resist and linger defeats itself; perceptually constrained the image fades away like a dream that we are trying to remember upon awakening. But to leave the image behind in a contextually determined course is to keep the image dynamically alive even if in a latent state.

Let me sum up in the idiom of vectors. A dynamic image embodies a vector. Hence the specificity of the image depends on the specific directedness of the vector. And since a vector always directs perception away from itself, there can be no internal specification of the image in disregard of its context. To resist perceptual advance in the direction to which the vector points is to attempt a separation between the vector and its orientation in the field. But a vector without orientation in a field is no longer a specific vector at all; it points to nowhere.

And the image, deprived of the specificity of the associated vector, fades away. On the other hand, to follow perceptually the lead of vectors is to undertake a survey of the total vector field in which all constituents are preserved because they are linked together. Vectorial linkage is the equivalent of imaginal interpenetration. For when perception takes leave of a dynamic image, the explicit sensory aspect of the image may no longer be present, but its vector core remains active throughout the period of the aesthetic process.

The point is illustrated by the dynamic image of a vacated lair that materializes from the following stanza of D. H. Lawrence's "Mountain Lion."

And above the trees I found her lair,  
 A hole in the blood-orange brilliant rocks that stick up, a little cave.  
 And bones, and twigs, and a perilous ascent.  
 So, she will never leap up that way again, with the yellow flash of a  
 mountain lion's long shoot!  
 And her bright striped frost-face will never watch any more, out of  
 the shadow of the cave in the blood-orange rock,  
 Above the trees of the Lobo dark valley-mouth!

How can such a specific and concrete image of the emptied cave emerge from such a meager description? There are only a few descriptive words, and they happen to be so vague and general as to be virtually threadbare. "A little cave," "bones," "twigs," "a perilous ascent," and that is all. Is there a deliberate reserve or restraint on the part of the poet? We understand that to communicate the mood of emptiness and desolation the writer chooses scanty words. But how can such words bring out a vivid and distinct picture? We turn to the context to find the explanation. The image of the lair acquires specificity by interpenetration with the image of the mountain lion. Observe that the poet secures interpenetration by means of imaginal superimposition; he makes us visualize the puma in the cave. And he does his best to have the image of the mountain lion dynamic and concrete. The two lines that call forth the image are not only the longest in the poem but would be of extraordinary length for any other poem; and they are replete with col-

orful and metaphorical words. The first line gives a signally dynamic glimpse of the lion's leap. With the second line perceptual concreteness grows because the glimpse is absorbed into, or fused with, the watchful appearance of the big cat in the cave. And each of the fused appearances is described with a touch that increases, as it were by reflection or reverberation, the specificity of the image of the lair. The "long shoot" of the leap suggests both the stretched length of the leaping body and the height of the leap, and with the latter a dynamic specification of the height of the lair on the rock. The word "frost," in the description of the cat's appearance in the cave, is hyphenated with "face" to make us visualize, with the aid of the juxtaposed adjectives "bright" and "striped," the snow-white patch in the middle and the cool, clean distinctness of the other features of the watchful, feline face. And, by indirection, the same word induces the impression of a winter scene to add another touch of specification to the image of the lair. But, of course, these are only subsidiary ways of transferring specificity from the fully dynamic and concrete image of the mountain lion to the scant outlines of the image of the lair. The transfer of specificity is chiefly the result of a remarkable contrivance of imaginal superimposition. The poet lets us visualize the mountain lion in the cave by explicitly telling us that she is not there: ". . . her bright striped frost-face will never watch any more, out of the shadow of the cave. . . ." We are thereby left with the impression of the unreal lucidity of a vision. And by contrast we derive the impression that the solid, present reality of the lair—upon which the vision of the absent lion is momentarily projected—cannot be an image of inferior specificity or distinctness. Hence the illusion that the image of the lair lends specificity to the image of the lion, when actually it is the other way around.

Although the illustration is taken from a poem, there is no intention of opposing literature, with its dynamic imagery, to painting, as if the latter were a source of static images. The contention that pictorial space is dynamic would alone rule out such opposition. But there is a noteworthy difference between

painting and literature in regard to the expedients to which they must resort in order to infuse images with dynamics. Pictorial movement would seem to be the only effective device in the case of painting. The poet, on the other hand, is seldom concerned with movement, although his resources of imaginal interpenetration, of which the metaphor has been the most widely discussed example, are many.

The statement that the painter must resort to pictorial movement does not mean that there is only one kind of dynamic image at his command. For there are different modes of pictorial movement. The basic distinction is between portrayed and enacted movement. Brueghel resorts to a representation of posture in order to portray, in the group of returning hunters and dogs, the movement of walking. But his winter landscape also enacts movement in several different forms. There is perceptual progress, from the frontal plane toward the background of distant hills and back to the foreground, in the course of which the eye surveys one part of the painting after another. This movement is enacted along the paths of tension that connect pictorial figures with one another. The perspective of trees generates tension from one tree to the next in the "near-far" direction along which our perception is compelled to proceed. Another form of enacted movement depends on the effect of such specific shapes as the angle. The angle functions in a picture either on a plane, where it appears to be moving bodily in the direction it points to, or else, as in the case of Brueghel's implicit triangle, T, with a thrust into pictorial depth. Not all kinds of pictorial movement are equally important to the constitution of dynamic images. Portrayed movement would be, as in a photograph, of no importance at all if it were not that in art portrayed movement happens to be inextricably tied up with enacted movement. For example, the forward-leaning figure of one of the hunters stimulates the eye to move forward in the same direction and creates the impression that the figure itself has moved along. Furthermore, the illusion of moving hunters contributes to the impressiveness of the thrust of the implicit triangle because both movements coincide in

perceptual direction. And, to meet the requirement of imaginal interconnection, the dynamic support is reciprocal. The state of tension within the whole area of the implicit triangle sustains the group at its base and prolongs its existence. The figures of the group are not just stepping stones to be left behind in the course of perceptual progress; they continue to be felt even after the focus of attention has moved to a different part of the picture. On the evidence of such observations we are in a position to conjecture that pictorial movement causes an image to be dynamic provided it leads to another image in a process of perceptual interpenetration. The Brueghel exemplifies still another form of pictorial movement that satisfies the condition. Let us observe the movement of skaters grouped in pairs in the upper skating rink and disregard the impression of the joint motion of all skaters clockwise in a circle. In particular let us single out the pair in the upper right corner of the rink. Each skater appears to move with a characteristic zigzag swing from one leg to the other. The illusion that each skater performs a complete cycle of the movement comes with the back-and-forth shift of the spectator's eye from one figure of the pair to the other. The complementary phase of the cycle that one figure portrays is transferred by the eye-shift to the other to be *enacted* there, in perceptual fusion, as an individual but complete performance. Whether or not the illusion is perceptually objective (i.e., whether other spectators would perceive the movement as described) I cannot tell. But there is no doubt that the impression that each skater moves—even if no literal movement (i.e., no objective illusion of motion) takes place—is enhanced by contextual correlation of their postures each with the representation of a complementary phase in the sequence of a complete performance. For by covering one figure of the pair we bring the other to a standstill so that the skater is turned into a static image.

There are two other forms of pictorial movement (neither of which is exemplified in Brueghel's *Winter*) that cause imaginal interpenetration. Both forms aim at a simultaneous representation of successive movements in the same figure. But their

procedures are different. One procedure—which I call stroboscopic because it emulates the effect of stroboscopic motion—sets a series of images, each of which is recognizable as the same figure, in a different sequential stage of bodily movement. The other—to be called synthetic—is the procedure of simultaneous exhibition of successive movements of the same figure by means of a single complex image.

Michelangelo's double representation in *The Creation of the Sun and Moon* exemplifies the stroboscopic procedure. In contemporary art, experiments in later cubism and futurism have familiarized us with the idea so thoroughly that we use it for commercial advertising, for example, in the Playtex posters. Picasso's combination of a profile with a fullface view can also be treated, in part, as stroboscopic experimentation.

To illustrate the synthetic procedure, let me examine a device of representation used in Leonardo's *The Annunciation*. The picture is a synthesis of three sets of bodily movements, each a correlation between the angel's action and Mary's reaction. The spectator's eye—perhaps guided by the knowledge of the story in the Scriptures—discerns one set after another in a cumulative experience of three successive stages of the portrayed event. First, we perceive the angel just alighted and Mary still startled at the apparition. For we notice that his wings are not yet lowered as, with a reassuring gesture of the hand, he motions the Virgin to attention. At the same time, Mary's hands disclose her reaction, the left hand in a gesture of self-defense while the right hand is clutching a book. Second, the angel proceeds, as his parted lips show, with the communication of the message. The calm of the woman's face and the repose of her body mean that she has already composed herself to attend to the momentous announcement. Third, we reinterpret the lifted wings to perceive the angel's leave-taking. Accordingly, the motion of his hand appears now to be a gesture of farewell. And so does the gesture of Mary's left hand. The spectator detaches these three successive stages of the scene from the same figures by shifting his eyes from the shape of the angel to the shape of the woman three times

in succession. And with each shift he either selects different features from the two figures or else reinterprets the same features in order to perceive a consistent set of action and reaction.

The idea of synthetic portrayal suggests a possibility of development that has not yet been tried in painting. Sets of images that would be perceived outside of art in succession or separation might be presented simultaneously and together without the ambiguity of representation—as in the case of *The Annunciation*—but by means of superposition. Double exposure in photography exemplifies such superposition but lacks the required imaginal integration. In art superposition must let each of the contrasting sets of images intensify the other by interaction and yet maintain the tension of their contrast. But how can contrasting sets of images co-operate without representing the same figure? The answer is that they can build up a unifying pattern of tension within the same inclusive vector field. In other words, each of the vectors of opposition generated by an imaginal contrast may within the larger context of the field contribute to the integral pattern of the whole, i.e., to the composition of an aesthetic emotion. If the reader thinks the suggestion to be fanciful, let me point out that, although untried in painting, the possibility under consideration has been frequently realized in literature in the form of the metaphor.

No one would question the importance of metaphors in poetry. But the frequency of their occurrence has been generally underestimated because of the common but false notion that similarity of one imaginal complex to another is the only basis for the construction of a metaphor. Actually poetry is dominated by metaphor. To be convinced, let the reader consider the definition (a sufficiently broad one to serve as a point of departure) proposed by I. A. Richards. According to Richards, a metaphor consists of two distinct sets of images or ideas, the vehicle and the tenor, that are projected—by continuously shifting attention from one set to the other—upon the same field of simultaneous display to make for an experience

which, although inclusive, does not require imaginal similarity and must not obliterate the tension of contrast between the vehicle and the tenor. To quote, a metaphor “presents both a tenor and a vehicle which co-operate in an inclusive meaning.”<sup>9</sup> Co-operation is the key word. It refers to imaginal interpenetration and means that the tenor and the vehicle are both dynamic images or ideas. But it also means that the contributions to the teamwork by the vehicle and the tenor are alive with contrast. The need for contrast is evident. Imaginal contrast generates resistance to integration, and resistance generates tension. With integration in effect tension makes for greater intensity of experience.

To consider one example which has not been generally recognized for what it is, a metaphor, take the passage from the “Ode to a Nightingale” that comes in the wake of Keats’s intimation that a work of art, symbolized by the song of the bird, remains the same through the succession of generations of beholders.

The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
 The same that oft-times hath  
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The two images, the Biblical image and the image of fairyland, stand apart. But watch them interact. The words “charmed,” “magic,” “faery,” and “forlorn” introduce the second image as if in the course of a fairy tale, and the imagination projects that impression back upon the earlier image to enrich it—the more poignantly by contrast with the plain words that refer to the woman in the corn field—with a tinge of nostalgia. The feeling for the exotic and remote frames both images and thereby helps to sustain the effect of projection. But, in an aesthetic experience of the order of familiarity, imaginal action is reciprocal, and the control of the later image by the earlier is equally impressive. To mention one feature of that

control, the lines that bring out the second image (i.e., the last two lines of the stanza) do not describe the vision of a princess dreaming of romance by the open casement of the castle. And yet the vision is objectively there, part of the fairyland image. A transfer of content from the earlier image would seem to be the only plausible explanation of the induced vision. For if we ask, "Why a princess and not a knight?" the answer is, "The Biblical image has disposed us to think of a woman." And to the question, "Why is the princess in a state of daydreaming?" it can be replied that daydreaming is the state into which we should expect the nostalgia of Ruth to be changed with the transformation of the setting in which the lonely woman has been placed from a corn field of captivity into the luxury of a castle. The subtle wording of the stanza stabilizes the induced vision by letting it appear in two different perspectives at once. First, within the perspective of what would be the nightingale's view (i.e., from outside, from the land or the ocean), and second, within the perspective of the princess, through the open casement out toward the sea.

Metaphor ranges from imaginal interpenetration just short of total fusion to barely discernible interaction. And since the number of complexes of images in transaction need not be restricted to two, the effect of co-operation of all the constituents of a poem, in short the poem itself, has been called an expanded metaphor. The name is appropriate. It calls our attention to the fact that a dynamic image, in an aesthetic experience of the order of familiarity, is not pinned down to the lines that refer to it explicitly but hovers over the entire poem, although with fluctuating intensity or impressiveness. The qualification is noteworthy. For interpenetration is not to be understood as a leveling process but as a mutual control that enables each image to surge forth wavelike in the due course of aesthetic experience. And a wave of imagery need not be at its crest to be interlocked with others in a train of waves. To change the figure of speech, let me say that there is no specifiable word or phrase with which a particular image is either born or ceases to exist. An intimation of the image can be traced back to earlier words while the words

about to follow the moment of its prominence are alive with reverberations. The dynamic image exerts a pervasive influence—with no boundary to separate the image from the influence—that helps us to stretch the span of the present from the beginning to the end of the poem.

Again there is a question of ontology. What is the status of an entity that cannot be at any definite place or time without overflowing beyond it? But by now the answer is to be expected: the status of power. For the term power connotes a tendency or agency that exerts influence upon, or controls, other entities at different places and at different times. I conclude that a dynamic idea functions in the mode of power, however concrete and objectified its overt manifestation happens to be. And, of course, the proportion of latent factors to explicit data varies from one dynamic image or idea to another.

The theory of dynamic images enables me to do justice to both sides of literary criticism in the issue between the imagists and the idealists. For the opposition of images to abstract ideas is no longer uncompromising once we have recognized that in literature both are dynamic agencies. I agree with the imagist provided he concede that poetry exists for the sake of dynamic images not necessarily to be visualized with an explicit manifestation. The agreement implies the understanding that a dynamic image can be felt without being visualized, i.e., without the aid of explicit data. With the idealists I should contend that abstract ideas, or even true propositions, contribute to the excellence of literary art. But again I must qualify. An abstract idea, or truth, is not out of place in art if it is dynamic, i.e., if it grows out of, or exists in a state of interpenetration with, the more concrete images of a literary piece. In other words, in literature an idea is unobjectionable when it is abstract in the sense of being unnameable to visualization but not in the sense of being detachable or isolable from the context of concrete or objectified images.

The issue between the imagist and the idealist may be treated as a special form of the basic problem of semantics. The problem is that of deciding whether meaning is functional or objective. On the one hand, the meaning of a word has been identified

with a bodily disposition or aptness—acquired in the course of a conditioning process—to respond to the word correctly by combining it with other words or by applying it to an appropriate, actual situation. In short, the word can be said to be used with a meaning if it is not misused. Meaning is functional if accountable for exclusively in terms of such behavior. But meaning has also been defined as a datum envisaged by the mind either in the form of an image or of a conceptual schema. Objective meaning, accordingly, is a mental object, an entity, that can be recognized and entertained singly, or for its own sake, i.e., objectified without reference to the beholder or to his bodily behavior. Let the meaning of the phrase, “the way from home to the office,” illustrate the difference between the semantic alternatives. Suppose that after you leave for the office, you walk one block to the right, then turn left and continue straight to the office building. If the performance is habitual, you do not visualize the pattern of directions. Your body “thinks” for you. The disposition of the body to turn left at the end of the first block makes you turn left, and so on until you have reached your destination. If that were a complete account, the meaning of the phrase, “the way from home to the office,” would be altogether functional. You can say that you understand the phrase because it prompts you to act, or walk, in an appropriate manner. The truth is, however, that the phrase, “the way from home to the office,” was meaningful before the walk became a habit. On your first trip you may have used a map. But on the following day a mental representation, an image, or a schema replaced the map. The mental substitute exemplifies objective meaning. I have assumed, for the sake of illustration, that neither functional nor objective meaning is a semantic fiction but that, depending on the change of circumstances, the same word or phrase is used now with one type of meaning and now with the other. Semanticists, however, would not favor the assumption because they are determined to reduce all meaning to one basic type. Whether reduction is feasible or not, there is the problem of the relation between functional and objective meaning.

Consideration of dynamic images is relevant to the semantic problem. And I am not called upon to go into the problem beyond a statement of their relevance. But the statement has been virtually prepared. The existence of dynamic images demonstrates that in art, if nowhere else, functional and objective meanings may combine but are not reducible to each other. Admittedly, there is evidence in favor of functional meaning at the expense of objective meaning. We already know that some dynamic images can be felt without being visualized. In addition, we learn from psychology that there are readers of poems who dispense with visual images altogether. At the same time, whether or not an image is enriched with a visual manifestation, the image must be felt, in order to contribute to the aesthetic effect, with an emotive impact. Nevertheless, the evidence in favor of the primacy of functional meaning is not conclusive. In the first place, the selfless pattern of an aesthetic experience requires dissociation of any meaning within the experience from the self or the body. Therefore, if meaning in art is still to be called functional, the term must no longer refer to bodily behavior but to a kind of projection of meaning, perhaps by means of empathy, from the field of behavior upon the field of aesthetic presentation. Such projection is unquestionably objectification or embodiment. Nor should we discount the evidence of visualized images. For an aesthetic experience which is free from visual imagery may turn out to be inadequate, at least for some works of art, for that very reason. To take one example:

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree,  
The sunbeam strikes along the world. . . .

The image of the sunbeam flashes, in the course of these lines, irresistibly unless the reader is psychologically unable to visualize. And the experience of the flash entitles us to assert that if robbed of the visual image, the aesthetic effect would be impoverished. I am not convinced by G. Ryle, who has argued

in *The Concept of Mind*<sup>10</sup> that there are no such things as objectified visual images. For I fail to understand his principal contention, that anyone who says that he has a visual image merely imagines that he has one. Granted that an image is not a veridical percept, what is the difference between "I have an image" and "I imagine that I have an image"? What would be the evidence that could establish the difference? I believe that the evidence that Ryle has been able to marshal shows, at most, that no image other than a percept is static. What Ryle has been inadvertently aiming at is the fact, which I have already admitted, that a dynamic image lacks the explicit details of a photograph or, more generally, of a static picture. Vivid and striking as Tennyson's image of the sunbeam is, it is not to be arrested for a scrutiny of detail. But admission of the fact does not mean that the image cannot be visualized or objectified. This is not to say that the objectified image can appear without the assistance of functional meaning. On the contrary, functional meaning is required to fill in the gaps that the unassisted image would have because of the lack of explicit detail. To sum up, in literature the distinction between functional and objective meaning exemplifies the distinction between implicit and explicit agency. Both are operative as two aspects of a single dynamic image or idea.

