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CONTEXT, AUDIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING

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Initially, I want to come clean about my doubts concerning the univocality of the 'topic' of *address* (as it might be applied in aesthetics[1]): that 'topic' strikes me as naturally combining a number of very different concerns. In this sense, perhaps there is no (one) topic of address as such. But one of the topics implicated is very important (at least to me). And it concerns just how there can be appropriate ways — or, more revealingly, *inappropriate* ways — to regard an artwork: minimally, any appropriate way involves approaching it as[2] *an artwork*; and as art of a *certain category*[3]. Moreover, the 'approach' here will be perceptual: that is, the artistic facts will be seen, noticed ... not inferred.

In philosophical aesthetics, artistic appreciation is generally recognised[4] to require (and hence to presuppose) a suitably knowledgeable, suitably sensitive

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[1] In writing this, I benefitted from a presently unpublished paper by Monique Roelofs "Normativity and Skepticism in Aesthetics" — although she may not recognise that benefit!

[2] This "as" should not be mistaken with that implying aspect perception: rather, it should be read as in Aristotle/Heidegger rather than Wittgenstein, from McIntyre (see later note).

[3] See Kendall Walton "Categories of Art" in J. Margolis (ed.) *Philosophy Looks at the Arts (Second edition)*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978 pp. 88-114.

spectator; where both these "suitably"s cannot *really* be filled-in, but give some context to the requirements both for appreciation under *categories of art*, and for the *mobilisation* of the appropriate category in the spectator's experience — a context at least of a negative sort: that is, explaining *failures* to understand or appreciate[5]. And this picture also incorporates the appropriate *narrative* of that category of art; hence it could or should locate the work in its history and traditions.

In this way, someone will misperceive the artwork if he/she approaches it without due regard for (at least) these two points. And, notice, the first condition ("as an artwork") implicates an artistic/aesthetic distinction (or might be seen to do so[6]) on which the appropriate approach to artworks is importantly different from the approach to the other objects in which we take an aesthetic interest.

One corollary of this artistic/aesthetic contrast is that one's calling a painting, say, *gaudy* will amount to something different when one recognises that the painting is an artwork from what it amounted to when one mistook the gaudy object for, say, wallpaper.

The key case here, of course, concerns the term "beauty": if I (mis)take something for an artwork, and find it beautiful, my now coming to recognise that it is *not* an artwork will *not* leave that judgement unaffected. Rather, as Wollheim[7] recognises, it will affect the judgement "… not by raising or lowering that judgement, but by knocking it sideways": even if I continue to regard the object as beautiful, its beauty will amount to something different. So one cannot *just* say, "Well, OK, it is not art but I still find it beautiful"; for what one meant by the term "beauty" is implicated — hence the "still" ("I *still* find it beautiful") is unjustified!

Further, this difference has a bearing on the (non-monetary) value of the

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4 Compare Richard Wollheim *The Mind and Its Depths*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993 p. 189: "What is properly visible in the surface of the picture is a matter of what experiences appropriate information allows a sensitive spectator to have in front of it…" Also Wollheim "On Pictorial Representation" in R. Van Gerwen (ed.) *Richard Wollheim on the Art of Painting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 pp. 13-27; esp. pp. 13-14.

5 Compare my "Meaning and the Art-Status of Music Alone" *British Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 37 No 1 1997 pp. 31-46, especially pp. 35-36.

6 Compare, for example, see David Best *The Rationality of Feeling*, London: Falmer Press, 1992 p. 174; and my *Understanding Dance*. London: Routledge, 1992 pp. 38-44, 173-192 (cited as "UD").

7 Wollheim *The Mind and Its Depths*. p. 174.

8 In contrast, Anthony Savile (*The Test of Time* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982 p. 181) writes of the need for "univocality" in any analysis of beauty; and earlier he comments: "Unless the analysis I have offered [of beauty in art] can be extended to cover natural cases of beauty as well, and extended in such a way as not to import ambiguity into the concept, my proposal will have to be judged a failure." (Savile *Test* p. 176). This is one of the views I am opposing here.

object. And we might then treat occurrences of one term (for instance, "beauty") on both sides of this artistic/aesthetic distinction as systematic ambiguity (or, better, a kind of contextualism[8])

The second consideration ("as in a certain category of art") implicates the history of art, since that is where such categories are found — or, better, a *narrative* of that history[9]. And one might therefore expect one's understanding:

(a) to be as disputable as that narrative;

(b) to be debated (partly) by debating that narrative; and

(c) to be as *changeable* as that narrative — which, for me, involves *forwards retroactivist* changes[10], with later events (than, say, its creation) possibly altering how an artwork is appropriately understood.

So that both appropriate category and art-status *might*, in some circumstances, be mutable under the impact of changes in taste.

These two considerations generate *requirements* (as I called them earlier) in the sense that failure to satisfy them will lead to one or other kind of misperception of the art object: either not as an art object at all, or as though it were a different kind of art object (one from a different category).

Such *requirements* could, of course, be stated in terms of how the artwork addresses me, if I am to be a spectator of it as an artwork — although notice how little *content* such a notion has. For what is at issue is the powers and capacities needed to make sense of the work (minimally: that is, as necessary only). Notice, too, how *odd* it would be — if *this* were the context — to speak of the work addressing me as *something*: say, as a sedentary white male. For here, if these requirements are not met, I do not (appropriately) perceive the artwork: rather, I misperceive it. Then we *might* say that it does not *address* me … and either the "it" or the "me" might be stressed in explanation.

So that one central problem about so-called "address" is really more old-fashioned: it is of a piece with attempts to make sense of the idea of *misperceiving* an artwork, or of an *appropriate* approach to an artwork as in its *category*. And

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[9] In respect of the sense of the term "narrative" used here, see Noel Carroll "Essence, Expression and History: Arthur Danto's Philosophy of Art" in Mark Rollins (ed.) *Danto and his Critics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993 pp. 79-106; "Identifying Art" in Robert J Yanal (ed.) *Institutions of Art: Reconsiderations of George Dickie's Philosophy*, University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994 pp. 3-38.

[10] See my "The Historical Character of Art: A Re-Appraisal" *British Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 32 No 4 1992 pp. 307-319; "Back to the Future: A Reply to Sharpe" *British Journal of Aesthetics* Vol. 35 No 3 1995 pp. 278-283.

that amounts to a consideration of the appropriate concepts to mediate one's perception of the artwork.

One strength of *that* way of putting the matter (shared by talk of "address") is that it can stress that the properties at issue are properties *of the object* — and hence raise a discussion about the *nature* of such properties (a topic I'll return to) — rather than looking to, say, how to *regard* the object, or how to address it. For I would urge the *transformative* impact of art-status[11]: if this were granted, it would explain both why art-status is *important* (drawing some artistic/aesthetic distinction) and why locating the relevant *category* is also important — since it supplies the basic critical concepts for that artwork.

For only when these conditions are met can I genuinely regard the object before me as an *artwork*, and as an artwork of a certain *kind* (or category) that I might plausibly make sense of. As we might say, only in this situation is it possible for the artwork to *speak to me*, to address me. (There is no guarantee that it will, but at least it might.) And, notice, regarding the work aright will bring with it notions of artistic *value* — of a valuing of art distinct from our valuing of other objects of aesthetic interest (for example, the wallpaper on the wall on which our great painting hangs).

Here, we can turn on its head the thesis, from Stanley Cavell[12], that: "[i]t is tautological that art has, is made to have, an audience, however small or special." For, as we see, once the object fails to have (to attract) an audience, it fails to *be* art … or, at least, its days of art-status are numbered if this condition becomes permanent. Thus, objects highly regarded as artworks at one time might lose their art-status entirely when, at some later time, they are rightly regarded as mawkish, sentimental, etc. (I think of the Pre-Raphaelites in just this way) — indeed, viewed in any of the ways incompatible with these objects being artworks: for instance, as pornography.

A difficulty here (a point I will return to) is, of course, that one cannot prescribe how these objects *might* be viewed — surely there is someone, somewhere able to see anything in anything (*Macbeth* as a comedy, say) — but rather

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11 The central arguments here are, of course, Arthur Danto's: see, for example, his *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace Cambridge*, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981 pp. 1-2. Here, as Danto (*Embodied Meanings: Critical Essays and Aesthetic Meditations* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994 p. 384) puts it, "The aesthetic difference presupposed the ontological difference".