## F O U R

### *Artistic Truth*

#### 21. TRUE PROPOSITIONS AND ART

Our position, that the aesthetic field of experience is distinguished from the rest of nature and life by having a different kind of space and time and a unique dynamic structure, compels us to consider the problem of truth in art. For if art stands apart from life, how can it be true to life? If an aesthetic experience is complete and self-contained, with no reference to the world beyond, how can art be true to anything outside itself? The dilemma seems to be, Either art is autonomous but not true; or else, if true, art is no more than an imitation or reproduction of nature. Actually, however, there is no dilemma, and the fact will become clearer as I explain how and why artistic transformation, which sets the aesthetic effect outside of life, does not exclude truth.

Let it be understood that I do not propose any esoteric or special connotation but that I am using the word "truth" throughout in its conventional scientific sense. This is to say that a truth is to be taken in the sense of a true proposition (or statement) or understood to be the truth of a proposition (or statement). My use of "truth" commits me to the recognition that if a work of art, for example, a piece of music, contains no propositions, it can have no truth either. On the other hand, the existence of true statements—or at least of statements the truth of which is arguable—in literature is an undeniable fact. A great novel invariably carries a message. And the message can be stated, as Proust's message has been in the preceding chapter, by means of an abstract, i.e., by a set of allegedly true statements. The same is true of a poem or of any other piece of literature. Let me quote a few examples which express the same idea. "O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem

by that sweet ornament which truth doth give" (Shakespeare); "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" (Keats); "A poem should be equal to: Not true" (A. MacLeish); "Art is but a vision of reality" (W. B. Yeats). I have chosen these statements out of a much longer list because each of them proves to be pertinent at some stage of the argument to follow.

While admitting the existence of true propositions in literature, some writers argue that truth is not essential to, or characteristic of, their art, because some pieces of literature, lyric poems in particular, make no explicit statements of assertion and therefore cannot contain true propositions. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that we assume the existence of literature without truth. I am not at all convinced that the assumption means that truth is not essential. We must first ascertain whether the presence of truth is a rule or an exception. And if it is a rule, we may disregard the minority without truth as nonrepresentative specimens or even as freaks. If, on the other hand, truth turns out to be a rare guest even in literature, we may still recognize the presence of truth as a mark of excellence and therefore as something characteristic of art at its best. Shakespeare's observation, "O how much more doth beauty beauteous seem by that sweet ornament which truth doth give," is relevant precisely at this point. For if Shakespeare is right, the absence of truth means a failure to represent beauty which is attainable in art, and therefore a failure to meet a requirement characteristic of art. To make the point clear let me take advantage of an analogy. If asked to name a representative man, we should look for a genius, rare as genius is among the ranks of mediocrity. Our reason is that potentialities which give man dignity, which distinguish a man from an animal, can be fully realized only on the level of genius. The reason is of the kind that makes us wait for a child to grow into an adult before we are ready to pronounce with confidence upon his character and ability. And so with truth in literature. The presence of truth may be the standard to which only the immature or incomplete piece of writing would fail to conform. The question is, of course, whether Shakespeare is right, whether

truth is a standard of literary excellence. And the answer, on the evidence of the practice of literary criticism, is that all depends on whether truth is an integral part of the work of art as a whole. Shakespeare's declaration is an understatement if it means that artistic truth is a decoration which can be removed without much damage to the rest. And, in this respect, Keats's striking equation of beauty with truth is preferable. For truth which is detachable, without injury either to itself or to the context, is simply not a real constituent of the work of art. Keats means, among other things, that artistic truth is never an annex but must grow out of, and within, the basic structure. According to the equation expressed in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," a statement detached from the beauty of the whole ceases to be true while the whole, upon the removal of the truth, falls apart and is no longer beautiful. This insight applies to itself. Taken in isolation the equation is inevitably misleading. In particular, if we disregard the context of the poem, we are likely to misinterpret the two last lines in a way which, although entirely false, can be easily confused with, or mistaken for, our own interpretation. I have in mind the absurd notion that a work of art as a whole is a true proposition. I may mention that I consider the notion absurd partly on the grounds of semantics, since the identification of a work of art with a proposition requires a misuse of either of the equated terms, but mostly because I find that there are essential aspects, and elements, in art that cannot even be paraphrased in a statement and therefore have nothing to do with the truth. My concern is not with refutation, however, but with guarding the reader against confusion. I want him to observe that to contend, as I do in agreement with Keats, that beauty and truth are inseparable functions of the work of art as a whole is *not* to identify either of these functions with the work of art itself.

An opponent might concede that truth is essential to literature but deny that it is characteristic of art. He might point out that if true statements or propositions are confined to literature, no other major art can have truth and conclude that, since a major art such as music dispenses with truth, truth is not essential to

art. My answer is that even if the opponent's premises were acceptable—and they are not—his conclusion would not follow. The answer is obviously reasonable if our concern is with Art (with a capital "A"), i.e., with one of the major and exclusive functions of the mind. For if we are concerned with Art, we can argue as follows. At least one of the major arts, say painting, is essential to Art. But if truth is essential to literature but not to Art, literature is not essential to Art. But literature is one of the major arts and therefore, by parity of reasoning, we may say that any other major art, for example, painting, is likewise not essential to Art. To avoid contradiction we must reject the questionable premise that truth is not essential to Art. The argument can be paraphrased in a less formal manner. We need only to observe that the exclusive function of the mind, the fulfillment of the need for an aesthetic experience, has many sides to it, and that each form of aesthetic experience, exemplified by such a major art as literature, is a unique alternative mode which is essential because its removal would impoverish the basic function, i.e., leave the need in part frustrated. The observation becomes increasingly convincing if we keep in mind that an aesthetic experience depends upon sensation and that with different people different organs of sense reach the required degree of acuteness. Art would be unknown to blind people if it were not for music or literature; on the other hand, painting may be the only source of aesthetic enjoyment to a tone-deaf spectator. And even when a man excels in every organ of sense, he may change from time to time his preference for particular arts; for example, today he would rather read a poem than listen to music, whereas yesterday he was absorbed in pictures.

But to justify my answer to the imaginary opponent I must turn to the main subject of this book, to art in the sense of individual works of art. Suppose the contention that truth is not essential to art is translated into the statement, "A work of art need not contain truth." The obvious reply is: "That depends. Not if the work of art happens to be a piece of litera-

ture." The contention is still less plausible if it is to be understood as "Truth is not essential to the actual collection of particular works of art." For, surely, the actual collection would no longer be the same after the removal of all books. The more I try to find a plausible translation or interpretation, the more apparent it becomes that there is none except the statement, "Some works of art do not contain true propositions," which has been already granted, for the sake of argument and as a premise for the present discussion.

It is necessary at this point, however, to withdraw the premise that I have granted for the sake of argument only. For the opinion that artistic truth is rare, that it is confined to literature and even there is frequently absent, turns out to be entirely false. To make the point clear I shall introduce the relevant distinction between explicit and implicit truth.

## 22. EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT TRUTH

In art explicit propositions (i.e., propositions uttered or written by means of sentences) are admittedly rare. Artistic truth, however, need not be rare, because an implicit proposition can often take over the function of an absent statement. An implicit proposition is a would-be statement; a particular claim to truth not yet expressed, but readily expressible, in words. The moment a proposition is turned into a statement, it ceases to be implicit. And yet expression is the only test of the existence of implicit thought because we need words to recognize that their meaning was present antecedently to the act of formulation. Implicit propositions are common both in and outside of art. A single word carries one each time it is meant to be, and is, understood as a complete assertion. For example, to call someone "Liar!" is to convey the whole implicit proposition which the sentence "You are a liar" would express. Idioms provide another ample source. "The patient makes no bones about his ailment." We are not puzzled because we know how to read through the literal meaning of the statement the entirely different implicit proposition. The practice of reading between

the lines of a piece of writing brings us to implicit propositions in literature. A fable which leaves the moral unexpressed is a case in point. Take, for example, Aesop's fable about the lioness and the doe:

"A Doe once passed near a Lioness, saying, 'I have many children in a year, and thou only hast in all thy life but one or two.' And the Lioness said to her, 'It is true; nevertheless, if it be but one, yet he is a Lion.'"

Is it not clear, without the aid of an explicit statement, that "Quality comes before quantity" is the moral of the fable? Of course it is. Every reader who understands the fable grasps the moral even if the latter remains, in the state of an implicit proposition, unformulated. The test, if there is any doubt, is, to repeat, formulation. We ask the reader whether the sentence "Quality comes before quantity" expresses the moral; and his answer is "Yes."

But the test, even with the resulting universality of assent, does not prove the antecedent, objective existence of the implicit proposition. For a proof we must establish the grounds for assent. The reader knows what the moral is with the same certainty that he knows that the moral is not "Honesty is the best policy." But how does he know? There is no other basis for his assurance than the compelling dynamics of the context. We read with confidence between the printed lines provided the explicit meaning of the print generates tension—a requirement for completion—while implicit propositions complete the sense, bringing resolution and satisfaction. We do not question the antecedent, objective existence of explicit statements on a page of print. But then contextual interdependence between the meaning of explicit statements and the implied thought certifies to the antecedent, objective existence of the latter. An implicit proposition, although a function of explicit words or presentations, is not a reader's subjective imputation for the simple reason that his discernment of overt data is, in its turn, guided by, and therefore a function of, the latent meaning. Explicit and implicit propositions are equally objective because

they are interlocked at their roots within the vector field of an aesthetic effect.

The objective (i.e., public and communicable) meaning of a sentence in the indicative mood is a proposition. But the meaning need not be an explicit, conceptual construct even though the sentence is perforce a combination of explicit words. Even in the case of an abstract idea, such as the proposition that quality comes before quantity, conceptual articulation is dispensable. For in the medium of art the function of an abstract idea can be taken over by a dynamic image because the latter combines the virtues of a functional meaning with that of an objective meaning. In its capacity of functional meaning the dynamic image is a disposition or tendency. But in the capacity of an objective meaning the disposition or tendency is dissociated from the thinker's body or mind and can be projected upon the aesthetic field in the form of a vector. The projected (and objective) vector is a substitute for an abstract concept that enables us to dispense with the latter altogether within an aesthetic experience. Consider again the unexpressed moral of the fable. For some readers the moral emerges in the mind, still unuttered, but in a conceptually articulated form, as a combination of the explicit concepts of quality, quantity, and precedence. But others would not admit the antecedent presence, within their aesthetic experience, of anything other than a disposition to recognize the fitness of the subsequent formulation of the moral. I should side with the second group provided the disposition were understood to be an objective factor of compulsion within the aesthetic field of tension.

But can a dynamic image, or a vector, perform the assertive function of a proposition? We must ask the question because we know a proposition to be either true or false on account of its claim to truth. The claim to truth is what makes the proposition an assertion or belief. And our question is in effect: What aspect of a vector is, or can be, the equivalent of a belief? The answer happens to be easy because there are only two aspects to a vector, magnitude or intensity, on the one hand, and direction or sense, on the other. Hume has said that belief comes

with the intensity of an image.\* To follow him we should have to equate belief with the intensity of a vector. But Hume's opinion has been severely criticized. Even if some beliefs seem to be identifiable with imaginal intensity—for example, the belief that the physical object represented by an intensely vivid percept exists—a different account is required for a belief which is concerned exclusively with abstract or general ideas. With this consideration we turn to the second alternative. The identifiability of the implicit equivalent of a belief with the relational or contextual aspect of a vector may be understood as follows. Suppose an explicit belief establishes a conceptual order of evaluation and articulation. And let the context within a dynamic field of experience set a number of constituent vectors in a perspective of precedence, i.e., with certain vectors forcing their way out, either in competition or co-operation with others, into the foreground of the beholder's attention and interest. Association between conceptual and vectorial precedence turns the perspective of vectors into a representation of the explicit belief. The fable of the lioness and the doe can be used to illustrate the point.

The superiority of quality over quantity is the order of precedence which the moral of the fable asserts. The assertion is enacted through the encounter between the lioness and the doe because a lioness, or lion, personifies qualitative excellence whereas a doe represents the herd, i.e., quantity. But the enactment—which assertion translates into concepts or words—takes place by means of imaginal dynamics alone. The vector imbedded in the image of the lioness takes precedence over the vector carried by the image of the doe. The perspective of vectorial precedence depends upon the judicious choice of characters for personification. Suppose the cow—an animal that has only one calf in a year—were to replace the lioness in the fable. The implicit moral would no longer be there. On the other hand, to appreciate the aptness of Aesop's choice we

\* Let me disregard, for the sake of argument, the fact that this statement of what Hume has said is, to say the least, subject to qualification.

need only watch visitors in a zoo as they rush past the herd of deer in the direction of a lion's roar.

We may conclude that there are three distinct, but dynamically equivalent, ways in which a proposition can be conveyed through the medium of art. First, by means of explicit statements; second, by communication of explicit, even if unuttered, concepts; and, third, by enactment or presentation through dynamic images or vectors. The first way is, of course, closed to arts other than literature. And concepts can never be the way of music. Nevertheless, any art, even music, can communicate propositions or truth within the context of dynamic images or vectors. Whether or not every work of art actually conveys a proposition is a different matter. The present point is that with the aid of implicit propositions any medium of art (sounds or colors as well as words) may be used to carry a message of truth.

But let us not misunderstand. Even in literature the equivalence between an explicit statement and an enacted truth is dynamic, i.e., recognizable only within the total context of a literary piece. The moment an explicit statement is detached from context, it ceases to convey the same meaning or proposition as before. We must not treat a proposition of art as a proposition of science. In science a proposition is dissociated from any dynamic or imaginative equivalent. The dissociation enables the scientist to treat a scientific proposition as a complete and self-sufficient meaning, i.e., as invariant in meaning through the change from one context to another as well as through the removal from context. In aesthetics, on the contrary, the assumption of contextual independence is untenable because it would leave the fact of co-operation between truth and other constituents within a work of art an inexplicable mystery. The mystery vanishes as soon as we connect an artistic truth with one of the vectors within the vector field of an aesthetic experience. In particular, the differentiation between propositions in science and art helps us to understand why a statement which is plausible within the medium of art may cease to be acceptable in isolation. The reason is that the

detached statement—like the arrow that points to nowhere unless presented against a definite background—is, in the absence of contextual specification or qualification, too loose or vague to carry truth. “Beauty is truth,” for example, without the benefit of the context of Keats’s ode, is not only a puzzling assertion but, if the words “beauty” and “truth” are taken in their dictionary meanings, a definite falsehood.

The preceding paragraph suggests that even in literature the enacted meaning or truth is preferable to the corresponding explicit statement. Perhaps the belief that in poetry explicit truth is altogether dispensable has inspired MacLeish to say: “A poem should be equal to: Not true.” But I think we need not go beyond the acknowledgment that enactment or presentation is what matters most. To go further and contend that the presence of explicit statements weakens art is to attempt to establish a general rule and to lose sight of the fact that individual characteristics of particular works of art require discrimination. When the implicit proposition is unmistakably evident, explicit formulation is redundant and therefore a fault. Aesop did not add the sentence “Quality comes before quantity” to his fable because he knew that the reader would have the moral at the tip of the tongue without the aid of the sentence; and Aesop was right. On the other hand, nuances and involutions of latent thought may not stand exposure; and, if this is the case, the statement that brings the thought into the open is likely to be sententious and clumsy. Some such consideration must have prompted T. S. Eliot to say that Keats’s line on beauty and truth is a blemish on a beautiful poem. And if I do not accept the criticism, the reason is not that the consideration behind the critical remark is wrong but that it has been misapplied. I suspect that Eliot has made the mistake of assuming that the meaning of the statement, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” is the same within the ode and in isolation. However this may be, careful analysis rather than impressions must decide for any particular literary piece whether the presence or the omission of an explicit statement would contribute more to the total aesthetic effect. And, of course, we conclude—or

should we leave the conclusion implicit?—that the explicit statement is preferable only if its presence assures the alternative of a richer aesthetic effect.

But even with the explicit statement in evidence enactment of its truth is in order. For it is enactment that enriches the statement with shades of meaning or significance that would be lost if the statement were detached from the context. In other words, in art an implicit proposition or truth cannot be localized at, or arrested within, an explicit utterance. The principle of enactment reasserts in a new form the already established thesis that a dynamic factor of art—a factor that infuses a work of art with life or movement—is latent or implicit. At the same time the principle provides a key to the “Ode on a Grecian Urn” that enables us to reject Eliot’s criticism.

Let me begin with a paraphrase of Keats’s message. Beauty, the poetic quality of the urn (of the work of art, that is), is the joint effect of sense data and of visitations that are evident to the imagination but inaccessible to the senses. The sense of beauty is the awareness of the mystery of the absent, the latent or implicit, that haunts the present, the explicit and overt manifestations of actuality. Artistic truth, likewise, is not pinned down to the present words of an explicit statement but spreads beyond through the background of implicit thought, of which the statement is a mere token. Hence in art the function of beauty is identical with the function of truth. Hence the equation of beauty and truth. So much for the paraphrase. To substantiate it let me quote one stanza of the ode.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
 What little town by river or sea shore,  
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

The image of the sacrifice takes the part of an explicit or overt presentation. The image of the deserted town, on the other hand, represents the operation of implicit factors of art. This is evident because the image is only implied by the scene of the sacrificial procession which the frieze on the urn is supposed to show. To be sure, the implied image manages to materialize in the reader's imagination. But even though materialized the image continues to enact the part of an implicit factor because the poet makes us visualize the town not as a particular place but, in the course of a rapid sequence of incompatible descriptions—"by river or sea shore, or mountain-built"—as a composite, dynamic impression, an almost ghostly apparition. At the same time, illustrating the thesis that only implicit factors give complete truth and the attendant sense of reality, the ghostly town is made to appear more real than the scene of the sacrifice. Obviously Keats does not induce the illusion of superior reality in order to remind us of the fact, which is irrelevant to aesthetic experience, that the urn with the frieze is no less imaginary than the emptied town. Nor is he concerned with the equally irrelevant observation that while the sacrificial procession is introduced as only a carving on the urn, the town is to be imagined as if it were actual. And since he is not concerned with such irrelevancies, is he not in fact putting into practice the idea that complete truth attended by the sense of reality requires an implicit carrier? But is the image of the town more impressive, and accompanied by a more pronounced feeling of reality, than the image of the sacrifice? I think there can hardly be any question about that. Observe that the poet has mobilized the resources of language in favor of the image of the town. For example, whereas only four lines are used to describe the scene of the sacrifice, six lines are devoted to the town. The difference of descriptive form is equally significant. For the interrogatory form with which the first image appears does not carry the weight of the positive assertion that induces the second image. There is the added touch of realism—as Cleanth Brooks has justly remarked—in the suggested presence of a visitor who is puzzled at the sight of empty streets. And we

must not minimize the influence of the mood. The nostalgic appeal of a forlorn little place surrounds the image of the town with the halo of reality.

But if the ode enacts the poet's message, why did he not leave out the explicit statement? To make use of Cleanth Brooks's apt phrase, why "the paradox of the silent speech"?<sup>1</sup> The "speech" by the urn is necessarily silent, i.e., intimated by the visual presentation without the aid of words. And yet Keats quotes the words of an actual speech. The puzzle can be resolved if we observe, to begin with, that there is more than one implicit proposition in the poem. Keats's message is one of them, but there are others. For example, through the interplay between the two images we learn a truth of history, that in ancient Greece a small community was like a unified family with every member leaving for the country to take part in a religious ceremony. The explicit equation of beauty to truth serves to divert the reader's attention from the historical truth, which has little relevance to aesthetic experience or to the intended message. Accordingly, we can answer Eliot's criticism by pointing out that an explicit statement in a literary piece is in order if it helps us to bring the intended implicit truth, at the expense of others, into the focus of aesthetic experience.