12 Stanley Cavell *Must We Mean What We Say*? New York: Scribners, 1969 p.

we are stressing how they might be *appropriately* (or arguably) viewed.

Let us turn now to the idea of "the work addresses me *as an X*": for example, a painting which (it is argued) requires of its spectators, say, a lascivious 'gaze' at the flesh of the depicted woman (I have read accounts like this given of Lucian Freud paintings). Here, I need not share this 'gaze' to recognise it[13]: to that degree, then, I can make sense of the work without actually *being* what I am addressed as. Or so it seems.

Could a painting (or novel) address me *as a woman*? Well, the term "woman" here has no specific content as such: it would need to be augmented in terms of the powers, capacities, and so on thereby assumed for (or attributed to) *women*. If, as we have suggested, artworks can require, for their understanding, an audience suitably knowledgeable and suitably sensitive, there seems no reason to preclude this particular requirement for knowledge, etc. So there could be (in principle) an implied audience for a painting or novel which assumed certain (say) *values*: so that the painting assumes that its (appropriate) spectators *share* (or at least recognise) the values of, for instance, a Victorian woman (on a certain conception of Victorian women or Victorian femininity) — for example, I have read accounts of Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* in these terms.

As a first step, we must recognise that an artwork that requires of its audience, say, understanding the values of, say, *Victorian women* cannot thereby require that the audience be composed of Victorian women. For, otherwise, its 'shelf-life' would be unacceptably short.

Now suppose I am *not* a Victorian woman: does that entail that I will *misperceive* the work in question? Suppose that it does not: in that case, the requirement here seems to be for a sympathetic recognition of the values, and so on — in such a case, a work which addresses me as a Victorian woman might do so even *though* I (personally) fail both aspects[14]. Again, this seems an aspect both harmless and familiar to art criticism: namely, the values assumed of an audience for this artwork — and then some discussion would follow about what happened when those assumptions were not met (either wholly or to some degree), perhaps

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[13] See Wollheim in *Modern Painters* Winter 1999 p. 69 in respect of such an assumption. We might well think that the kind of view offered (say, of Freud) was mistaken — but suppose we did not.

[14] Think too about the properties Wollheim attributes to internal spectators, or "the-spectator-in-the-picture": the view ascribed to them need to be held by actual spectators of artworks.

recognising the shades of meaning thereby unavailable.

We should, of course, contrast this case with an imaginary one where — since I am *not* a Victorian woman — the work *cannot* engage with me (not merely one where my specific, remediable ignorance precludes it). For this seems the case where I would *necessarily* misperceive the work. So, would this particular work address me and (say) a female colleague *differentially* — that is, where the differences did not come down to ones about our relative experience, knowledge, etc.: for differences like that would be remediable (in principle)? I would say "no": for what, exactly, am I supposed to *necessarily* lack? Of course, in reality, compared to our stylised Victorian woman, there are certain perceptions I do not share, certain values I do not have, certain narratives of art in which I *cannot* locate the work (as our candidate Victorian woman could) — and certain narratives 'second-nature' to me which are unavailable to her. But all (or at least, most) of this would be equally true of a contemporary female colleague: so that suggestion simply replicates in more detail our general point about the need for a suitably knowledgeable, suitably sensitive audience for artworks. And that just reinstates, with more detail given, the case sketched above.