To argue that artistic truth, regardless of whether or not it is explicitly stated, must be enacted is to reduce but not to erase the difference between meaning and being. I do not commit myself to MacLeish's pronouncement without reservation. Outside of art, presentations of being no doubt exclude meaning. For any such presentation exemplifies a seemingly unlimited number of scientific and common-sense statements of fact and, since it cannot be said to mean one truth to the exclusion of others, the presentation does not mean anything definite and therefore does not mean at all. On the other hand, if, as in MacLeish's own pronouncement, being is understood to include presentations or images of art, no such conclusion can be drawn because, in art, being is an outcome of purposeful selection and composition. The artist, in order to communicate a definite

meaning, takes care to have his exhibit free from any contents that distract attention, are irrelevant, or obstruct communication in any other way. And even when, in pursuit of aesthetic ambivalence, an ambiguity of meaning is intended by the artist, his aim is to present a definite interplay of alternative sets of ideas, a definite ambiguity, that is. Therefore a properly conditioned aesthetic effect suggests a definite, even if ambivalent, interpretation. And if the suggestion is not only definite but inevitable, so that any qualified beholder perceives the presentation with the same meaning, I see no reason why the work of art should not be said both to be and to mean.

### 23. TRUTH OF FACT AND TRUTH OF LAW

Current opposition to artistic truth stems from the notion—which turns out to be false—that a proposition, to be true, must refer to a fact outside discourse. External reference, the opposition points out, is compatible neither with the direct presentation nor with the autonomy of an aesthetic experience. To refer to the world outside, the work of art would have to represent and not to present; and to represent is not to be self-contained. Hence, our opponents infer, art is never cognitive. The inference is usually coupled with the statement that art is exclusively emotive.

No one can deny that truth by representation exists in art. Recognizable resemblance, as between the portrait and the sitter or between the painting of the landscape and the landscape, may be, perhaps, discounted as evidence because perception of resemblance involves no propositions. But descriptive truth in literature, for example, in an essay on a journey or in a historical novel, cannot be disregarded. One may argue, nevertheless, and I think convincingly, that representation of facts, the truth of a description as distinguished from the contents of the latter, is only an accident in art and of no consequence to aesthetics. One can point out, for example, that the question as to whether Keats has described an actual urn or whether Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is true to history is aesthetically just as

immaterial as the question as to whether the famous portrait by Leonardo had much resemblance to Mona Lisa herself. The case with the historical novel may seem to be different. Consider *War and Peace*. Since Tolstoy spent some years in studying the period for his novel, it would seem that historical knowledge had been a source of the novelist's inspiration, and therefore a factor accountable for the excellence of the book. But we must not be led into confusion. Suppose we assume that Tolstoy was inspired by his knowledge of the period. Inspiration is an antecedent factor; and we already know that antecedent factors are not to be confused with the contents of the aesthetic effect. We have already agreed to consider communicable contents only; therefore we must treat the novel from the reader's point of view. Of course, for some readers a subject that history has made familiar, or even the mere idea that the novel is also historical, may add to the amount of pleasure. But with others, professional knowledge causes annoyance at the novelist's description of historical events. Both additional pleasure and annoyance are subjective reactions to be disregarded in aesthetics.

To convince the reader that historical novels form no exception let me make another point. The novelist invariably takes liberties with history, and a sifting of truth from fiction by the reader, even if it were possible, would disrupt the unity of an aesthetic experience. We must not, for example, stop to think that one of the participants is a fictitious character when we read Tolstoy's description of the meeting between Napoleon and Prince Andrey if the scene is to have its full impact. Nor should we single out distortion, which in the perspective of art may be inevitable, to justify personal disapproval. An admirer of Napoleon complains that Tolstoy, in order to illustrate the thesis that history is made by masses and not by individuals, has presented a caricature of the emperor. And the complaint implies a point of literary criticism because a caricature has no place in a realistic novel. But a caricature must be recognizable as a derisive or debasing exaggeration even when we know nothing about the victim of the ridicule. This is not

*The Origin  
of the  
Milky Way,  
Tintoretto*



COURTESY OF THE TRUSTEES, THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

*The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, Raphael*



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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



*The Sailor*, Picasso  
KOOTZ GALLERY, NEW YORK

*Bacchus and Ariadne*, Titian



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the case with Tolstoy's description of Napoleon. If it were not for a comparison with Napoleon as we know him from various historical sources, we should find no fault with the realism of the novelist's portrayal although we might concede that he has portrayed a funny man. As literary criticism the charge that Tolstoy indulges in a caricature is worthless.

I am ready to admit that truth by representation, or truth of fact, is aesthetically irrelevant or even, when reference leads to facts outside of art, detrimental. But the admission does not rule out artistic truth. For statements of fact do not exhaust truth; there are also statements of law. And I shall proceed to argue that truth in art is truth of law. But, first, in order to explain the differentiation between statements of fact and statements of law, let me turn to human knowledge outside of art, where the differentiation in question is familiar and can be readily supported with examples. To begin with a few illustrations of our knowledge of fact, consider the following: "The earth is round," "Some cats are tailless," "There are elastic bodies." These are, respectively, truths of fact in astronomy, zoology, and physics. To contrast these with truth of law consider the statements, "The orbits of the planets are ellipses," "All animals are mortal," "The strain is proportional to the stress." Logical analysis of such statements has shown that the contrast between the two kinds of truth depends upon the difference of logical form or structure. The form of a statement of fact is: "There exists an  $x$  which is both  $A$  and  $B$ ." To show, for example, that the form is present in our illustration from physics, we translate "There are elastic bodies" into "There exists an  $x$  which is both corporeal and elastic." On the other hand, the form of a statement of law is: "There exists no  $x$  which, if it were  $A$ , would not be  $B$ ." Take the statement, "The strain is proportional to the stress." The required translation reads: "There exists no  $x$  which, if it were a body under stress, would not change in size or shape." Similarly with the translation of our other examples. In each case the statement of fact contains the phrase "There exists an  $x$  . . .," whereas the statement of law, on the contrary, contains the phrase "There exists

no *x*. . . .” The significance of the contrast is obvious. The first phrase functions as a reference to fact whereas the second phrase repudiates any such reference. Accordingly, when there is no fact to be referred to, the first phrase turns the statement into falsehood. On the other hand, the absence of fact is in accord with the repudiation of factual reference. Accordingly, a truth of law would not break down through a mere lack of exemplification. Suppose there were no more bodies under stress. Then, since there would be no bodies under stress at all, there would be no bodies that were both under stress and unchanged in size or shape. This is to say that Hooke’s law would still be true. Therefore, the law does not depend upon external reference. This piece of formal analysis encourages us to make the first step in our attempt to prove that artistic truth is a truth of law. For we are confident now that, as long as art can present laws, exclusion of representation or reference to fact does not exclude artistic truth.

The question to be answered before we can take leave of knowledge outside of art is, Since a law does not refer to particular facts, what is a statement of law about? We need to know that the statement is about something—not in the sense of “about” that connotes external reference but in the sense of concern with a type of being that the form of the statement may presuppose—because if there were no object, there would be nothing to present. Our need happens to be satisfied. For the fact that a statement of law has the form of a subjunctive conditional can mean only that the statement is about a tendency or disposition. A subjunctive conditional is about a tendency because it means that something tends to be realized under certain conditions regardless of whether these conditions happen to be fulfilled or not. For example, Hooke’s law asserts that if a body were under stress, it would change in size or shape. Attempts to analyze the assertion as a logical combination of two statements of fact, “A body is under stress” and “A body has changed in size or shape,” have always failed and are bound to fail, since the statements that are, in fact, true may happen to be, on the contrary, “A body is not under stress” and

“A body has not changed in size or shape.” With the facts to the contrary, Hooke’s law can still be true because the tendency to be distorted under stress remains. A tendency, which is expressed by a law, is present, regardless of the actual course of events, exactly in the same sense in which a disposition to laugh at a joke exists even while we follow a funeral procession. A law cannot be adequately formulated in words except as a subjunctive conditional. But the form of a differential equation, which so many laws take in mathematical physics, makes the connection with tendencies no less evident. “The use of differential equations is necessary whenever a certain set of circumstances produces a tendency to a certain change in the circumstances, and this change, in turn, alters the tendency to change.”<sup>2</sup> This observation would seem to be sufficient to assure us of an object for presentation in a statement of law.

To complete our defense of artistic truth we must exemplify the presentation of basic dispositions or laws by reference to actual works of art. We have already done that in connection with literature. For example, “Beauty is truth” is a statement of law, since we can readily translate it into “There exists no  $x$  which, if it were a beautiful object of art, would not communicate truth.” But when we turn to other arts, isolation of truth from the context by means of words is no longer easy. Each art speaks its own language (for example, the language of color and design in painting or of sounds in music), which is untranslatable into English. Even in literature translation of foreign poems is inevitably a distortion, a Procrustean embedment in an uncongenial language. With other arts translation into a statement is impossible. For just as we cannot expect the effect of music to be transformed into a picture, we must not expect either musical or pictorial effects to be renderable in words.

Nevertheless, even though a law, outside of literature, cannot be extracted unimpaired by a statement from the medium of art, there is no reason why a paraphrase in words, although unsatisfactory as a substitute for the aesthetic experience, should not be feasible and serve to prove the existence of an artistic truth. Consider representational painting. Paraphrase informs us that

a portrait, unlike a snapshot, which catches only the accident of a fleeting facial expression, intimates the character of the sitter. And what is character but a disposition to think or act in accordance with a law, i.e., in a predictable or consistent variety of ways? As Dostoevski has observed, "An artist studies a face and divines its main thoughts, even if at the time of the sitting facial expression did not convey them." Much more can be usually said by way of paraphrase when the picture portrays more than one person. For example, we can say that Titian's *The Tribute Money* enacts a law of contest between two kinds of inquiry. The calm, questioning look of penetration, on the face of Christ, thwarts the scheming and malicious expectation expressed in the Pharisee's inquisitive look. Admittedly this statement of interpretation is excessively vague and general. If we want a measure of specificity and precision in a paraphrase, let us turn to a painting of greater complexity and detail. Examine again Brueghel's *Winter*. The picture unmistakably enacts the law of cold indifference with which the town meets an intrusion of country life, the return of the hunters. For the hunters, both men and dogs, are portrayed in a state of dejection beyond mere tiredness, not because the hunt was entirely in vain—one of the men carries some kill on a long stick over his shoulder—but because of the sense of vanity with which their enterprise must impress them in the face of the town's self-absorption. In the abundance of activity around them there is no concern for the tired men. There are people on the ice, but they circle on skates in apparent self-content. The solitary figure on the bridge is heading towards the warmth of his home. Even the crows are unperturbed; only one has flown off a branch, in a leisurely flight on a private errand. The structure of the composition in depth supports the interpretation. The hunters are crowded on the outskirts of the town, at the base of the triangle T, which reaches across the landscape to the distant hills and leaves the converging wedge of penetration empty, merely the implicit shape of an arrowhead, as if to demonstrate that the intrusion of country life ineffectually fades out as it spreads through the town.

With abstract art, however, even paraphrase is not available. What kind of truth can we extract from abstract painting by Picasso or Braque or Kandinsky? Commentators have suggested for an answer that abstract art discloses the laws or rules for balancing shapes or harmonizing colors. The suggestion is unacceptable if it means confusion between truth in art and truth about art, i.e., between presentation of law and composition in accordance with law. A rule of composition may be a principle of aesthetics and therefore true about art; and we may learn the rule through a study of works of art. But no work of art, outside of literature, is ever intended to be a lesson in aesthetics. And to perceive the aesthetic effect we do not need to know the rules for its execution. Artistic truth is in art, not about art. And yet truth in art and truth about art are not always readily separable. How shall we treat, for example, the unique shades or brilliance of color in the art of Tintoretto, El Greco, or, to mention two moderns, Matisse and Roerich, with nothing comparable in human experience elsewhere? Undoubtedly such evidence demonstrates the effects of composition, and therefore gives knowledge about art. But should we not add that an unprecedented effect of color has disclosed the presence of a hitherto hidden potentiality in the world? And if so, can we not generalize to contend that artistic truth comes with a manifestation of ontological tendencies—as a discovery of psychological laws in representational painting or of more pervasive, if not cosmic, laws in abstract art—that would remain latent if it were not for the artist's perspective of vision? Let me quote, in this connection, from Herbert Read on cubism. "The cubism which was discovered and exploited for a few years by Picasso, Braque and Juan Gris was *analytical*. That is to say, it was directed to the revelation of an aesthetic aspect of the natural world, and it claimed, by reducing the appearance of objects to their significant forms, to tell us something about the essential nature of these objects. . . ." <sup>3</sup>

Disclosure of potentiality through the novelty of sense experience would seem to be even more characteristic of music. Not that there is any scarcity of attempts to endow music with

laws, or truths, that are not confined to the world of sound. Philosophers and musicians alike have deciphered music into universal laws of a metaphysical sweep. The memorable example is, of course, Schopenhauer's conception of music as a representation, in fact as the most adequate portrayal, of the universal Will. And conjectures that music intimates the Pythagorean harmony of the spheres continue to recur in some form or other even in our day. Now and then we read of a "correspondence of rhythm," of "the echoed rhythm of the universe," and the like. Whether there is anything to such pronouncements we cannot judge, on this side of mysticism. Nor do we need to be much concerned with mysticism in reading a contemporary book on the matter. For, in his interpretation of music, a contemporary writer would rather argue for a similarity, in structure or law, between the realm of sound and the empirical field of psychology. To mention one, out of a considerable number of such psychological interpretations, that has impressed me more than any other, there is Carroll C. Pratt's recent theory. Pratt would not recognize as the meaning of music psychological suggestions which are not in the piece for everybody but are embodied in a particular situation or scene which varies from one listener to another. At the same time Pratt is not entirely satisfied with the purists who find in music nothing but patterns of tonal quality and movement and reject psychological suggestion, altogether and without discrimination, as extraneous association. He contends that the world of sound refers to the world beyond in an exhibition of disembodied process or movement, i.e., of the essence of struggle and attainment which is common to tonal movement and life outside of art. He writes: "The stuff of musical struggle can not, by itself alone, trace the dimension of an object. It remains the essence of all struggle, divorced from real life and presented through a sensuous medium of wondrous beauty. . . ." <sup>4</sup> I have no disagreement with what Pratt tells us except for his contention that the world of sound means the world beyond. His theory does not warrant that contention. For, as he himself recognizes, tonal movement has only a "potential capacity for

suggesting meanings both near and remote." I admit the potential capacity, but I submit that a disposition to refer to something outside of art is not yet reference or meaning and that the latter alone would establish a connection between music and life. I admit also that the power to refer resides in music through a disclosure of laws to which both tonal movement and psychological process conform. But this is not to say that music discloses the fact that both art and nature conform to the same law. And without a disclosure of such fact a mere presentation of the law in the medium of sound remains a presentation of a law of potentiality. On Pratt's own premises we are led back to the import of the first sentence of this paragraph: A piece of music means a potentiality which the actual sounds realize, a meaning which does not connote the possibility of concurrent realizations in a medium outside of art.

Whether truth about unsuspected potentialities of the medium of sense is in art or only about art, such truth enables aesthetics to contribute to epistemology. This is to say that the novelty of an aesthetic effect is evidence against the empiricist principle according to which an image or idea can be no more than a reproduction of a sense datum or a combination of such reproductions, never an anticipation. Every time an artist anticipates an original sensory effect, and demonstrates his anticipation to others in a work of art, the empiricist principle is decisively refuted. For even the elements of sense at the artist's command (colors, sounds, and others—not to speak of the novelty of the integral quality of the aesthetic effect as a whole) are unprecedented qualities within the context of an original composition. Although derived from the same scale the sounds of Beethoven are not the sounds of Mozart.

#### 24. EXPERIMENT AND FICTION

To complete the theory that artistic truth discloses an objective tendency or law, we must consider the question of verification. For we may be called upon to meet two interconnected points. The first point: Since art presents a tendency which is hidden

elsewhere, the existence of the tendency in a latent state outside of art cannot be established. The second point: There would seem to be no way of, or at any rate no definite procedure for, verifying artistic truth. My reply to both statements is essentially the same as the usual answer to similar questions about the truth of science. How does the scientist know, prior to verification, that the proposed law is objectively true? And, since the law does not refer to particular facts, how can there be verification? The answer is as follows: Whether in science or art truth is proposed not because there is correspondence to something outside of the statement of law but as an empirical hypothesis subject to confirmation. And in both science and art verification is confirmation by means of experiment. Of course, there is some difference. In science the law can be stated apart from the experiment, whereas in art, as we already know, truth is not isolable from the context. And experimentation in the two fields is not of the same kind. Scientific experiments are performed with instruments in a laboratory. In art, on the other hand, the experiment is always imaginative. The work of art itself plays the part of a test tube. The artist's insight is both realized and confirmed by a work of fiction. On closer examination, however, we find that the similarity between art and science in these matters of verification outweighs the difference.

Even in science truth may be present implicitly, without the aid of formulation, in the performance of an experiment. Consider, for example, Boyle's experiment with sound. A bell is placed inside a glass jar. We pull the bell, and it rings. Next we pump out the air from the jar. We try the bell again, but there is no sound. The law—"Sound does not travel in a vacuum"—can be grasped without the formality of an explicit statement just as readily as the moral of a well-written fable. Of course we want to know the reason why explicit formulation happens to be the rule in science, but not in art.

A law is formulated by means of variables. For example, Newton's second law of motion is  $F = ma$  (the force is equal to the product of the mass and the acceleration), where  $F$  and  $a$  are variables that take different experimental values. At the

same time, each performance of an experiment gives just one set of numerical values, and all such sets, derived through the variation of the initial conditions in repeating the experiment, exemplify the law equally well; i.e., the values are correlated in every set in accordance with the same law. The universality of a scientific law is, therefore, clearly distinguishable from the particularly of exemplification by a single set of values. Not so with art. Truth in art can also be expressed in terms of variables. For example, since there are many beautiful things and true propositions, the terms "beauty" and "truth" in Keats's equation are, in effect, variables. And a particular work of art, like the performance of an experiment, exemplifies a law in a unique and definite, although imaginative, setting, for example, in the plot of a story or in the scene portrayed by a picture. But in art there is no variability of exemplification. When a work of art succeeds in communicating a certain truth, nothing else can take its place, for a paraphrase would not be adequate communication. This means that one, and only one, instance enables us to grasp universality, so that a separation between truth and its presentation is not called for.

The exclusive association of variables with a single set of values is a clue to the solution of the old puzzle about the universality of particular characters in literature. The puzzle arises with the observation that the great characters in a novel or play appear to be persons, i.e., to display a measure of individuality that even real people can hardly equal, and yet are types because each of them personifies an essential aspect of human nature. Hamlet, to illustrate the observation, seems to be a full-bodied man with peculiarities, or even eccentricities, that are not observable elsewhere; nevertheless, we immediately recognize a Hamlet in an acquaintance who shows the characteristic hesitation when called upon to act. How does art manage to combine pronounced individuality with universal significance? By this time the reader is likely to know the answer. The individuality of a character means a singular contribution to the exclusive set of values that exemplifies an artistic truth. The universality of the individual character means that no

other figure can replace the character, within the context of the set of values, to play its part in the exemplification of the law. This is to say that to have universality the instance must be indispensable.