My point here is actually two-fold: first, we have no reason to expect a single uniform resolution to the difficulty which these cases indicate (namely, the need for a suitably sensitive, suitably informed audience for any artwork, and the complexity of getting this); second, these are just versions of a difficulty familiar to those of us who recognise the *contextual* dimension of meaning more generally conceived — what Charles Travis has spoken of (in relation to language) *as speaking variability or occasion-sensitivity* [15], under which[16]:

> "… words are sensitive to their speakings in the semantics they bear, varying semantics across speakings. So that any semantics they might bear in saying something to be so is one they bear only occasion-sensitively. Their semantics as part of their language, e.g. English, is at most a proper part of their semantics on an occasion of expressing a thought, and underdetermines what thought they would

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[15] See Charles Travis *The Uses of Sense* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; "Annals of Analysis" *Mind* vol. 100 1991 pp. 237-264; "Meaning's Role in Truth" *Mind* vol. 105 1996 pp. 451-466; "Pragmatics" in Crispin Wright and Bob Hale (Des) *Blackwell Companion to the Philosophy of Language* Oxford: Blackwell, 1997 pp. 87-107.
[16] Travis "Annals of Analysis" p. 242.

> thus express, the latter varying while they mean what they do and have whatever semantics that confers on them."

This leads to a further comment: that the notion of *address* dooms itself *if* it is necessarily wedded to a mistaken view of understanding, of language and of communication.

Suppose, then, one thought that the right model for the understanding of meaning-bearing 'entities', such as language, was as *utterances*, made in contexts, in relation to specific questions or issues, and by specific persons; as *utterances*, that is, rather than as, say, *sentences* with truth-conditions. If one supposed this, one might be (say) Charles Travis — or, latterly, Graham McFee — and find one's philosophical forebears in Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, and perhaps R. G. Collingwood. And I would want to be very particularist about this, recognising how the same form of words might, in different contexts, amount to different utterances or questions.

Suppose, further, that artworks are meaning-bearing in *something like* this way: hence that this thesis about understanding should be applied *mutatis mutandis* to artworks such as paintings and — in particular — to novels. Of course, this would not preclude quite a wide variety of manifestations of such understanding. And those who grant that artworks can typically be *understood* must be granting (at least) something in this direction.

One problem for such a *general* view of meaning, etc., is that it is difficult to see exactly how such a conception relates the various uses of similar expressions — imperatives ("Please shut the door"), indicatives ("The door is shut") and questions ("Is the door shut") — given that they occur in different contexts, in relation to different issues, perhaps. But here I just assume this difficulty can be overcome.

A second problem is more specific. It can be brought out by considering *sentences*, say, in a book: it might seem that — contrary to the position here — *the book itself* has a meaning (the sort of thing John Searle might think of as locutionary[17]) *independent* of any particular context of 'utterance'. Although this view strikes me as wrong, it is revealing here since we can imagine an orthographically-indistinguishable sentence in a novel and in a report (or even whole indistin-

[17] See, for example, John Searle Speech Acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969 p. 23.

guishable texts) which *amount* to something different *just because* one is from a novel, the other from a report. So the transformative aspect of art-status is visible here.

This comparison of artistic understanding with language may also be revealing here in locating *a* topic of address. For what is it for a sentence (or an utterance) to *address* me? In part, this might amount to its being addressed to me … you say this to me, whether I understand or not — indeed, whether or not I even recognise that the remark is (literally) addressed to me. Or the utterance's addressing me might be for your utterance to have a bearing on, say, a bourgeois, middle-class, sedentary (etc.) life like mine. In both these cases, though, the remark *addressed* to me might have no chance of being understood by me — it might even be in a language I do not understand. And here it seems right to think of the remark as *effectively* passing me by, however much it was intended otherwise. Here, we might say, a remark *aimed* at addressing me (or addressing my problems) failed to do so.

Moreover, there is nothing here unique to language, although there is a connection to genuine meaning. Thus, the idea of *communication* is (essentially) related to that of *meaning*[18]. Indeed, any 'learning about another' not so based in (at least *implied*) intention could not figure as a legitimate contribution to *meaning*: as when my boss learns from my yawning that I am bored by/at the meeting — the very last thing I'd hoped for! There is no (genuine) communication here, and no meaning, just because my behaviour lacks both the required kind of *intention* and (therefore?) anything *specific* to communicate. These fit together: there cannot be anything to communicate (since nothing was intended) and we can infer from the lack of intention that there is no 'message' to be communicated (or to fail to be communicated, or to misfire in communication, etc.).

As in these examples, intended address is clearly not equivalent to real or genuine address. But, again, if we think of, say, a sentence as *addressing* me only in those cases where I can both understand it and where it has some *significance* for me — as we might think the owners' manual for the Ford Ka addressed Ford Ka owners, but no others — we have returned to our earlier conclusion … applied to art, what we *then* need for address is just suitable sensitivity and suitable knowledge.

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[18] As Best (Philosophy and Human Movement. London: Allen & Unwin, 1978 pp. 139-140) has shown: see also UD pp. 243-244.

If remarks are addressed to me in some role or capacity — say, as Professor of Philosophy, or as Vice President of the British Society of Aesthetics — this is because those remarks might have a bearing for me 'wearing that hat' that they lack for me under some other description (say, as plain 'G. McFee'). But now what is brought out is my *special relevance* as a recipient of those remarks: and this case cannot tell us much about understanding art, since art necessarily has a wider audience than this (in principle if not in practice).

Of course, art differs from face-to-face communication in sharing with so-called *mass communication* what has been termed "a fundamental break between the production and reception"[19], so that (unlike the feed-back typical of face-to-face communication) these are 'messages' fixed and 'transmitted. (For this reason, Wollheim[20] urges that it is best not thought *communication* at all — or, at least, is recognised as a distinctive kind of communication.)

The point, though, is that the *potential* audience for artworks is nor circumscribed by the class, power, etc., of particular members of that audience. Practically, there will be limitations — as when only French-speakers can understand poetry in French. But that is a *practical* problem only. And, of course, there is no suggestion here that *all* that audience will make the same sense of a particular artwork (no idea of 'one right reading', only of various wrong ones), nor that they will do so in the same way.

Still, this point *might* be turned into one we have repeated already — that the audience for an artwork needs to be suitably knowledgeable and suitably sensitive: and applying this idea might require a view of what was involved in the *perception* of artworks (perhaps of perception more generally) wider than that sometimes assumed. For, at the least, artistic value must be perceptible. And this could be complex. Perhaps, in order to understand a musical work (for instance), I will need to locate my momentary perceptual response in a fuller perceptual experience. Or at least, there is something there to discuss. Jerrold Levinson[21]approaches it this way: "…much of the aural comprehension of ex-

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[19] John B. Thompson *Ideology and Mass Communication*, Stanford, CA: University of Stanford Press, 1990 p. 220.

[20] Richard Wollheim *Painting as an Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1987 p. 96: "Necessarily communication is either addressed to an identifiable audience, as when a speaker answers a question put to him by another or when an orator harangues an audience, or is undertaken in the hope an audience will materialize, as when a shipwrecked sailor raises a signal of distress."

[21] See his *Music in the Moment*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997 p. ix.

tended pieces of music that seem to implicate explicit architectonic awareness can be explained by appeal to tacit, unconscious correlates of present passages..."

Here, there is a contrasting of "explicit" with both "tacit" and "unconscious" — one might think that these contrasts embody a mistaken view of the mind: an unduly rationalistic one, on which the listener's successfully *doing* something is taken to imply kinds of knowledge (say, of rules or principles) the agent would disavow if asked — and with justification (perhaps he has neither heard, nor thought about, them). An alternative view might begin from a conception of the listener as agent, with practical powers and capacities: "In the beginning was the deed"[22]. And some of the deeds might be appreciation of, say, musical structure. Levinson continues:

> "Even if the comprehending listener must have internalized, through repeated listening, certain facts of musical structuring in order to follow the piece aurally as he or she does, this does not entail that the listener has encoded such facts linguistically, or has access to such facts in a linguistic mode, even after careful eliciting." (p. x)

One might wonder what conception of understanding is in play here: the idea is that the listener might have "encoded such facts" concerning musical structure. Exactly of what practical capacity is this an abstract formulation?

The question to raise is whether criticisms or discussions such as *these* — which clearly do bear on the powers and capacities of the appropriate audience for artworks (musical in this case, though we might say the same, *mutatis mutandis*, for dance) — involve any notion of *address* … or, at least, any beyond what is picked-up in the requirement (for general artistic understanding) of suitably knowledgeable, suitably sensitive spectators. And one reason for offering a "no" answer might precisely be reservations as to whether any fruitfulness in the notion of *address*, as it applies in communication generally, could transfer to these works properly understood — that is, as artworks. Here, our account of art has emphasised the powers and capacities of its (appropriate) spectators, rather than (merely) their knowledge or cognitive stock.