So much for the solution of the old puzzle. Since the solution, however, rests on the idea that in art universality is inalienably embedded in a single instance, what do we mean by the universality of an artistic truth of law? Our reference to Hamlet may serve to illustrate the answer. Familiarity with the play enables us to discern a resemblance between our acquaintance and Hamlet even though the real man is neither a prince nor a man who can act on the level of high tension that the tragedy requires. Our illustration shows that universality in literature may be understood in the sense of the universality of a standard, not because we can expect to find in nature an exact exemplification, but because we find approximations to such. "Nature imitates art." We agree with Oscar Wilde, but we want to add that no imitation by nature equals the standard. The only adequate exemplification of the latter is an effect of the antecedently planned, sensory and imaginal composition that makes for the particularity of a work of art. This will remind us of the paramount importance of the sensory and imaginal factors that, in our preoccupation with the factor of universal truth, we might underestimate or even overlook. Under the leadership of truth art is the more significant, but without percepts or images there is no art at all.

We must also consider the function of material objects in generating aesthetic experience. And if we keep that function in mind, we can observe another point of similarity between experiment and fiction. To counteract the alleged opposition between the material implements of science and the purely imaginative resources of art, we can point out that a physical object of art is the instrument—comparable to a generator in a physical laboratory—with which to turn on the flow of the aesthetic process. Nor can a physical laboratory be set in operation altogether without the aid of fiction or imagination. We find some of the instruments used in the performance of an experi-

ment to be as artificial as fiction. No such thing as a vacuum, an isolated chemical substance, or a controlled electric current exists in nature. And, as we have been so often told, the scientist's experiment ends with a set of pointer readings which would mean nothing but disconnected numbers if it were not for the ingenuity of imaginative interpretation that adjusts them within the prescribed correlation of a physical law. Intervention by the imagination takes place in art and science alike although in a different manner. To characterize the difference we may say that the aesthetic effect is artful whereas the scientific experiment is artificial.

We have already admitted that nature confirms art only by way of approximation. At the same time, we must admit that the remarkable success of scientific prediction proves that a law of science is closely and publicly verifiable. The difference need not mean, however, that experiment is superior to fiction but rather that the subject matter of art is far more complex than the field of science. Artistic truth is extracted from the field of human psychology, transaction, and value—a field so complex and encumbered with the irrelevancy of detail or accident that to perceive a significant pattern, a psychological law, or an ethical norm, in disregard of the distortion caused by entanglement in a maze of other patterns, takes an extraordinary power of discernment and penetration. Such complexity would, as a rule, defeat attempts at prediction whether the attempts were made by the artist using his imaginative insight or in the course of scientific experimentation. The notoriously slow progress of experimental psychology in the field of humanities is a case in point. Admittedly, experiments in psychoanalysis have led to successful prediction; but psychoanalysis has the advantage of reducing the complexity of the human field through preoccupation with abnormal psychology. Art, on the other hand, is at home with the subtle ramification of normal tendencies within the human mind. Excess, which is characteristic of anomaly, makes abnormal tendencies conspicuous. Normal tendencies, on the contrary, are likely to be latent or elusive and to resist exposure. As a matter of record,

fiction of psychological novels is more effective than experiment in scientific psychology in exposing the patterns of the human mind.

We must not disregard, in this connection, the instances of successful prediction in literature. Rare as they are, these instances are so remarkable that they have been called prophetic. But I think that a treatment by analogy with scientific prediction rather than in terms of prophecy would be far more plausible. Consider, for example, the case of Russian literature, in which the occurrence of "prophetic" works would seem to be particularly abundant. The earliest item in the list is the poem entitled "A Prophecy," by Lermontov.\* The opening lines of the poem are as follows:

The year will come, the black year of Russia,  
When the crown of the tsars will be overthrown.  
The mob will forget the ancient reverence for the rulers.  
And many will taste death and blood for food. . . .

Lermontov's poem was written more than a hundred years ago, and the wording of the prediction is too general and vague to be impressive. For an elaborate prediction that has come true in detail we must turn to Dostoevski's novel, *The Possessed*.<sup>5</sup> André Gide, to mention one among many other critics who have singled out the "prophetic" aspect of the book, remarks: "The whole book of *The Possessed* is a prophetic condemnation of the revolution that is afflicting Russia at the present time."<sup>6</sup> The remark is supported by the fact that the book portrays the incompetent appeasement of the specter of rebellion by the representatives of a tottering administration, the inability on the part of the intellectuals to shift at the critical moment from words to action, and the ideological bankruptcy of the leadership of rebellion, set on destruction by opportunists such as Pyotr Verhovensky or utopians such as the doctrinaire Shigalov. Even the methods for engineering a revolution have been anticipated, for example, alliance with crime, resort to flattery and blackmail in dealing with the administra-

\* In another poem Lermontov has predicted his own death in a duel.

tion, and circulation of falsehood by means of inciting, anonymous leaflets. Even more remarkable is Dostoevski's insight into the logic of revolutionary events, in particular the prediction that the revolution would begin with a declaration of unconditional freedom only to end with unconditional dictatorship. And it is this particular insight (notwithstanding the fact that our contemporaries were taken by surprise at the transformation of the liberated Russia into a dictatorship), that has finally convinced me that anticipation in art is not a prophecy but an analogue to scientific prediction.

The truth is that the psychology of the agents determines the logic of events. In particular a kind of transcription in the key and on the small scale of communal life enables Dostoevski to derive the revolutionary course from his knowledge of the psychology of the leaders. The basic premise of the book is a law of psychology to the effect that an individual who is bent on complete independence from his fellow men inevitably surrenders or destroys his own personality. The principal characters in the book are subject to that law because they happen to be detached from their native soil and people—they all emerge from abroad—and are therefore incompetent for constructive, co-operative work. The outcome is frustration and loss of personality, which naturally lead to the enslavement of dictatorship. Let us consider the main characters of the book one by one. Stavrogin, the ambiguous hero of the novel, commits suicide because his cultivated contempt for others leaves no outlet for his superior powers. Kirillov, who is almost a caricature of Stavrogin's tragedy of isolation, resorts to self-destruction to prove his absolute independence from others. The romantic liberal and sentimentalist Verhovensky (the father) has a lifetime of indolence to blame for his estrangement from the people. His gesture at redeeming inaction by a flight from comfort and home—at bottom an effort to assert independence from a personal involvement—turns out to be, likewise, a form of self-destruction. Pyotr Stepanovitch, the son, is a man of action and the leader of the uprising. Like his father, he is not literally a suicide. But his whole life is invested in the revolutionary cause,

and therefore the failure of the affair may be described, with a measure of justice, as Pyotr's own frustration and undoing. In every case, with these men as well as with other minor characters, the inability to co-operate with others breeds a desire to shift the responsibility for destructive action to, and therefore to be led by, some mysterious but superior agency. Even Pyotr Stepanovich, his conceit and self-reliance notwithstanding, wants Stavrogin to be the figurehead of a mysterious leadership. The psychology that paves the way for a dictator is unmistakable.

But if Dostoevski's insight is comparable to scientific prediction rather than to prophecy, is the measure of success of his predictions equal to that of the scientist? There is only one, but prominent, feature, the outcome of the revolution, in which the novel and the subsequent history would seem to diverge: the Verhovensky affair is a fiasco whereas the revolution in Russia has succeeded. What can be said, in the face of such apparent discrepancy, to support the argument that the success of prediction in art matches science? An attempt to find in literature a better example of successful prediction than *The Possessed* would not seem promising, since no other book has been called prophetic by an equal number of distinguished critics. I might mention an earlier, and abortive, revolution in Russia. But I do not want to suggest that the psychological law which Dostoevski used for prediction remains valid regardless of the outcome of actual events. I take it to be more plausible to argue that the Verhovensky affair is by no means a complete failure. I have already called the affair a fiasco but only because I virtually identify my own point of view with what would be the point of view of its leader, i.e., of Pyotr Stepanovitch himself.

Let us now take a broader point of view. Certainly, Dostoevski himself did not intend to make a farce out of the affair. The number of Pyotr Stepanovitch's followers (there are "twelve apostles,"<sup>7</sup> and one of them, Shatov, is suspected of being a traitor) is unmistakably symbolic in a writer of Dostoevski's religious temper, and the symbolism is used to impress upon us the significance of the mission assigned by the author to the prin-

cipal characters in the story. And, leaving symbolism aside, there is the outcome of destruction which in the world of the novel is altogether a success for Pyotr Stepanovitch. For toward the end of the story every character that matters is wiped out. Let no one suggest that the brevity of the period of its success—a few days, according to Dostoevski—means that the Verhovensky affair represents a historically inconsequential event. The measure of ordinary time is of no relevance to the length of aesthetic time within the course of the novel. The suspense induced in the reader by the development of events in *The Possessed* is almost unendurable and therefore generates the impression of an almost interminable duration. Once more we recognize that artistic truth—in the present instance the truth about the almost intolerable length of time to be endured before the apparent success of evil can be transformed into defeat and the ultimate salvation of the possessed—is not altogether separable from the mode of its presentation, which only the medium of fiction can afford.

## 25. ART AND REALITY

Commitment to artistic truth has placed us on grounds where considerations of art (with a small “a”) and Art (with a capital “A”) overlap. For the presence of a truth of law in a work of art is taken to be a mark of excellence. But it would be difficult to understand why the addition of truth should add to the aesthetic value if it were not for the simple explanation that contribution to a better understanding of reality is one of the major functions of Art. Without some such explanation we should be at a loss to tell why we prefer a work of art with artistic truth to a work of art that equates the salvation of mankind to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or proclaims some other falsehood, even if both works are otherwise of equal quality.

We can easily appreciate that reference to Art in a concern with art raises a problem of art criticism. Suppose a critic has resolved to judge a work of art on its own terms, i.e., on the basis of its intrinsic properties and with no regard for any independent interest or conviction. But the first thing he notices is that the

work under examination communicates falsehood. Can he, or should he, disregard his discovery and proceed in accordance with his resolution? Or is it not evident rather that the cultural requirement of truthfulness and sincerity dominates the minds of our age so completely that no critic would accept a work of art that flaunted contempt for the requirement? And if concession to one of the cultural convictions is indispensable, can the critic avoid his responsibility to the others? If not, he must give up the original resolution and pronounce on art in relation to the extrinsic standards of morals, metaphysics, and religion.

I think that part of the difficulty that confronts art criticism can be removed by clarifying the statement that considerations of art and Art overlap. In the case of artistic truth overlapping is concurrence or parallelism rather than coincidence. The explanation that artistic truth is a mark of excellence because of its contribution to the understanding of the world is no doubt satisfactory. But there is a concurrent or parallel consideration, to the effect that the presence of artistic truth is experienced with an immediate sense of significance that raises the emotive intensity of the experience. This is a consideration of evaluation because it means that truth is a positive factor of aesthetic integration. But it is also a statement of empirical fact. And a fact can always be accepted as self-explanatory or ultimate to forestall reference to evidence outside of art, for instance, to the relation between Art and life, however instructive that relation may happen to be. The imaginary example of two works of art equally good except for the presence of truth in one and of falsehood in the other may have created the impression that reference to Art is unavoidable in a comparative appraisal. But the proposed consideration enables us to dismiss the example as a fiction which is beyond the possibility of realization. A false or absurd message would come with such a jar to the beholder's sensibility as to cause disintegration of a would-be aesthetic effect. Truth may not be indispensable in art. But a work which flaunts opposition to truth is not art and therefore cannot be appraised by comparison with a real work of art.

There is only one more point to be explained before we can

reassert with confidence the contention that the first task of art criticism is to evaluate and judge a work of art on its own terms and that the record of a correct, intrinsic appraisal is not to be erased whatever the results of subsequent appraisals by any of the extra-aesthetic standards of the dominant culture. I want to explain that the contention in question does not imply that art is an escape from reality. The explanation rests on the perspectival theory of truth. And in application to art the perspectival theory of truth may be described as a modification, or specification, of the general idea that a work of art, in the words of R. P. Blackmur, "has a life of its own forever separate but springing from the life which confronts it . . . at the remove of form and meaning; not life lived but life framed and identified." <sup>8</sup>

In *Power and Events* I have introduced the perspectival theory of truth in terms of conformal transformation in cognition. These terms involve two principles. First, knowledge must conform to real or objective tendencies, i.e., to dispositions that make up the world whether or not singled out in true statements. Second, an objective tendency or disposition must be actualized or manifested, and therefore transformed, in order to be discernible and accessible to public knowledge. This is so because the latent state and the manifestation of a tendency are different modes of being; and transition from one state to the other must be transformation. The instrument of cognitive transformation is a perspective. For to be actualized a tendency must be disentangled from a complex of alternative or competing tendencies. And the fact that a perspective can present only one aspect of a complex thing is equivalent to disentanglement, and manifestation, of a certain tendency. Hence, a cognitive perspective means conformal transformation.

To illustrate the perspectival theory in art I shall simplify the exposition by dealing with an instance of truth by representation, the kind of truth that we attribute to a map in relation to the corresponding land. But let me assure the reader that, the increase of complexity notwithstanding, an artistic truth of law is amenable to exactly the same treatment. The treatment

requires a comparison between incompatible perspectives that takes the form of a contrast between static and dynamic images. To introduce the illustration we imagine that we are comparing two photographs of a woman, one in profile, the other in full-face, with the picture of the same person by Picasso in one of his attempts at a simultaneous representation of the face from two points of view. The two photographs are momentary, coexclusive shapes, but they are both true representations because the same person is recognizable in each. Picasso's synthetic picture is true to a composite memory image which has recorded a sequence of facial expressions. The photographs give the truth of a moment; the artist's picture gives the truth of a process or duration. In each case there is conformity to life. But the fact that the three shapes are mutually exclusive means that none of them is identifiable with the form that would belong to reality outside of the limitations of perspective. For if one of them were so identifiable, the other two would be forms of falsehood and not of truth. Therefore each image is a transformation of reality. Transformation must not be understood, however, as replacement of one explicit form by another; such replacement would be equivalent to the falsehood of each and every form of representation. The only way out of the difficulty is to state that outside of a perspective there is no such thing as the form of reality. We can only conjecture a complex of implicit forms, each one a tendency to be rendered explicitly within, and by means of, a particular perspective. Accordingly, transformation, to be compatible with conformity and truth, is actualization of a tendency in an explicit form of a perspectival image or appearance.

Our illustration shows also that art transforms life in yet another sense that testifies to the imaginative aspect of an aesthetic experience and, at the same time, helps us to understand why the error of the escape theory has been so readily and frequently committed. There is transformation from the explicit form which is commonly, even if mistakenly, attributed to life into the explicit form of art. The change is from an easy and ordinary to a difficult and unusual perspective. The perspective

which we assimilate in looking at a photograph does not call for the imaginative effort that we must make in order to see things in Picasso's way. Obviously people who are indifferent to the artist's restless sensibility will not court difficulty so long as they can use the ordinary perspective. And the fact that, for all practical purposes, they can use such a perspective is a fortuitous means of convincing the unartistic man that the forms of an ordinary perspective, exemplified in photographs or static pictures, are the standard forms of reality. Confronted with a masterpiece that opens up a new way of seeing things, he protests against the liberty that the artist takes with reality. The transformation of life through art is unjustly denounced as distortion or escape from reality.

That art is an escape from commonplace reality there is no doubt. But the escape is not into a mirage or dream. Poetry, in the sense in which it is not the exclusive property of literature but the core of all arts, is the feeling of mystery that would be out of place in the ordinary world. Nevertheless art is not mysticism. And the sense of mystery in art is of this world. The impression of freshness and strangeness that infuses a work of art with poetry, or mystery, is conveyed by means of a perspective which turns a habitually invisible aspect of life and nature into sensory and imaginal evidence. The artist presents a work of art as an instrument of discernment and vision. With this instrument he enables us to perceive extraordinary things in ordinary circumstances. In short the effect of mystery is perspectival. Hence an artist who hopes to escape from the prosaic by means of an imaginary traffic with the supernatural or fantastic is on the wrong track. The so-called art of mystery and imagination, a tale by Poe, for example, even at its best does not reach the heights of a masterpiece. The reason is that an effort to concoct a weird or fantastic scene is made at the expense of the effort to show things in an unusual perspective. Yet the effect of the latter is incomparably more impressive. To be moving, contents must be enlivened by the mode of presentation.

We must not imply, however, that art shares with life the same contents but at the "remove of form and meaning." If

there is a shade of such an implication in the quotation from Blackmur, there is a point of disagreement between us. I do not want to exaggerate the importance of form in art. I should rather side with the tradition that insists on the unity of form and content, though I should not assert, with a radical follower of the tradition, that their unity is identity or even that content is a function of form. Once the latent contents of life have been brought out into the open in the form of an artistic truth, we can always not only refer to but describe the message without mentioning other factors within the context of the work of art even if, in order to do that, we have no better means than a paraphrase. Nevertheless, there is the fact that the full significance of the contents of an artistic truth is a function of the form or, as I would rather say, of the total dynamic context. The point is not merely that the latent truth could not be discerned except through the artist's perspective. Even after the message has been isolated in an adequate paraphrase, the isolation cannot be complete because to be reassured that the paraphrase is adequate we continue to keep our eye on the text or on the source. Nor can we find any conclusive evidence that the message is true in a paraphrase taken alone. Artistic truth is established solely by the work of art itself. This is to say that the only proof that we can have is an intuitive recognition of truth within the immediacy of an aesthetic experience.

The measure of independence from life and culture enjoyed by art enables the critic to concentrate on artistic truth in close contact with the work of art and in disregard of any extrinsic interest or value. He must register the increase of significance caused by the presence of truth but only as a feature of the aesthetic experience. For any contents that would substantiate the claim to increased significance exist outside of art in a latent and therefore inaccessible state. The best the critic can do is to translate the sense of significance into a stipulation of a latent but operative power in the world, of an objective tendency or disposition, that is, which is represented through the artist's perspective in the form of a truth of law. And, perhaps, this is the kind of consideration that Blackmur has in mind when he tells

us that the critic must be concerned with “the force of reality pressing into the actuality of symbolic form.”<sup>9</sup> But I want to emphasize that such concern on the part of the critic is no more than an acknowledgment that the power or force to be actualized in art is objective, i.e., exists also outside of art. The moment the critic attempts to go beyond mere acknowledgment—for example, as soon as he tries to specify the nature of the power in question—he must proceed in terms of the work of art. The procedure consists in showing how the power, i.e., the truth of law, is related to other constituents within the aesthetic effect. And in such specification by relatedness the critic will perforce treat the representation of power as a factor of contextual integration or form.

## F I V E

### *Aesthetic Analysis and Art Criticism*

#### 26. THE FOUR STANDARDS OF ART CRITICISM

Each chapter of this book, up to the present one, yields a standard of art criticism, for each of them introduces some distinctive feature of a work of art at its best. And these features correspond to standards because their presence and prominence account for the excellence of art. Any work of art that either lacks one of these features of excellence or fails to exhibit them to their greatest advantage is not great art. Of course, standards are not required merely to recognize the fact that the bulk of art is not great. But to determine the departure from perfection for a particular work of art, precision, and therefore the use of definitive standards, is in order. With certain qualifications to be mentioned later, the standards are applied on the assumption that of two works of art the superior work meets the requirements of a greater number of standards or, if the number is the same, meets the requirements better.

The gist of the preceding paragraph is that the principles of aesthetics are to be used as standards of art criticism. To paraphrase for the sake of clarity, description of art entails appraisal and therefore prescription. Or again, a basic fact of art automatically provides the critic with a norm. The critic is entitled to conclude that descriptive analysis is criticism. I am not prepared to defend the converse of the conclusion, that criticism is analysis. For the present I can deal only with the outcry—which even this limited conclusion is bound to provoke—against the implied reduction of value to fact. To silence the outcry let me observe that consideration of general problems of value can be deferred because the present argument depends only on conditional statements of value. Let the question as to whether a work of art is a value wait—although, of course, anyone knows that it is.