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[22] This was one of Wittgenstein favourite slogans: see my "Wittgenstein, Performing Art and Action" in R. Allen and M. Turvey (eds.) Wittgenstein, Theory and the Arts. London: Routledge, 2000 pp. 92-116, esp. pp. 109-110.

Now, one might well want to say more about the nature of such spectators, and about their relation to the properties — especially the *perceptual* properties — of artworks. Yet that concern is not centrally philosophical: for it does not plot the logic of artistic judgement, nor its peculiar epistemology. Rather, on the one hand, an art-critical interest might concern itself with the precise properties of the *actual* audience for such-and-such a work; or, on the other, a sociology of art might plot the contours (say, in terms of class-base or power) of the audience for such-and-such art in so-and-so period — that is, might be a sociology of artistic consumption. And one can see how *this* concern might relate to those *not* available to consume *these* artworks, those not "addressed" by the works, or unsuitably "addressed" by them.

Calling this interest "sociological" is not, of course, an attempt to draw rigorous, sharp boundaries between disciplines. But it is an attempt to see what is crucial for different (disciplinary?) concerns; and, here, the crucial difference is that what I have called "sociological" concerns with artistic consumption leave an 'art-shaped hole'[23] in one's theory because, of their nature, they can give no weight to artistic value — that is, to the sorts of differences in the achievements of (in Peter Fuller's example[24]) sculptors on the Parthenon frieze, such that we recognise one as creating flowing robes from the marble while the other: "…depicted folds in robes or drapery through rigid slots, … like someone furrowing the surface of a cheese with a tea-spoon."

Yet these sculptors are, we might think, in exactly the same position with respect to class, power, etc., etc. So, given only our 'sociological' account, we lack the explanatory tools to attribute a value to the one not shared by the other. But such artistic value is crucial for philosophical aesthetics. So the difficulty here identifies, not a deficiency in my 'sociology', but a characteristic of it, something central to its particular epistemology.

Thus, stressing the importance of (the possibility of) artistic *value* — as aestheticians must (and is implicit in the artistic/aesthetic distinction) — we are turning our backs on some of the specifics here: while of art-critical or 'sociological' relevance, they cannot speak to philosophical aesthetics.

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[23] See Peter Fuller *Beyond the Crisis in Art*. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1980 p. 236: for discussion, see UD pp. 294-297.

[24] Fuller *Beyond the Crisis* in Art p. 236.

Earlier, I promised a return to the idea of circumscribing the perception appropriate to artworks. Why is viewing our artwork as, say, pornographic inappropriate (when it isn't straightforwardly misperception[25])? Answers will involve comments on the value of art; in particular, on its epistemology.

At this point, then, we return to the *nature* of artistic properties: here I assume the usefulness of a comparison with, say, secondary qualities such as colour. So, we can usefully note (a) the sense in which the colour of (say) a red object is a public, shareable property of that object and yet (b) how, in a world with no beings of suitable discriminatory powers — no beings who could discriminate this property, even in principle — it would be puzzling in what sense the object would genuinely *be* red. It is this second feature that tempts the unwary to dismiss colour as 'subjective'. Yet that cannot be warranted, given the publicity of colour judgements (such that we can identify the colour-blind). So we might think of colours as response-reliant. For this is surely the context for our understanding of redness — as John McDowell[26] puts it: "…an experience of something as red can count as a case of being presented with a property that is there anyway — there independently of the experience itself." Yet we recognise the relation of that property to human powers and capacities — and even to human concerns[27].