Also such other questions as: What makes a work of art valuable? Why is a masterpiece more valuable than an inferior work of art? How does the value of art compare with other human values? I am not called upon to answer such questions because the simple logic behind my contention does not raise them. My premise is that certain characteristics define a work of art or, at least, a work of great art. Hence, and this is a conditional statement of value, I am entitled to say: If something is to be called art or great art, it ought to have some or all of the defined characteristics. Therefore the "ought," so conditioned, depends on the "is." The norm is derived from the assumed fact.

Let me proceed with the enumeration of standards. Corresponding to the aesthetic postulate of the first chapter there is the standard of particularity. With the second chapter I associate the standard of verifiability. The third chapter adds the standard of imaginal interpenetration. And the fourth chapter brings out the standard of significance. The correlation between the chapters and the standards requires explanation. To begin with, one point must be clear. The four standards are neither coexclusive nor jointly exhaustive. The standard of particularity is so inclusive and general that the other three standards turn out to be rules for its specification. And, of course, many more precepts have been, or could be, employed in the practice of art criticism. But I am confident—on the assumption that no essentials of aesthetics have been overlooked in this book—that these four standards are the principal ones.

To apply the standard of particularity is to determine to what extent the work of art complies with the aesthetic postulate, i.e., to establish whether the features of individuality and cohesion make for a readily recognizable, or identifiable, particularity of the aesthetic effect. For in terms of evaluation the aesthetic postulate means that the more distinct a work of art is (i.e., the more pronounced its individuality and the more impressive its cohesion), the greater is its excellence. The standard may be said to be a requirement for originality in art. And originality is required because it alone causes one particular to stand out against the background of others. The two criteria of particular-

ity (individuality and cohesion) deserve to be mentioned separately because outside of art an object may display cohesion without individuality or vice versa. In art criticism, however, the two are barely distinguishable. For in a loose composition any part would be detachable without irreparable damage to the whole. And the fact that a part is detachable signifies a lack of individuality in the whole. Furthermore, in a work of art neither individuality nor cohesion would be evident if it were not for the complexity of the composition. In the practice of art criticism consideration of complexity provides the only opportunity for the direct application of the standard of particularity without the aid of the more specific standards. Two findings of psychology control the critic's consideration of complexity. On the one hand, excess in number or diversity of parts overtaxes the beholder's imagination so that he fails to perform the intended integration. But, on the other hand, uniformity and simplicity of contents cause monotony and tedium that are no less adverse to the occurrence of an integral effect. Hence the maximum of imaginatively unifiable complexity of contents is, as a rule, a mark of artistic perfection.

Usually the judgment with regard to originality or uniqueness depends, somewhat paradoxically, upon a comparison of the work of art to be appraised with works of art of an already established excellence. Even outside of art we may recognize an outstanding personality by contrast with other personalities. In art, comparison or contrast is the principal means of recognition. The reason is that any work of art whatsoever, whether a masterpiece or an inferior product, has a measure of unity and particularity. And the purpose of criticism is not to acknowledge the fact but to determine, in each particular case, whether the measure is adequate. But if it were not for the critic's familiarity with other works of art of similar complexity but with a superior or inferior measure of cohesion and originality, there would be no objective judgment of adequacy. I am not bringing out the obvious consideration that comparison with other works of art is necessary in order not to mistake for individuality what happens to be characteristic of a whole school of art. I am now con-

cerned with aesthetic discrimination. Acquaintance with art enables the competent critic to laugh at the work with which an unsophisticated and untrained beholder is readily impressed. To mention an extreme case, a peasant woman who was our servant during my childhood in Russia had the walls of her room decorated with wrappers from chocolate bars. Her sense of beauty was not matched by critical discrimination.

The fact that comparison with other works, based on the critic's familiarity with the field of art, makes for a reliable judgment of aesthetic merit has been questioned by a host of skeptics who proclaim that in art, as in the matter of preferring one food to another, *de gustibus non est disputandum*. These skeptics fail to observe the competent critic's confidence in his own judgment of comparison. Or, if they do not, they fail to understand that the critic has the right to be confident when the works of art under comparison represent successive stages in the development of his own taste. Any adult can remember things that he used to enjoy as a child but that no longer move him. And when he explains the loss of interest by calling it "childish," we accept the explanation. Similarly we should accept the adverse judgment of art criticism when the work of art happens to be a landmark of immature enjoyment that the critic has already outgrown. There is no better ground for objective discrimination in art than awareness of personal development. Of course, to be a basis for reliable criticism such awareness must not be confused with a distaste caused by excessive exposure to a particular work of art. The critic may take a dislike to the work of art simply because he is tired of it. Usually an aversion caused by satiety is a transient state. After the work of art has been left alone for some time the aesthetic experience can be renewed unimpaired. And even during the state of aversion the critic may be able to realize that his attitude has nothing to do with mature taste. Nevertheless, the possibility of confusion remains. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is a case in point. We wonder whether the frequent exposure to the symphony has helped us to recognize the objective superiority of Beethoven's other sym-

phonies or whether the disappointment with his Fifth is to disappear in time.

Consideration of time is relevant to the discrimination between objective and subjective taste in yet another way. Culture conditions the critic's taste. But does cultural conditioning of taste bind the judgment of criticism? To answer the question on the evidence of an illustration, let us take *The Iliad*. A reader acquainted with wars on the scale of the twentieth century cannot be impressed by the feud of ancient Greek tribes. Nor is he likely to be moved by, or even interested in, the military exploits of an Achilles or a Hector. Does his indifference to puerile entertainment prevent the critic from doing justice to the objective excellence of the epic? No. For it is possible to identify a masterpiece without liking it. A positive aversion would interfere with appreciation. But if there is no aversion, an imaginative effort enables the critic to forget his sophistication for a time in order to reinstate, and adopt temporarily, the perspective of the more primitive age. The change of perspective can be an experience which is sufficiently refreshing and exalting to make up for the detrimental effect of cultural disparity. A repeated re-enactment of a culturally uncongenial interest of the past may even turn the latter into what may be called an operative quasi interest of the present. In this connection I cannot help remembering Professor Zelinsky, of Petrograd University, who used to shed tears, to the delight of his students, while reciting the scene in which Achilles drags Hector's body around the walls of Troy.

The enabling act of criticism, to use R. P. Blackmur's phrase in order to designate the critic's shift of perspective, not only keeps art alive by doing justice to culturally conditioned works of art but even more so by enriching them. I have in mind the so-called creative criticism. The critic can discern with the aid of his own perspective certain features of art that would be inconspicuous or even indiscernible within the perspective of the artist's contemporaries. By a perspective I here mean a way of looking at things both in the literal sense and in the sense of an ideological outlook. The artist, who not only represents but is a leader of his age, may not be aware of his departure

from the norm. For his relation to his art, with which a new perspective is to be inaugurated, is not unlike the relation between a shortsighted man and his glasses. The artist has the limited perspectival range of his contemporaries the moment he sets aside the work of art, which is his instrument of vision. To describe the situation we may say either that the work of art anticipates the use of a new perspective or that undetected contents of art must wait for detection until after the replacement of the traditional perspective by a different outlook. And, of course, to speak of the detection of previously undetected contents or of initiating a previously untried perspective is to mean the same thing. What I am leading to is that the role of the detective is reserved for the creative critic. His criticism is creative not because he reads into the piece something which is not there—that would be misinterpretation—but because the previously untried perspective enables him to discover in art unsuspected riches. Accordingly, the judgment of creative criticism is always a judgment of approval. The critic approves of art which enriches aesthetic experience. And he recognizes the value of a lasting art, i.e., of art which makes for renewed aesthetic enjoyment in spite of, and through, the change of perspectives from one generation to another. Obviously, creative criticism promotes the cause of art. If they are contemporaries, the critic helps the artist to find himself; if not, the critic is the custodian who protects art from undeserved oblivion.

The eulogy of creative criticism assumes it to be responsible and verifiable. This is to say that I assume that a judgment of creative criticism is distinguishable from an arbitrary imputation to a work of art of contents that are not verifiably in it. The main evidence for the existence of verifiable judgments of creative criticism is the artist's own testimony. For it is not unusual for the artist to admit that the critic helped him to understand his art. It happened once even in my limited practice of literary criticism. A Russian poet, Alexey Massainov, wrote to me apropos of my interpretation of his poem as follows: "I am completely in agreement with you. But the main merit of your essay is that it reaches beyond what one would expect it to aim at. I

should compare you with a diver who works at a greater depth than he was supposed to attain. . . .”

Consideration of verifiability leads to the second standard of criticism. In its function of rendering specific, and of elaborating upon, the first standard, the principle of verifiability is much more than the understanding that no responsible judgment of criticism should attribute to a work of art anything that a competent and unprejudiced beholder would not, or could not, find there for himself, i.e., independently of the critic's coaching. Nor does the second standard compel the critic to confine his observations to public sense data or to what Prall has called the aesthetic surface of art. On the contrary, in order that the intended correlation with the second chapter may be established, the standard of verifiability must be construed as a requirement for substantiation of criticism by reference to observable vectors. And to observe a vector is, as we know, to feel, or to be aware of, an implicit dynamic agency and not to perceive an explicit sensory manifestation. The critic is expected to see, and to make others see, the invisible. His task is to discern, and to point out to us, objective but latent elements of art. The requirement translates into the idiom of norms the statement of fact that an observable vector, i.e., a definite strain within the aesthetic field of tension, is a factor of relatedness and therefore a contribution to the unity of the individual complex which is the particularity of a work of art. Accordingly, to apply the standard of verifiability is to specify a factor of art both with respect to its intensity, or prominence, and to its directedness. To identify such a factor the critic may want to mention some correlated, absolute sense quality, for example, the absolute pitch of a sound in a tonal sequence. But the point of identification is to bring out the contextual quality of the factor and therefore to show how it bears upon, or leads to, some other factor within the same field. For example, let the critic point out the striking contextual tinge of blue which the absolute shade of red acquires against a background of yellow in a certain painting. Simple as it is, the critic's observation nevertheless conforms to the standard of verifiability provided he has

specified the contextual contrast of color that forces other spectators to recognize the same emergent tinge of blue. However, the critic's task is seldom as simple as that. For in order to single out a context with implicit as well as explicit constituents he must proceed beyond sense data and appeal to the beholder's imagination.

The concluding statement of the preceding paragraph explains why conformity to the standard of verifiability does not automatically assure verification by beholders. In order to induce the apprehension of a contextual effect within his reader's aesthetic experience, the critic must have at his command the technique of persuasion and skillful writing, including not only the resources of logic and rhetoric but also of tactical digression (the roundabout approach). A piece of art criticism, if it is to communicate the critic's findings to others, is therefore itself art, i.e., a literary essay. The question is, Are the critic's findings that have been communicated to and verified by his readers final? If it were not for the standard of imaginal interpenetration, the answer would be Yes. For suppose the standard of verifiability were the only one in use. If the beholder has singled out within the aesthetic field a limited context which the critic wants him to single out, to feel the presence of a vector, and if, under these circumstances, the vector has been felt, the requirements of verifiability have been met in full. No subsequent change within the beholder's experience could undo the record of verification. Let the beholder contend that the record was a result of perceptual aberration because he no longer observes the presence of the vector. The critic can insist that, relative to the specified context, the implicit agency is objective and therefore continues to be observable and that the beholder's failure to continue to observe can mean only a decline in sensitivity or imagination. This is not to deny that the critic can revise his verifiable judgment. But revision can take place only after the originally specified context of observation has been replaced by a more inclusive context and, ultimately, by the total vector field. For both the verifiable intensity and direction of an aesthetic factor may change with contextual expansion.

Accordingly, revision of art criticism means that the application of the second standard has been controlled and supplemented by an application of the third standard.

The contrast between the second and the third standards can be explained in terms of the distinction between the order of learning and the order of familiarity. The standard of verifiability requires verification within an aesthetic experience of the order of learning. The standard of imaginal interpenetration requires verification within an aesthetic experience of the order of familiarity. For it is applied in order to evaluate the part which a sense datum, an image, or a vector plays within the aesthetic effect taken as a whole. And, bearing in mind the connection with Chapter III, we see that such an evaluation presupposes an imaginative grasp of the aesthetic effect within the span of an inclusive present because the total functional significance of a single constituent of art must be appraised with regard to all its predecessors and successors. This is not to say that the critic must always apply the third standard in the same way. There are two procedural alternatives. There is critical analysis of metaphor. The critic concentrates on two distinct images, and approves of them, because they interpenetrate each other in the process of forming a successful metaphor. The second alternative is a "monadological" approach. The critic approves of a single fragment of art because the fragment is a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm of the total aesthetic effect. In other words, he singles out an element which mirrors within itself with an appropriate degree of clarity and completeness, like a Leibnitzian monad, the work of art in its entirety. Critics have pointed out that *Swann's Way* is a complete novel in itself, of which the principal themes appear with variation and ramification throughout the sequel of Proust's volumes. These findings of Proust's critics exemplify the "monadological" approach.

The application of the third standard may confirm the conclusions that have been already reached by means of the second standard. This is so because some works of art, for example, paintings, cause at once a general impression which enables the

beholder subsequently to perceive details each with the intended orientation. A sense for the whole may exist in the fused mode of an aesthetic emotion prior to perceptual specification of parts. On the other hand, the two standards may lead to conflicting results. In the case of conflict the standard of interpenetration overrules the standard of verifiability. The precedence given to the third standard should raise no question in theory. But in practice correlation of criticism with the order of aesthetic experience may be difficult. The existence of intermediate levels of aesthetic experience between the extremes of the order of learning and the order of familiarity is one source of the difficulty.

The failure to assign criticism to the appropriate level of experience, with the consequent confusion concerning the finality of the judgment of appraisal, accounts for many of the critic's mistakes. Consider the case of F. R. Leavis against the "Ode to the West Wind." To quote the censured passage:

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,  
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread  
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
The locks of the approaching storm. . . .

Leavis' criticism follows immediately.

The sweeping movement of the verse, with the accompanying plangency, is so potent that, as many can testify, it is possible to have been for years familiar with the Ode—to know it by heart—without asking the obvious questions. In what respect are the "loose clouds" like "decaying leaves"? The correspondence is certainly not in shape, colour or way of moving. It is only the vague general sense of windy tumult that associates the clouds and the leaves: and, accordingly, the appropriateness of the metaphor "stream" in the first line is not that it suggests a surface on which, like leaves, the clouds

might be “shed,” but that it contributes to the general “streaming” effect in which the inappropriateness of “shed” passes unnoticed.<sup>1</sup>

And Leavis goes on in the same vein. On the level of the standard of verifiability Leavis’ points of adverse criticism are generally well taken although now and then we may demur as, for example, in the instance of Shelley’s use of “shed,” which seems entirely appropriate because of the intimation of the subsequent image of rain and lightning. However, the important question is whether Leavis has the right to assume that his judgment is final. He admits, in the very first sentence of the quoted criticism, the existence of a level of appreciation at which “the obvious questions” may not be asked. And the employment of the adjective “obvious” may betray an uneasy suspicion that the questions are asked at a superficial level of analysis. At any rate, one can argue, in opposition to Leavis’ adverse criticism, that the potency of Shelley’s dynamic imagery is sufficient to induce the experience of inclusive immediacy of the order of familiarity—especially in a reader who knows the poem by heart—for which the critic’s jabs are ineffective. This argument, it will be noted, is almost a paraphrase of what Leavis himself suggests in his opening sentence in apparent disagreement with the subsequent context. The impression that Leavis has a divided mind on the matter is strengthened by the concluding words of his criticism:

This poetry induces—depends for its success on inducing—a kind of attention that doesn’t bring the critical intelligence into play: the imagery feels right, the associations work appropriately, if (as it takes conscious resistance not to do) one accepts the immediate feeling and doesn’t slow down to think.<sup>2</sup>

Difficulties increase with the fourth standard, to be called “the standard of significance,” because the topic of Chapter Four, from which the standard is derived, is the cognitive significance of art. These difficulties also arise in the course of practice. In theory the matter is altogether simple. To apply the standard of significance is to approve of the work of art in its capacity to present artistic truth. In practice this means that the critic must tell

us what particular truth is to be found in the work of art. But he can tell us that only by paraphrase. I do not share the widely spread contempt for paraphrase. I think that a paraphrase can be adequate provided it enables us to grasp the intended artistic truth in the due course of an actual aesthetic experience. Nevertheless, the task of paraphrasing is difficult because most people expect too much of a paraphrase. Most people are inclined to take a paraphrase as if it were intended to be equivalent to, and to replace, the original truth of art. Of course, if so intended, the paraphrase could never be adequate.

The root of the difficulties is the same for each of the four standards. It is the fact that each standard is verifiably applied on the evidence of contextual qualities which require, to be observed, an effort of cultivated and controlled imagination. The same fact makes it clear that the essence of art criticism is contextual analysis. To justify his judgment of approval the critic points out the prominent and distinctive features of a work of art and proceeds to show the measure of contextual control which, in accordance with their rank, these features exercise with regard to others. Difficult as the procedure of contextual analysis admittedly may be, it is not only possible but has an impressive record of practice. Nevertheless, I cannot disregard the persuasive argument which denies the possibility of contextual analysis on the grounds that the procedure is self-contradictory, i.e., that in analysis the whole is taken apart and that the interrelatedness which holds the parts together within the context of the whole is not grasped. The point of the argument is that the contextual quality of a part cannot be observed except within, or against the background of, the aesthetic whole. Even S. C. Pepper, his own practice of contextual analysis notwithstanding, has some misgivings on the matter: "A situation or event is a unity with details. . . . If we analyze it to find the relations of its details, we diffuse the unity and lose the quality of the whole, or at least diminish its vividness in following out the details."<sup>3</sup>

The argument against the possibility of contextual analysis does not convince me because it rests on a confusion of issues.

The issue of verifiability is to be distinguished from the issue of communicability. And, once the distinction has been established, it is evident that to admit that a point of critical analysis is generally verifiable only within the framework of a complete aesthetic experience is not to concede that the same point of analysis is not communicable in isolation from context. The apparent plausibility of the argument against contextual analysis depends on the false impression that the admission that isolated points of analysis are unverifiable closes the matter. Actually the argument fails with the failure to elicit our concession of incommunicability. But the statement requires elaboration.

## 27. ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT

The position of contextual analysis is a way of mediation in the argument between the (extreme) analyst and the (extreme) contextualist. The analyst contends that analysis by means of definite statements of the form, "The element *E* of the complex *C* has a quality *Q*," is always feasible. The contextualist argues that the proposed form is elliptical and that completion would turn what the analyst takes to be a definite statement into the propositional function, "The element *E* of the complex *C* has the quality *Q* within the context *x*," which contains the variable *x* and therefore is not sufficiently definite for the purposes of analysis. In other words, according to the contextualist, all qualities are contextual, and therefore no element *E* can be known to have the contextual quality *Q* without an antecedent knowledge of context. The contextualist concludes that analysis is superfluous. There is no point in studying a whole by way of its parts if the parts cannot be known without a knowledge of the whole. Of course, the analyst denies that qualities are contextual. One of his reasons is a consideration of formal logic. Such principles of formal logic as the law of identity, "A is A," or the law of contradiction, "Nothing is both A and non-A," stipulate, among other things, that recurrence in discourse leaves a term A invariant. The stipulated invariance of recurring terms is incompatible with the contention that all qualities are contex-

tual. For if one of the terms is the contextual quality  $Q$ , the recurrence of  $Q$  would be equivalent to two or more occurrences of  $Q$  in different contexts. But since  $Q$  is, by supposition, a contextual quality, it does not remain the same with the change of context. For example, if the middle term in a syllogism were defined by a contextual quality, the middle term would have one meaning within the context of the major premise and another within the context of the minor premise; and the syllogism would exemplify the fallacy of four terms. The supposition of contextual qualities, the analyst concludes, rules out not only analysis but any unambiguous discussion concerning the complex  $C$ .

Both the contextualist and the analyst have overlooked the possibility of contextual analysis. Yet specification of a vector field in physics is a procedure of contextual analysis. Consider, for instance, a magnetic field. Sense and direction are contextual qualities of vectors in terms of which the field is specified. Nevertheless, the procedure of specification is analysis because each constituent vector is determined locally—by observing the turn of the compass needle at different places—and not in reference to the total pattern of the lines of force. Let us consider, however, whether the analogy between physical and psychological vector fields is sufficiently close to warrant a transfer of contextual analysis from physics to art.

There is at least one relevant difference. The beholder or critic cannot explore an aesthetic vector field with a compass needle or some other test body but must rely instead on individual percepts of parts of the field. This difference the (extreme) contextualist can turn to his advantage by arguing that, unlike a test body, a percept fails to specify a vector locally, i.e., in disregard of the field as a whole. In the first place, the contextualist reminds us, in art a percept of a part, unless conditioned by the experience of the whole, is subject to subsequent correction, i.e., to replacement by a contextually conditioned percept, and therefore is not reliable. Second, the contextualist adds, even if reliable percepts of parts were available in art, they would be useless for the purpose of analysis because they cannot be unam-

biguously singled out or referred to without the aid of context. Both formulas of analysis mention "the element  $E$ " as if unambiguous designation were feasible. Actually, "the element  $E$ " is short for "the element to be distinguished by the quality  $E$  which the letter 'E' connotes," and the longer expression makes it clear that the intended designation presupposes the recognition of a quality. But all qualities are contextual; therefore the required recognition of a quality depends upon a context. Suppose, for example, that in analyzing a painting you say: "The violet in the part which is surrounded by red appears, i.e., contextually is, purple." You do not make it clear what the word "violet" is supposed to designate unless you mention a context, as when you add, "I mean that the region which looks purple would look violet if the surrounding color, i.e., the context, were not red but white." It follows that the formula of analysis, in the case of art, must be amended to become even more indefinite than before: The element which we call  $E$ , because "E" connotes the quality  $E$  that would distinguish the element within the context  $y$ , has the quality  $Q$  within the context  $x$ . This formula is more indefinite than the preceding one because it has, in addition to the variable  $x$ , a second variable  $y$ .

Let me grant that a contextually unconditioned percept is unreliable because it may turn out to be faulty in the light of subsequent experience. This is not to say that all such percepts are actually faulty. And since they are not, the point of the observation is not that a beholder or critic cannot practice contextual analysis in art but that he must take care to confine his analysis to percepts that survive the test of contextual re-examination. Similarly with the contextualist observation concerning the problem of designation: I do not think that his conclusion, that contextual analysis has no place in art, follows from his observation. Let us consider the matter more closely.

The amended contextualist formula of analysis can be shortened as follows: The element of the complex  $C$  which would be distinguished by the quality  $E$  within the context  $y$  has the quality  $Q$  within the context  $x$ . The formula can be granted. But the identification of the element  $E$ , contrary to the contextualist's

expectation, is feasible provided the identifying quality *E* is confined to the range of absolute qualities. For example, suppose you are familiar with the air of "All through the Night" in the key of F but are concerned with the identification and description of the same tune transcribed in the key of G. You may proceed exclusively in terms of absolute qualities, i.e., by means of a correlation of pitches that correspond to one another in the two keys. You may say: "The first G of the transcription has the contextual quality of the first F of the original air; the first F-sharp of the transcribed tune sounds like [has the contextual quality of] the first E of the original; and so on for the other notes." The identification by means of absolute qualities, it must be observed, does not depend upon a further correlation with physical items such as the correlation between pitches and ivories on the piano key board. Our concern is with the aesthetic effect and not with its physical carriers. We are dealing with the recognition of absolute pitch through the change of the contextual quality of the tone in different tonal sequences. Such recognition may require an unusually sensitive ear but need not have anything to do with the instruments or technique of music.

No doubt the contextualist will protest that our differentiation between absolute and contextual qualities violates our agreement with him that all qualities without exception are contextual. Actually there is no violation. I do not deny that absolute qualities are also in a sense contextual. But I contend that absolute qualities differ from all other contextual qualities in a way which enables us to treat the former as if they were entirely independent of context. To make my position clear let me contrast the expressions, "the quality *E* within the context *y*," and "the quality *Q* within the context *x*," in the contextualist version of the formula of analysis, on the assumption that "E" stands for an absolute quality and "Q" for a contextual quality. Whereas the contextualist takes both expressions to be entirely analogous, I contend that "x" is a variable but that "y" is not or, which amounts to the same thing, that "y" is a variable which always assumes the same value. My position is a development of D. W.

Prall's theory of natural or standard orders of sense data and can be best understood by beginning with a summary statement of the latter.

According to Prall, a sensory element which is serviceable in art is a member of a natural or standard series of sensory elements of the same kind. For example, the pitch of a single note belongs to a definite position within the standard scale of Western music. "And to hear a note at a particular pitch is to hear a note in its relation to any and every other note, as higher or lower than the other note by a determinate pitch-distance."<sup>4</sup> This means that the absolute pitch is not strictly isolable but must be heard within, and together with, the tonal medium of the scale. The medium takes the part of an inseparable context. Whether it is heard "singly" or in any of a variety of tonal combinations with other sounds, a particular note appears together with the auditory relations to other notes that make up the serial order of pitch. "A note carries with it its position in the pitch series into any composition, and maintains its determinate distance in pitch from notes of other pitch placed near or far from it in any temporal succession of notes."<sup>5</sup> No matter how the tonal background of a composition may affect its sound, any of the constituent notes is simultaneously heard as if it were sounded in the tonal sequence of the standard scale. The note participates in two orders at once. In fact the order of a particular composition is a function of the standard serial order; the articulation of sounds in a musical piece, the effect of contrast or consonance which any two of them acquire in juxtaposition, depends upon the standard distances in pitch which the notes continue to exhibit after rearrangement by juxtaposition.

Any melody is an example of the dependence of structure upon native qualitative order in sensuous materials, a structure felt as having specific and even nameable character, only as the qualitative relation is grasped which is seen to constitute the native order intrinsic to the quality as such. The qualitative order of pitch is not the sole constituent of melodic structure, of course. But that it is one important aspect of it is fairly obvious. Say that we have a series of a dozen notes. We may decide on the duration of each, the tempo,

the loudness, the timbre. But we may still make widely different tunes out of the notes by ordering the pitches variously. If, for example, there is a large pitch difference between the first and second notes, we say that one of them is far from the other in pitch and that the tune begins with a skip. But this would be impossible did not all pitches have each its own fixed place in a pitch order, an order intrinsic to musical sound simply because no musical sound lies outside this order, and because anything that lies in this order is a musical sound.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly with colors and other sensory elements of art. Each such element exhibits an absolute quality recognizable regardless of the combination with other elements because in entering a combination it retains its relationships in the standard order of absolute qualities.

Prall's theory enables us to identify the context upon which, according to the contextualist formula of analysis, the identification of the sensory element *E* depends with the invariant standard order of sensory elements of the same kind. Invariance of contextual reference, in connection with the absolute quality *E*, allows us to dispense with considerations of context in the practice of analysis. However, to take advantage of Prall's theory we must complete it at the point where he has left it unfinished. He failed to account for the way in which the sensation of a single element brings about a perception of the corresponding standard series. The single element appears explicitly, as an actual sense datum; but the other elements that form the standard setting for the explicitly given element are not assumed to be given by way of actual performance. The question is, How are they given? For example, when only one note is struck on the piano, only one note is explicitly heard. All other notes that complete the scale may be said to be sensed or heard implicitly. But the implicit mode of sensory existence cannot be taken for granted without an explanation. The conception of vector fields of sense experience provides the required explanation. For, as we already know, even the so-called explicit vectors, i.e., vectors embodied in distinct sense data, are implicit factors of emotive tension or stress. All that remains for us to do is to equate the implicit

standard setting of an explicit appearance with the invariant background of vectors which the actual sense datum generates. The existence of invariant vector fields or contexts is therefore the basis for a compromise in the disagreement between the analysts and the contextualists. In practice the compromise takes the form of an allowance for contextual or vector analysis of art.

We are still confronted, however, with the analyst's dilemma: "Either contextual qualities or formal logic." Suppose we resort to the tactics of a challenge. We may address the analyst as follows: "Granted that formal logic is indispensable to analysis, and that the invariance of terms stipulated in formal logic is incompatible with their contextual change, can you, as an analyst, account for the fact that in aesthetic experience contextual effect is a commonplace?" We should add that the analyst cannot dismiss the experience of contextual effect as an appearance or illusion, since in aesthetic experience there is no distinction between appearance and reality. The only way still open to the analyst is to meet the challenge by showing that the emergence of a contextual effect does not depend upon a concomitant contextual change in the nature of its constituent terms. C. I. Lewis can be quoted in this connection because he has argued for the contextual invariance of terms with a considerable degree of plausibility:

As regards the so-called modification of meaning by contextual words, the accurate conception is the fairly obvious one: the whole phrase or other context in which the expression in question is constituent has a meaning which is different from the meaning of this constituent alone. The meaning of 'red rose' is not the meaning of 'rose,' or the meaning of 'red,' but is determined by the meaning of 'rose' together with the meaning of 'red' and the syntax of the phrase. But 'red' does not here modify 'rose' in the sense of changing the meaning of it. If the constituent whose meaning is said to be modified did not in fact retain the same fixed meaning *in this context* that it has out of it, or in some different context, then the meaning of the whole expression in which it is constituent would be indeterminate or other than in fact it is.<sup>7</sup>

My position with regard to the quoted passage is mixed. To clarify the matter let me differentiate between the retroactive and the prospective change of meaning. In the case of "red rose" there is no retroactive effect. This is to say that after the word "rose" is separated from the qualifying adjective "red," each word may be said to mean exactly the same thing which it meant before entering the context of the combination with the other. So far I agree with Lewis. But in the absence of a retroactive effect the presence of contextual modification of meaning is latent and is to be called prospective because it cannot be immediately ascertained but requires, in order to be detected at all, a recurrence of constituent words within an enlarged context. The fault with Lewis' argument is that he overlooks the prospective change of meaning because he has failed to place the context "red rose" within some larger context in order to observe what might happen to the meaning of the original constituent words. This is not to say that I disagree with him when he points out that, unless we accept a standard or dictionary meaning of constituent words which remains invariant through the change from one context to any other, we cannot expect the meaning of a context to be determinate. I accept the contextually invariant standard or dictionary meaning of words but only as a minimum meaning. To say that the minimum meaning is contextually invariant is merely to assert that it is present in each and every context of words. But to assert that presence is not to deny that in some contexts the minimum meaning can be enriched without being either undermined or distorted.

Let us experiment with the expansion of context in order to see how the enrichment of meaning works. We can expand Lewis' own context as follows: "There is a red rose on the bush, and the rose is of an exquisite shade of yellow." The shock with which the second component sentence of the expanded context comes to the reader proves that, in recurring, the word "rose" has enriched its dictionary definition with the connotation "red." This experiment alone would justify us in rejecting Lewis' contention. But if we turn from an artificially simple context and consider a poem, with the interpenetration of constituent words

which—in the process of transition from learning to familiarity—displays not only a prospective or progressive but also a retroactive change of meaning, there can be no doubt whatsoever that Lewis is wrong. Even in the case of a poem we can still adhere to the invariant dictionary definitions by letting these definitions play the same part, i.e., assume the function of the identification of elements, which absolute qualities have in the practice of art analysis. To pursue the analogy with absolute qualities we may say that the dictionary meaning of words is established contextually but that the context, in its usual form of two columns of words, is standard and publicly accessible and therefore enables us to single out the minimum invariant core of meaning much as it may be enriched in a particular context of literary art through interpenetration with other meanings.

The admission that all terms are contextual nevertheless preserves a measure of opposition between absolute and contextual qualities, to the extent that a stable or invariant aspect within a standard context may be opposed to contextually variable qualitative aspects. This admission enables us to face the analyst's dilemma without conceding that formal logic has no place in art. Formal logic stipulates invariance of terms and is therefore applicable, whether in art or elsewhere, to the contextually invariant aspects of constituent terms. To the extent that we recognize and make use of absolute qualities for identification of elements in aesthetic experience, we apply logic to art. Accordingly, there is no incompatibility between formal logic and art. At the most I may concede that the part of formal logic in art is minor because the aesthetic effect of contextual change with the recurrence of terms—except in the case of a refrain in which recurrence is literally a return to a previous experience—is strikingly prominent. This concession justifies the thesis that the logic of art is predominantly a logic of relevance rather than the formal logic of invariant terms. But I object to the contention that formal logic has no application unless the invariance of terms is unconditional. If the contention were correct, there would be no use for formal logic at all. For not only in art but in science or in games, where contextual change is at a minimum,

unconditional invariance of terms is also unattainable. Take the game of chess, for example, and consider the rule which determines the invariant function of the knight, i.e., the rule that the knight moves two steps ahead and one sidewise. The invariant function does not exclude contextual change in the development of the game; in the beginning of the game the knight is exchangeable for three pawns but toward the end for only two. Contextual change does not entitle us to call chess an illogical game. Similarly, there is nothing illogical in art, the large measure of contextual change notwithstanding.

Let me conclude that the above considerations have established that contextual analysis is practicable in art and that the possibility of contextual analysis enables us to avoid the one-sided position either of the extreme analysts or of the extreme contextualists.

## 28. TWO EXAMPLES OF CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Our defense would be of no more than academic interest if contextual analysis were not abundant in practice. Actually art criticism at its best has always been contextual analysis for the simple reason that nothing else would live up to the four basic standards. Two citations will serve to illustrate the actual practice of contextual analysis. I have chosen these two not only because they represent the best in art criticism but also because they combine relative brevity with the quality of analytic fertility, i.e., because they lay out the lines along which the reader may readily proceed with additional observations of his own, in short because they are remarkably suggestive. Let us begin with H. Wölfflin's comment on *The Creation of the Sun and Moon*.

. . . Next, the sun and the moon. The motive force grows stronger. We recall Goethe's words: "A mighty crash heralds the coming of the sun." God the Father, with thunder in His wake, stretches out His arms, while He abruptly turns and throws back the upper part of His body. A momentary check to His flight, and sun and moon are already created. Both arms of the Creator are in motion simultaneously. The right is the more strongly emphasized, not

merely because the eye follows it, but because it is more boldly foreshortened. Movement always produces a more vigorous effect when foreshortened. The figures are still larger than before. There is not an inch of superfluous space.

We here notice the extraordinary licence that Michelangelo took when he represented God Almighty twice in the same picture. His back only is seen, hurrying into the depth of the background, as if shot from a cannon. He might be taken at first for the departing demon of darkness, but the creation of herbs and plants is intended by this. Michelangelo thought that a mere hasty gesture was sufficient for this creative act. The countenance of the Creator is already turned towards new purposes. There is a trace of primitive art in the double appearance of the same figure in the picture, but the spectator can convince himself by covering up the one side of the composition how greatly the impression of the movement is enhanced by the repetition of the flying figure.<sup>8</sup>

The use of the standard of significance is evident. Wölfflin succeeds in making clear to us what the artistic truth of the fresco is. Let us sum up that truth in a paraphrase. The power of cosmic creation is so great and terrifying that even the spectacular emergence into being of heavenly bodies is to it but an incident of realization to be symbolized by a momentary gesture. A "momentary check to his flight," a simultaneous stretching out of both arms—and the sun and moon are there. The further truth that the degree of exertion, on the part of the creative power, measures the importance of the created object is illustrated by the casual gesture that brings forth herbs and plants on the return flight from the creative mission. We may also mention that the Creator's right arm "is the more strongly emphasized" in order to symbolize that the creation of the sun is an event of greater importance than the creation of the moon.

But Wölfflin does not resort to paraphrase. His selection of pictorial features for observation does the work of a paraphrase. At the same time, the application of the other basic standards also controls the selection. This is to say that Wölfflin uses all four standards of criticism in co-operation. To let us see the artistic truth, he dwells on the dynamics of the composition, on the

pattern of pictorial movement. The standard of verifiability is applied with a particularly telling effect in the description of the major pictorial movement—the circling flight that alone should identify the Creator in His double appearance—when we are instructed to perform a simple experiment with the resulting setback to the moving figures. The further contrast with the advancing motion of the sun—advancing because of the advancing orange of its surface and also as an effect of the propelling force which appears to come from, and along the direction of, the foreshortened arm—serves to enhance the impression of the Creator’s circling movement. This again can be ascertained by an experiment of the kind used by Wölfflin, by screening off the part of the picture where the sun is represented.

Wölfflin enables us to proceed in the same direction with discernment of additional detail. We may observe, for example, that the hands of the Creator’s outstretched arms are not open: He is pointing to the sun and the moon. This gesture not only fits in better with the majesty of the occasion but confirms the act of creation by preventing the interpretation—which the open hands would have inevitably suggested—that the sun and the moon were thrown out into space like balls thrown out of the hand. Or, to continue the line of interpretation suggested by Wölfflin, we may point out that the fearfulness of creation is confirmed by the fright expressed in the faces and movements of the spirits following the Creator.

To recognize the superiority of contextual or vector analysis as a procedure of art criticism we need only compare Wölfflin’s passage with the recent impressionistic descriptions of the same fresco. Consider, for instance, Charles de Tolnay’s statement (which, I do not deny, contains several valuable observations). The opening sentence tells us that “In *The Creation of the Sun and Moon*, God, like a planet, crosses the spaces of the universe in a whirling speed, describing an orbit.”<sup>9</sup> On the score of verifiability—notice the cloudlike mantle that envelops the Creator together with the spirits—Wölfflin’s suggested simile of the thundercloud has decidedly an advantage. De Tolnay’s impression-

ism is not verifiable for the simple reason that actually we have never observed a planet describing its orbit with a whirling speed; the notion is only a scientific inference. Or, again, contrast Wölfflin's characterization of the departing figure ("hurrying into the depth of the background, as if shot from a cannon") with De Tolnay's impression. De Tolnay writes, "Having discharged the excess of His forces He falls, to the left, into the depths of space like an amorphous mass. . . . It is the silhouette of a heavily falling body, but the flowing mantle indicates that He continues His flight through the air." A glance at the picture will convince the spectator that Wölfflin, and not De Tolnay, is right. The departing figure is not an amorphous mass; it is speeding into depth and not heavily falling; and, finally, it is not an incoherent representation with the shape of the body indicating one thing and the mantle another.

My second example is even shorter. It is a piece of recent literary criticism, Cleanth Brooks's comment on five lines from Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." The lines from Keats are as follows:

The same that oft-times hath  
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

To quote from Brooks:

In the first instance, "forlorn" is being used primarily in its archaic sense of "utterly lost." The faery lands are those of a past which is remote and far away. But the meaning of "forlorn" is definitely shifted as the poet repeats the word. In its meaning, "pitiable, left desolate," "forlorn" describes the poet's own state, and applies, as he suddenly realizes in the poem, to his own case. The very adjective which is used to describe the world of the imagination which the bird symbolizes, ironically enough can be used to describe his own situation. The psychological effect is that of a man in a reverie suddenly stumbling, and being wrenched out of the reverie. The real

world makes its demands; no matter how beautiful the realm of imagination, one cannot free himself from actuality and live in the imagination permanently. Indeed, the general theme of the poem may be described as that of the following paradox: the world of the imagination offers a release from the painful world of actuality, yet at the same time it renders the world of actuality more painful by contrast. Keats's repetition of "forlorn" is thus a concentrated instance of the theme of the whole poem. . . .<sup>10</sup>

Brooks here employs the standard of imaginal interpenetration in a remarkable way. He demonstrates how a contextual shift of meaning that takes place with the recurrence of a single word reflects or represents a pervasive ambiguity which is the theme of the poem as a whole. A demonstration of relevance at its maximum, i.e., of the presence of the whole intimated by the recurrence of a part, is a feat of contextual analysis that makes us appreciate the high degree of integration, and therefore of aesthetic excellence, in the work of art under consideration.

The point that Brooks makes is verifiable on a semantic or linguistic level of contextual analysis. He is concerned with two meanings which are, according to the dictionary, associated with the word "forlorn." The dictionary information, when applied to the poem, shows us that whereas one meaning fits in better with the first occurrence of the word, the other meaning fits in better with the second. And preoccupation with the word "forlorn" leads to a further remark. For while Brook points out the presence of a sudden shift, we may—in recognition of the principle that a development in art is never altogether unexpected or unanticipated—look for a measure of continuity that the association of distinct sets of meanings for the same word disposes us to assume. We may observe, for example, that isolation by distance in time or space, which is connoted by the first occurrence of "forlorn," and isolation in the sense of personal loneliness, which the recurrence of the word designates, are meanings that are relevant to each other. And their mutual relevance suggests that, to sum up in a highly generalized paraphrase, the theme of the ode is the tragedy of inevitable isolation.

## 29. RELEVANCE AND PROBABILITY

Contextual analysis establishes the degree or measure of relevance—in qualitative terms of comparison rather than with numerical precision—that one element or factor in a work of art has to another. And the four basic standards of criticism prescribe a maximum of relevance compatible with the utmost diversity, or even opposition, which the constituents of art must display in order to sustain the beholder's interest. The requirement of diversity rules out the maximal relevance of qualitative identity. Not that repetition or recurrence is altogether excluded. But it must not dominate the composition. As an ornament or decoration a recurring pattern may be pleasing enough, but as the principal factor in art it would set off a process of aesthetic disintegration through monotony. The observation is in line with our previous remark to the effect that the logic of art is to be distinguished from formal logic because the latter is based upon strict identity of recurring terms. However, the contrast between the two logics, the logic of relevance, on the one hand, and the logic of strict identity, on the other, does not preclude the possibility that the logic of art has an affinity to the logic of probability in at least some of its divergent interpretations and that comparison would contribute to a better understanding of both. My position is that such an affinity exists. And in the argument to follow I shall take advantage of Keynes's definition of relevance in terms of probability.<sup>11</sup> But to forestall confusion I must begin with a preliminary distinction.

In art criticism relevance may be either extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic relevance depends upon, and varies with, the beholder's preparedness or training. Suppose the critic calls our attention to the currently obsolete sense in which a word is used in a sonnet by Shakespeare. The information is relevant because it may prevent us from distorting the meaning of the sonnet. But, of course, the same information addressed to Shakespeare's contemporaries would be gratuitous. Or, to take another example of extrinsic relevance, consider I. A. Richards' correction of another critic's comment to the effect that Wordsworth's expression,

“the living God,” is foreign to the spirit of Christianity. A quotation from the Bible, to substantiate the correction, happens to be in this case, i.e., in relation to the uninformed critic, a piece of relevant literary criticism. The relativity of extrinsic relevance makes it, in principle, unrestricted. For since the critic intends to convince his reader and, at the same time, since entirely different considerations carry conviction with different readers, digression into biography, psychology, sociology, or history has a legitimate place (i.e., may be extrinsically relevant) in art criticism. But the very fact that the range of extrinsic relevance is unlimited in art criticism enables us to exclude from aesthetics considerations of extrinsic relevance. For aesthetics, in our sense of the term, is concerned with the aesthetic effect in its exclusive particularity. With this concern we can disregard the beholder’s experience except when it reproduces, in a close approximation, the aesthetic effect itself. In other words, we can assume the beholder to be sufficiently informed and competent to take a work of art strictly on its own terms. And this assumption narrows down our preoccupation with art criticism to the problem of intrinsic relevance.

Intrinsically relevant analysis and criticism require an examination of a work of art on its own terms, i.e., a survey of contents which are embodied in, or presented by, the work of art. This preliminary statement is not to be taken, however, as an adequate definition. To bring out the inadequacy for the purpose of subsequent amendment, let us suppose that a critic tells us that the composition of Leonardo’s *The Last Supper* is analyzable into four groups, each containing three figures, in addition to the central figure of Christ. Let us further grant that if we look at the picture, we must agree with the critic. This is to say that we admit that he has pointed out something which is verifiably present in the picture. Nevertheless, I do not think that we could call the assumed information intrinsically relevant—not, at least, if the critic is unable to explain to us the significance of his comment. For in this case we can always say, “Yes, there are four groups with three figures in each, but what of it?” On the other hand, the critic’s observation would be, presumably,

relevant if he were able to provide the required explanation. He might say that four groups in threes were one of the most satisfactory arrangements toward aesthetic integration because the numbers are small enough to prevent perceptual confusion or lack of articulation and, at the same time, sufficiently large to meet the requirement of complexity. And he might add that the grouping is particularly suitable for the symmetry of a linear composition lengthwise (as the two groups of threes on each side of the central figure assure visual prominence to the latter).

The assumed example is intended to suggest a restriction with regard to our preliminary definition of intrinsic relevance in art criticism. We are now in a position to understand that, in order to be intrinsically relevant, a judgment of analysis or criticism must be a judgment of intrinsic relevance. The critic singles out an element of art not for its own sake but to show how it bears upon other constituents within the total aesthetic effect. This is, of course, another way of saying something that we already know, namely, that critical analysis in art is contextual or vector analysis. But the contention bears repetition in the course of the present argument because no connection between probability and intrinsic relevance can be established unless the latter is taken in the sense of judgments about intrinsic relevance.

Even after we have introduced our restriction, however, consideration of probability does not seem to be called for except when we are dealing with implicit factors or elements. And even in a preoccupation with the implicit constituents of art we can proceed without recourse to probability as long as we are not confronted with the problem of alternative interpretations. Let me explain. First, let there be no doubt that interpretation can function in a work of art as an implicit factor of integration. For example, a glance at Titian's *The Tribute Money* will convince a spectator that each of the two central ovals in the picture represents the face of a man. The interpretation of the colored ovals is embodied as an implicit factor in the picture in the sense that it is inevitable for any normal spectator. And to see a face in the picture is to integrate a large number of colors and lines in a pattern that can be readily taken in at a glance. But, second, there

are times when the contention that an interpretation is implicitly present in a work of art may be questioned. For instance, we may not be sure, to take the Titian again, whether a spectator can fully appreciate the painting without reading into it the story from the Scriptures. And if he cannot, the question is whether we should not say that the story is in the picture rather than read into it. Suppose we decide that the story is presented by the picture. There is the further question as to whether the religious emotion which the story would arouse only in a spectator who happened to be a devout Christian would be intrinsically relevant, i.e., part of, the aesthetic effect. Let me now proceed to show that, so long as they do not involve a choice between alternative interpretations of the explicit data in a work of art, such questions can be settled by means of considerations which are independent of the theory of probability.

Let me begin with religious emotion in connection with a Christian theme in art. I think we must recognize, in deference to unreligious people who have insisted that their understanding of religious art is complete, that such an emotion is not an intrinsically relevant factor. I do not find any conclusive evidence to counter the claim of the unreligious art appreciator. There is, of course, evidence to show that to a religious beholder religious art is more moving. We know that at the first performance of *The Messiah* the king and his court rose at the sounds of the Hallelujah Chorus in a gesture of spontaneous tribute; and we should not expect the present-day audience, no longer dominated by religious emotion, to act similarly if it were not for a tradition established by the precedent. But the evidence can be turned, with equal plausibility, against the opinion that faith contributes to a better understanding of religious art. The added zest, unquestionable as it is, can be discredited on the grounds that it is an excess which interferes with sober appraisal and leads to overestimation. For example, the more reserved reaction to the Hallelujah Chorus may indicate that, unhampered by religious fervor, our concertgoers are in a better position to discern in Handel's oratorio passages that are preferable because of pure musical excellence. Conflicting treatments of the same

evidence, with no objective reason for choosing one at the expense of the other, mean that there is no proof that religious emotion is ever part of the aesthetic effect.

An interpretation is embodied in a work of art if it is verifiably there, although the requirement of verifiability is not to be taken in a strict sense. If we contend that the story from the Scriptures is embodied in *The Tribute Money*, we do not expect a spectator who has never read or heard the story before to be able to tell it by merely looking at the picture. The requirement of verifiability is met if the spectator recognizes that once the story is told to him, his understanding has been improved to the extent that the aesthetic experience is completed without any concomitant distortion. He might point out, among other things, that without the benefit of the story he would be puzzled at, and would not know how to correlate, the facial expressions of Christ and the Pharisee. If the example entitles us to a generalization, we may say that an interpretation is verifiable, and therefore intrinsically relevant, if it contributes to the understanding of the work of art as a whole without exerting any distorting influence. A complication is introduced when there are alternative interpretations of the same work of art, each a contribution to the appreciation of the whole and equally compatible with all the parts. After an experimental performance of Rimski-Korsakov's "Bumblebee" for an audience previously unfamiliar with the piece, each member of the audience was asked to guess the theme and no one guessed right. The negative result of the experiment does not prove that the composer failed to embody the theme in the music. He would have failed only if the hearers had refused to admit that the intended theme were preferable to their own interpretations. The real test comes to this. Given the intended interpretation along with any alternative one that happens to be compatible with the other constituents of a work of art, the former is part of the work of art if, and only if, a competent beholder unfailingly recognizes its superior contextual plausibility. This is the juncture at which probability makes its entry. To recognize the superiority of an interpretation within the

given context of data is to attribute to the preferable interpretation a greater probability than any alternative interpretation would have in relation to the same data.

Let us consider then the way Keynes defines relevance in terms of probability. His basic symbol of probability is  $p/h = a$ , to be read as follows: "The probability of  $p$  on the evidence  $h$  is  $a$ ." The values of  $a$  give the measure of probability and, outside of art, may be numerical. For example, on the evidence that a pack of cards is not defective and has been properly shuffled, the probability of drawing at random an ace is  $4/52$  (the ratio of favorable instances, the number of aces, to all instances, the number of cards). In the case of art, Keynes's basic symbol may be understood as follows. The evidence  $h$  is to be taken as the total context of the aesthetic effect short of the constituent  $p$  in question. The symbol  $a$  is to represent the contextual plausibility of  $p$ . And the appropriate reading of  $p/h = a$  is: "The constituent  $p$  has, within the context  $h$ , a contextual plausibility  $a$ ," i.e., is comparatively plausible or un-plausible as the case may be. To illustrate: If the complaint that the "mass-killings" at the end of *Hamlet* form an anticlimax were justified, we could say, "Within the context of the play as a whole the final scene has no aesthetic plausibility."

And now for relevance. Let the original evidence  $h$  be combined with a new item  $h_1$ , and let us estimate the probability of  $p$  on the combined evidence  $hh_1$ . If  $p/hh_1$  is not equal to the original probability  $p/h$ , then the added evidence  $h_1$  is said to be relevant. To apply the criterion to art, consider *The Tribute Money* again. Let  $h$  represent the total context of explicit lines and colors of the picture. Among these, two sets form two colored ovals that produce the impression  $p$  of two facial expressions. Let the story that the painting is intended to illustrate be  $h_1$ . And let there be an alternative interpretation  $h_2$ . On the basis of Keynes's definition, we may say that the intended story is relevant if it adds to the plausibility of the facial expressions. In conformity with our own requirement we should add that the story is intrinsically relevant or embodied in the picture if  $p/hh_1$  is greater than  $p/hh_2$ .

The connection between relevance and probability which has been established by Keynes serves to clarify and articulate our ideas on the matter provided we do not hastily draw the conclusion that, of the two connected notions, the notion of probability is epistemologically prior or ultimate. The conclusion would be legitimate only if the meaning of probability were not a controversial issue. But let us not forget that current empiricism would not even accept Keynes's basic symbol of probability unless reinterpreted in terms of statistical frequency. And it is immediately evident that in art, where the unique character of contents excludes membership in a class of recurrences, there is no place for statistical tabulation. On the other hand, if we adhere to Keynes's own treatment of the basic symbol, we must be prepared to answer the empiricist's criticism that Keynes's belief in an intuition on the basis of which the probability relation between  $p$  and  $h$  can be equated to  $a$  is altogether unempirical. And I do not think that there is an answer to the criticism except through the recognition that aesthetic relevance is epistemologically prior to probability. For the recognition of priority allows us to derive the intuition of probability from aesthetic intuition, i.e., from the sense of mutual relevance with which the constituents appear to be invested within the context of an aesthetic experience. Of course, even outside of art people claim that a hunch often leads to success. But the empiricist points out that if the hunch is reasonable, the reason behind it can be nothing but past experience, of which statistical frequency is the most articulate and explicit form, and that if the hunch is not reasonable, the success to follow is only a lucky coincidence. To convince the empiricist that he is wrong, we should be able to isolate any instance of a successful hunch or intuition from the influence of past experience. But outside of art the required isolation is obviously impossible. In art, on the contrary, a unique, imaginative setting replaces the practical framework of repetitive experience and enables our intuition of aesthetic relevance to operate in an isolated or pure form. This consideration alone gives weight to the suggestion that relevance precedes proba-

bility in the order of epistemological priority. For in the medium of art, where its exercise is uninhibited, the fact that the sense of aesthetic relevance determines the probability, or plausibility, of every item is apparent. An analogous dependence of the intuition of probability on the aesthetic sense outside of art, on the other hand, may be stipulated if we make allowance for the complexity or obscurity of nature, owing to which dependence can be no longer evident.

Let me make use of *The Possessed* again in order to illustrate the ultimacy of the sense or intuition of relevance in art. I am concerned with the plausibility of an episode that takes place during Kirillov's protracted suicide. The episode creates the impression, or the illusion, that Kirillov commits suicide twice, first by hanging and next by shooting himself. The impression of a double suicide literally doubles the gruesome and sinister effect of the tale. And as the contextual crescendo of the story can stop at nothing short of a superlative effect, the reader accepts in full the plausibility of the episode. But let the reader judge for himself. The scene takes place in Kirillov's lodgings. Pyotr Stepanovitch is waiting for his host in the adjoining room to commit suicide. And the reader's suspense is magnified—and renewed at a second reading of the passage—by the masterful description of the guest's growing misgivings at the outcome. Finally, unable to stand the suspense any longer, Pyotr Stepanovitch goes into the adjoining room.

There was no one in the room. He started. The room led nowhere. There was no exit, no means of escape from it. He lifted the candle higher and looked about him more attentively: there was certainly no one. He called Kirillov's name in a low voice, then again louder; no one answered.

"Can he have got out by the window?" The casement in one window was, in fact, open. "Absurd! He couldn't have got away through the casement." Pyotr Stepanovitch crossed the room and went up to the window. "He couldn't possibly." All at once he turned round quickly and was aghast at something extraordinary.

Against the wall facing the windows on the right of the door stood a cupboard. On the right side of the cupboard, in the corner formed

by the cupboard and the wall, stood Kirillov, and he was standing in a very strange way; motionless, perfectly erect, with his arms held stiffly at his sides, his head raised and pressed tightly back against the wall in the very corner, he seemed to be trying to conceal and efface himself. Everything seemed to show that he was hiding, yet somehow it was not easy to believe it. Pyotr Stepanovitch was standing a little sideways to the corner, and could only see the projecting parts of the figure. He could not bring himself to move to the left to get a full view of Kirillov and solve the mystery. His heart began beating violently, and he felt a sudden rush of blind fury: he started from where he stood, and, shouting and stamping with his feet, he rushed to the horrible place.

But when he reached Kirillov he stopped short again, still more overcome, horror-stricken. What struck him most was that, in spite of his shout and furious rush, the figure did not stir, did not move in a single limb—as though it were of stone or of wax. The pallor of the face was unnatural, the black eyes were quite unmoving and were staring away at a point in the distance. . . . Then something happened so hideous and so soon over that Pyotr Stepanovitch could never afterwards recover a coherent impression of it. He had hardly touched Kirillov when the latter bent down quickly and with his head knocked the candle out of Pyotr Stepanovitch's hand; the candlestick fell with a clang on the ground and the candle went out. At the same moment he was conscious of a fearful pain in the little finger of his left hand. He cried out, and all that he could remember was that, beside himself, he hit out with all his might and struck three blows with the revolver on the head of Kirillov, who had bent down to him and had bitten his finger. At last he tore away his finger and rushed headlong to get out of the house, feeling his way in the dark. He was pursued by terrible shouts from the room.

“Directly, directly, directly, directly.” Ten times. But he still ran on, and was running into the porch when he suddenly heard a loud shot.<sup>12</sup>

Even within the abridged context of the quoted passage our aesthetic intuition of relevance accepts the plausibility or approves of the extraordinary developments at “the horrible place,” the inevitable illusion that Kirillov has hanged himself and the subsequent biting of Pyotr Stepanovitch's finger. No doubt these developments overwhelm us at first with com-

plete surprise; yet the moment the passage has been read we realize that nothing else could be dynamically or contextually as appropriate. To convince ourselves how ultimate our intuition of contextual relevance is we need only consider how incredible the same episode would appear to us if we had come to know it through a summary paraphrase. For example, let us consider the following report: Pyotr Stepanovitch had been waiting a long time for the sound of a shot. Finally he walked into the adjoining room and found Kirillov hiding in a corner. It looked as if Kirillov had hanged himself, but of course he had not. He was standing on his feet, and there was no rope on his neck. Besides, after Pyotr Stepanovitch came closer, Kirillov bent down and bit his guest's finger. The matter of fact tone of the paraphrase is associated in our minds with considerations of experience or frequency; and, of course, in terms of frequency the probability of the episode is null. Even more damaging to credibility is the explicit statement that Kirillov looked both as if he had and had not hanged himself. The discrepancy is not apparent in Dostoevski. The writer induces the image of the hanged man by indirection or hint and without the aid of explicit statement. To force the illusion on the reader the description dwells on the "very strange way" in which Kirillov stood motionless in the corner flat against the wall as if his figure "were of stone or of wax." We are almost led to read the semiarticulate and fugitive thoughts in the mind of Pyotr Stepanovitch: "Is Kirillov dead? Did he hang himself? No, that cannot be. He is standing on the floor. And yet there is something unnatural in the way he stands. . . ." Not that Dostoevski removes altogether the discrepancy between the induced image and the explicitly described scene. But he manages to anesthetize our sensibility to the discrepancy. The scene is described as it unfolds itself to Pyotr Stepanovitch, and, as we are told, the latter could not see Kirillov's motionless figure distinctly from where he stood. Furthermore, the description creates the atmosphere of a hallucination or horrible dream in which a discrepancy is no longer impressive. And, of course, the atmosphere accounts for the apparent plausibil-

ity of the subsequent biting of the finger. A residue of the attenuated discrepancy, a vague impression that somehow Kirillov is both dead and not dead, almost dictates the ghoulish action as a final touch.

That aesthetic intuition, the sense for contextual relevance which plays such a prominent part in art appreciation and criticism, enables one to perceive probability is a suggestion which may not appear unduly fanciful if we pause to consider the reason for our confidence in the law of chance and its representation by means of the bell-shaped or Gaussian curve. The reason is our acceptance of the principle of symmetry. For the law of chance, let me remind the reader, tells us, first, that accidental departures from the normal or intended effect are distributed symmetrically (i.e., positive and negative deviations are equally frequent) and, second, that large departures are less frequent than small ones. The first part of the law is to be accepted with confidence as merely an explication of the dictionary meaning of the word "chance" or "accident." Chance does not mean the existence of uncaused events. But we contrast chance with systematic influence in order to distinguish between the alternatives of a random or symmetrical distribution of effects, on the one hand, and a persistent one-way accumulation of results, on the other. But this consideration takes care of only one aspect of symmetry. Our confidence in the second aspect (in that part of the law which stipulates the increasing rarity of the increasingly large deviations from the standard) is not a matter of linguistics. The confidence is an expression of the conviction that normal or intended effects are isolable from distorting interference. We realize, of course, that even under the most favorable conditions of a laboratory experiment isolation is never foolproof. Everything is causally interconnected in the physical world, and some interference with the intended effect is always operative. Nevertheless, we remain undisturbed because we believe that under control the unavoidable interference is negligible or—which amounts to the same thing—that a markedly distorting influence is an exception. The belief in the isolability of intended effects follows

naturally the practice of imaginative isolation. And in this connection art and aesthetic intuition must be credited with a leading part. For, as we have already established in a comparison between scientific experiment and artistic fiction, the fictitious setting in a work of art is the only thing that secures imaginative isolation by eliminating all interference. It remains to consider whether an isolable aesthetic effect and the bell-shaped curve of chance or probability are adjustable to each other. On its face value it may appear that a scheme of chance is incompatible with an artistic design that has no room for any random appearance. Actually, however, a change of interpretation shows the bell-shaped curve to stand for the guiding scheme of composition in art. Let us reinterpret the word "chance." Instead of letting chance be opposed to relevance we now construe it as a departure from the maximum of relevance. Accordingly, the distance of a point on the bell-shaped curve from the maximal ordinate no longer represents the frequency of a random occurrence, but indicates the degree of contextual relevance that an element in a work of art has in relation to the central constituent or theme. The less relevant, the more accidental, the element, the more remote it appears from the principal "axis" of the composition. And the weight that a distant element adds to one side of the work of art must be compensated, in order that the composition may be kept in balance, by the presence of an equally distant element (if the two are of the same weight) at the opposite side. The connection indicated by means of the bell-shaped curve between chance or probability, on the one hand, and aesthetic relevance, on the other, explains the definite sense in which we can say that aesthetic intuition determines the judgment of probability. The bilateral symmetry of the curve represents the balance of a composition in art. Therefore confidence in the curve is an expression of the artist's or critic's intuition of contextual relevance that the elements have to one another within the balanced composition. This means that our sense of probability depends, at least in part, upon the principle of aesthetic symmetry or balance.

**30. ART AND VALUE**

To complete my treatment of aesthetics I must conclude with a statement concerning value. And the chapter on aesthetic analysis and art criticism is the appropriate place for the statement. For no critic of art is on firm ground unless he is prepared to back his judgment with considerations of value. To make the point clear let me present two imaginary characters, a poet and a critic, engaged in the following argument. To the critic's observation that in the course of an aesthetic experience the poem falls apart into a sequence of disconnected fragments, the poet counters with a question: "Why should a poem be unified or integrated?" The critic answers: "For one thing, because we know of no masterpiece that—under close analysis that brings out implicit factors as well as sensory contents—does not have a unified dynamic effect." But the poet remains unconvinced: "My poem is a masterpiece of a new kind, and the absence of integration is one of the features in which it differs from other masterpieces." It would not help the critic to announce that an unintegrated piece of writing is, by definition, not a work of art. The poet would simply point out that the definition is too narrow and must be revised to do justice to his creation. The critic, who still expects to win the argument without raising the difficult question of value, has one more remark up his sleeve: "A poem that falls apart is not a single work of art but a collection of disjunct pieces." The expectation is short-lived. The poet, far from being silenced, points out that the aesthetic postulate can be satisfied by a collection of disjunct pieces of writing as well as by a single, integrated work provided the collection is unique and stands apart from other particular works of art. And, he continues, as long as the postulate is satisfied, it is unimportant whether the poem is a unified work or a collection of fragments. What is important is whether the poem gives pleasure of the kind that is not to be found outside of art. The collection of disjunct pieces, which is his poem, gives, to the poet at least, aesthetic pleasure. Hence, he concludes, his poem is a real work

of art. Such words as "important" or "aesthetic pleasure" are definitely terms of value. If the argument is to continue, the critic must consider what makes for importance in art and, in particular, whether the value of a work of art is its capacity to give pleasure to some beholder. And the situation, although imaginary, is typical. Any actual argument about art is likely to bring out the question of value.

One might think that no special theory of value were required in order to justify the standard of dynamic unity. For it would seem that regardless of the definition of value aesthetic unity is valuable. For example, suppose we assert, with the hedonists, that value is pleasure. It would be then merely a matter of statistical record to ascertain that beholders derive pleasure from the integration of contents within a work of art. Or let us follow I. A. Richards when he asserts that the value of the aesthetic effect must be described in terms of resolution, interanimation, and balancing of impulses. It is obvious that there would be no contribution to a balance of impulses in art if it were not for the factor of aesthetic unity. Other conceptions of value can be treated similarly. But the proposition that aesthetic unity is a value whatever the conception of value may be is not to be confused with the stronger contention that any conception of aesthetic value entails the standard of aesthetic unity as an analytic consequence. Without the support of the stronger contention the proposition that aesthetic unity is valuable does not enable us to assume that the value of aesthetic unity is both sufficient and necessary to assure the value of the work of art. Let the hedonist speak again. He may tell us, on the one hand, that the amount of pleasure that he derives from the experience of aesthetic unity is too small to outweigh the pain of the concomitant effort at concentrated attention. On the other hand, like the poet in our imaginary dialogue, he may say that his aesthetic experience is pleasant enough to be recognized as a value even in the absence of aesthetic unity. We cannot counter with the stronger contention for the simple reason—which the imaginary dialogue also serves to illustrate—that there are definitions of value which in application to art

do not entail the standard of aesthetic unity. Hence—as we have committed ourselves to the standard in question—a special theory of value is in order.

Let us envisage the operation of a definite tendency or disposition to be actualized as the main factor in a value situation. To illustrate we may pick out an animal drive or a human impulse, for example, hunger or the pressure of an idea in the process of articulation and embodiment in words. The aspect of such tendencies that I take to institute value is the anticipation of the outcome of actualization. In the case of human values anticipation may be either a conscious or latent state. Consider, for example, a poem in the making. During the period of actually writing the poem down a measure of control by the poet, and therefore of conscious anticipation, is inevitable. Correction or revision is evidence that words are set to match an antecedently intended effect. On the other hand, the poet's antecedent intent itself emerges after a period of semiconscious gestation during which the poem gradually forces itself into shape. And the period of gestation, in its turn, is preceded by a state of latent dynamics of creative unrest or presentiment. Outside of the field of human transaction value must be construed by analogy with latent human values. Accordingly, we may attribute value to the "foresight" of the nest-building instinct. Or, to turn to inanimate nature for an example, we may associate value with the attraction that draws a piece of iron toward a magnet. We may even describe as unconscious anticipation the tendency of matter to persevere—in accordance with Newton's first law of motion—in its present dynamic state.

Consideration of cosmic, or nonhuman, value contributes to our insight into the connection between value and causal law. Dissociation between consciousness and anticipation does not allow us to treat the latter as an anticipatory concept which is detachable from the operative tendency itself. This is to say that latent anticipation is not a separable aspect of a tendency. To revert to a vector representation, the inseparable aspect of anticipation can be identified with the directedness of a vector within a vector field. The directedness of a vector is no more

separable from the vector than the arrowhead from the arrow aimed at a target within the field of its flight. We can best understand vectorial directedness as a form of contextual connectedness and, in particular, as causal connection. We observe that causal connections of inanimate nature are expressed by means of causal laws. There is an initial, isolable state—the set of the so-called boundary conditions—to be described as the cause; and there is a subsequent state which we identify with the effect. But in addition there is the course of change that brings about the subsequent state, the effect, initiated by the state of boundary conditions, the cause. This means that within the framework of causal connection the course of change is directed or, as it were, anticipated by way of tendencies or vectors that are operative within the cause. The language of differential equations, in which we formulate our causal laws, enables us, as I have already pointed out, to translate vectorial anticipation into mathematical computation and prediction of the effect, given the knowledge of the initial conditions. Hence—on the assumption that the anticipatory aspect of a tendency to be actualized institutes value—the concepts of value and causal law have been brought together.

Let us consider briefly the form which the connection between value and law must take in art. We have already established three relevant points. First, dynamic constituents within the field of an aesthetic experience are tendencies or vectors. Second, the pattern of vectorial interpenetration resolves tension within the field to bring about aesthetic unity. Third, the pattern of dynamic unity may be described as the presentation of a law even though there are no other presentations or exemplifications of the law outside of the work of art. Taken in conjunction the three points can mean only that in art the connection between value and law assumes the form of aesthetic unity. But that is exactly what we want: aesthetic unity and the associated standards of art criticism turn out to follow analytically the proposed conception of value.

To show that I have not pulled a rabbit out of a hat, I need only observe that the proposed definition accounts—by way of

contrast—for the generally accepted opinion that the evil of frustration or waste is the very antithesis of value. The account can be briefly summarized. Suppose a tendency to be actualized is in operation. The tendency may be blocked before actualization has taken place. Obstruction generates a sense of frustration unless the agent is aware of the existence of some factor of resistance. And, of course, an anticipation of eventual actualization must be recognized as a factor opposed to frustration because such anticipation encourages the blocked tendency to persevere. There can be no doubt that, as far as the tendency is concerned, resistance to obstruction is valuable. Therefore the aspect of the tendency that has been described as an anticipation of the actualization is experienced as a value. The scope of our account can be extended by analogy to include nonhuman values, except that instead of frustration we must use the broader term “waste,” which may or may not involve consciousness. Accordingly, let us say that the aspect of a tendency which is the analogue to human anticipation of actualization is a factor opposed to waste and therefore a value.

Extension of the range of value beyond consciousness rules out the equation of value to anticipatory concepts. But the inadequacy of such an equation can be perceived on independent grounds. There is a linguistic or semantic consideration to the effect that the word “value” connotes an object of a certain kind and therefore the referent of a concept rather than the concept itself. There is, in addition, a consideration of ontology. An anticipatory concept is the product of conceptualization, which is a mode of actuality. Value, on the other hand, has the status of potentiality. This is so because value, according to our hypothesis, is an aspect of a tendency or disposition and, consequently, belongs to the ontological order of the latter. Let me put the matter briefly as follows. An anticipation of actualization—the aspect of a tendency that has been already identified with value—precedes actualization by definition. And to the question concerning the status of the anticipated object prior to its actualization, there would seem to be only one answer. The anticipated object of a tendency

exists as a potential object whatever the interpretation of the term "potentiality," and, unless it takes the form of an anticipatory concept, the object of anticipation cannot be distinguished from the state of anticipation. Hence value is a potential object.

The assignment of the status of potentiality to value may be criticized on the grounds that the derivation of value from a tendency to acquire actuality commits us to recognizing that nothing short of the intended end, i.e., of complete actuality, can be a value in the basic sense of the word. For, as our critic might point out, it is only with the attainment of actuality that a tendency to acquire actuality can be unconditionally freed from obstruction and therefore from waste or frustration. The critic would then add that only an actualizable tendency generates value, that a vain aspiration is unquestionably perversion or anomaly. I do not accept the criticism although I admit that it contains an element of truth. It is, of course, true that only an actualizable tendency generates value. But this is not to say that actuality—even though an indispensable condition for value—is the same thing as value. To convince ourselves that actuality and value are different things, let us observe that there are two forms of actualization, one of which quite obviously leads away from value. These are completion and embodiment. Completion brings the tendency to its end with the attainment of actuality. Satisfaction of hunger is an example; satiation is a discharge of the appetite. And even if to an organism the resulting quiescence is valuable, there can be no value in relation to the tendency at the moment of discharge. In fact discharge is the extreme form of waste and therefore the very antithesis of value. In the case of embodiment value is present because the medium of actualization can at once sustain the tendency and fulfill its demand. But in this case value is present in spite rather than because of the copresent actuality. The presence of actuality notwithstanding, an embodied tendency operates in anticipation of further or continued actualization. Accordingly, we must qualify our original conception: Not all tendencies to acquire actuality but only tendencies toward

prolonged actualization—toward the continuation of an actual state—institute value. The qualification implies that actuality as such is neutral with respect to value.

Nothing can exemplify the process of actualization by embodiment better than an aesthetic experience. For the dynamics of vectorial interpenetration does not let perceptual discernment completely actualize any single constituent vector in detachment from context. A vector that has been already attended to continues in operation as perception advances along the path of vectorial directedness by conditioning the character of subsequent vectors. In other words, even a single vector component within a field of tension is incapable of being fully actualized and exploited locally; the actuality of the component is coextensive, both in space and time, with the range of its operation, i.e., with the total vector field. This is not to deny that even locally, while perception singles out a particular vector and dwells upon its manifestation, the total field is present in a latent form, but to emphasize that its status is that of a potential object of perceptual anticipation. We have already discredited, in the previous analysis of the aesthetic process, the notion that an aesthetic experience is locally actualized by completion at the final phase of consummation. It remains to conclude with the observation that the relation between value and actuality in art is strictly parallel to the relation between the aesthetic effect (a potential object) and an aesthetic experience, which is an actualization of the latter.

A tendency to be actualized—which is the source of value in art—must not be confused with the beholder's urge to undergo an aesthetic experience. My position is not subjectivist, and I am not concerned with a beholder's subjective disposition. By a tendency to be actualized in the field of art I mean a vector which is objectively a constituent of the total aesthetic effect. The beholder's part—as far as it is relevant to the intended meaning—is merely to testify, or verify, that definite tendencies to be actualized are at work by his acknowledgment of the fact that, once under the sway of the work of art, his perception and imagination carry on the process of actualization along

the channels of vectorial interconnectedness with a sense of objective compulsion.

Consideration, in this connection, of another possible misunderstanding furthers our inquiry into value in art. When we speak of a tendency to be actualized, we do not mean merely an urge to undergo transformation from potentiality into actuality. On the contrary, we are concerned with a tendency that promotes actuality of a special kind which corresponds to the peculiarity of the tendency and, in particular, to the character of its anticipation. This is so even in the case of a tendency that brings about actualization by completion and discharge. For example, hunger is not simply a drive toward the actual state of satisfaction but toward satisfaction in the particular form of satiety with food. If we turn to actualization by embodiment, we find a tendency toward prolonged actualization, which is even more clearly an agency of selection that promotes one particular kind of actuality at the expense of others. In art actualization by embodiment takes place in a prolonged process of vectorial co-operation that requires, from each vector or tendency, an irreplaceable individual contribution to the given context, i.e., a unique absolute quality. The peculiarity of the process of actualization in art accounts for the emergence, or disclosure, of highly individualized values which we single out from others under the name of beauty. And the experience of vectorial co-operation that culminates in a state of aesthetic unity enables us to acknowledge the equivalence of the presence of maximal beauty with the fact of aesthetic unity. This acknowledgment takes care of the challenge that was expressed by the poet in our imaginary dialogue. To the question, Why is a unified work of art preferable to a pleasing set of disconnected fragments? our reply is that there is no aesthetic value, no beauty, in a disconnected set.

To equate beauty with the fact of aesthetic unity is to admit that value is a fact. Yet we must not forget that a value is not a fact of actuality. Our identification of value with potential objects gives us the same advantage that the idealist derives from his opposition between value and fact. We can say, with

the idealist, that actuality never equals the ideal because we know that actuality is not the same thing as potentiality. But we do not follow the idealist in removing value from nature altogether. We insist that latent tendencies or vectors are no less facts of nature than overt and explicit actuality. And we contend that a potential object would not be valuable if it were not actualizable in a process of embodiment. The point is that if value were not an actualizable fact, it could be only an empty and detached fiction. We know that the pursuit of a chimera inevitably leads to frustration and therefore cannot possibly take part in a value situation. Our requirement for value to be actualizable is simply a way of expressing that knowledge. The requirement confines value to tendencies which are, in principle, sufficiently potent and persevering to force their way into the field of overt and explicit manifestation. In other words, only a basic and pervasive fact of nature can also be a value. The idealist, or any other dissenter, is likely to ask me: "Why should anyone, if he does not feel like it, value a basic fact any more than a transient and irretrievable appearance?" This is not the place to argue the matter at length, but I cannot resist the temptation to counter the question with questions of my own. How can anyone challenge a value if the challenge commits him to a relentless conflict with actuality? And if the challenger escapes from the struggle into illusion, how can he hold his value to be objective in the face of a resolute opposition from others, for example, when his opponents resolve to demonstrate their respect for fact by converting his illusion of isolation into the solid actuality of a cell in the madhouse?

But is not my own way of contrasting art with nature a way of escape from the facts and values of the world? The question, in this restricted form, has already been answered in the chapter on artistic truth. There are laws in the world that can be approached only through the channels of art, so that art turns out to be an irreplaceable, cognitive instrument for orientation in, and close contact with, reality. But the question can be put more generally as follows: Can art be cultivated except at the

expense of other values? We must concede that indulgence in aesthetic experience occasionally has been excessive, to the detriment of other values, that is. The word "aesthete" is currently spoken with an overtone of derision that testifies to the frequent abuse of aesthetic experience. But let us discount excess. The question remains: Can we be sure that art—even within the range of a moderate and judicious cultivation of aesthetic experience—does not detract our attention from the pursuit of greater value elsewhere? I think we may be confident that the answer is No. As two prominent literary critics have put it: "The question of the value of poetry, then, is to be answered by saying that it springs from a basic human impulse and fulfils a basic human interest."<sup>18</sup> The answer not only is correct but enables us to close the matter because it helps us to realize that we have been treading on grounds which are no longer within the domain of aesthetics. For to speak of a basic human impulse or interest is no longer to be concerned with art, in the sense of particular works of art, but with Art with a capital "A," i.e., with one of the distinctive functions of the mind or departments of culture. In aesthetics we must proceed with no regard for values outside of art. Comparison with other values may, no doubt, deter the beholder from undertaking an aesthetic experience. But the possibility does not affect the aesthetician's analysis of aesthetic experience that has already taken place. And, for the purposes of analysis, once the beholder is engaged in the contemplation of a work of art, once the aesthetic experience is under way, there can be no reference to external values. For, to repeat what we already know, an aesthetic experience, while it lasts, coincides with an autonomous, or self-contained vector field. Preference for other values would involve external reference and therefore disrupt the aesthetic unity of the field. Within the frame of the beholder's objective experience, within the aesthetic effect—beyond which aesthetics, in the narrow sense of the word, does not reach—the value of a work of art is absolute.



## Notes

### INTRODUCTION

1. *Principles of Art Appreciation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949), p. 11.
2. *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934); copyright, 1934, by John Dewey. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

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4. See "Supplementary Essay" in *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1945).
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17. Koffka, *op. cit.*
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19. *Aesthetic Analysis* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1936), p. 148.

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3. *A Musician Talks*, II, 54.
4. For further discussion of Stout's theory see Koffka's *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*.
5. Russell's opinion is developed in *The Analysis of Matter* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927), pp. 280 f. I have dealt with his argument in my *Power and Events* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 182-185.
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