Now, I want to offer a similar comment on artistic value: to suggest (with McDowell?) that "… the world contains value in as strong a sense as it contains colour"[28]. Granting this point — and here I simply assume it — would clarify an important dimension of the nature of artistic appreciation, because we would have related the possession of the artistic properties (by artworks) to the powers and capacities of the audience for those works, while leaving the properties as clearly properties *of* the artworks. Moreover, we would be acknowledging the contribution of what the audience has *learned*: our suitably knowledgeable audience has

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[25] There is much to be written here about "addressing me as an audience for pornography": but I shall assume that to do so is not to address me as an audience for art. See Stanley Cavell *The World Viewed* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979 p. 46: "Straight pornography is not a problem: a drug is not a food". But studying this case could, of course, shed light on cases that do concern us. (Compare UD pp. 175-176; my *Much of Jackson Pollock is Vivid Wallpaper*, Washington: University Press of America, 1978 pp. 155-158.)

[26] John McDowell "Values and Secondary Qualities", reprinted in his *Mind, Value and Reality*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998 p. 134.

[27] Hilary Putnam T*he Threefold Cord: Mind, Body and World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999 p. 5ff.) is good on ways (from Peirce) of connecting our powers and our concerns. [NB McDowell (Mind, Value and Reality p. 118) discusses Williams on Peirce.]

[28] Jonathan Dancy "Intuitionism" in P. Singer (ed.) A *Companion to Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 p. 418, giving exposition of McDowell.

not merely learned to *see* — that is, to recognise the *artistic*, and to apply (some) categories of art — but also, first, has learned to *mobilise* those concepts in the experience of artworks (where this contributes to being "suitably sensitive") and, second, has learned to *value*; to see artworks as valuablex[29]. For, in understanding the work in its narrative, I will come to see what is valuable about it. And, to some degree, this will be to value the work. So seeing artworks in their appropriate categories cannot (in general) be fully separated from valuing those works[30] Thus, in learning how to understand artworks (of particular *genres, categories*, etc.), one is also being taught how to (appropriately) value.

This, then, shows us why (in general) artworks cannot be pornographic: that the commitment to them *as art* is (defeasibly[31]) incompatible with seeing them as pornographic — and taking a pornographic interest in acknowledged artworks will be misperceiving them! For recognising artworks is (defeasibly) recognising them as valuable. Recall artworks misperceived under *aesthetic* concepts — a mistake exemplified when Norman Tebbit, a politician from Mrs. Thatcher's government, discussed photographs of 'topless' women on Page Three of a British national newspaper, *The Sun*. Tebbitt[32]:

> … made a widely reported observation to the effect that middle-class people could see spicier pictures of naked women on art gallery walls, and he really could not see that there was any difference between such things and the *Sun* Page Three girl.

Those who "cannot see that there was a significant difference"[33] between artworks and pin-ups are denying the idea of artistic value as I have been seeking to de-

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[29] Note both (a) my "Wittgenstein, Performing Art, and Action" pp. 100-108 on learning to see and learning to value; and (b) the sense in which this "as" has nothing to do with aspect-perception. I explain aspect-perception in my "Wittgenstein on Art and Aspects" Philosophical Investigations Vol 22 No. 3 pp. 262-284. What it might mean is suggested, and ascribed as a thesis to both Aristotle and Heidegger, by Alasdair McIntyre *Dependent Rational Animals*, Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1999 pp. 44-47: see, especially, the importance of what Heidegger (as McIntyre reads him) calls "the as-structure".

[30] Of course, the work might have other defects: this is, at best, one thing to be said in its favour — and that defeasibly (see below)!

[31] On defeasibility, see UD pp. 61-63; and my *Free Will*. Teddington: Acumen, 2000 pp. 123-124: on the evaluativeness of artistic appreciation, see my "The Logic of Appreciation in the Republic of Art", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 29 No 3, July 1989 pp. 230–238.

[32] Peter Fuller *Theoria; Art and the Absence of Grace*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1988 pp.211–212.

[33] Peter Fuller *Seeing Through Berger*. London and Lexington, KY: The Claridge Press, 1988 p.64.

velop it[34].

One might wonder *how* value can be taught — how one can be taught to value *for oneself*, as it were, rather than being brain-washed or bullied (or even "socialised") into repeating others' value-claims. But our lines of reply will illustrate (perhaps in detail) *that* one can — perhaps pointing to effective teachers of such valuing, including some art critics — and then highlight the *generality* of this problem: it is certainly not a problem for philosophical aesthetics only!

Yet, granting *that* insight, another question appears: what *kind* of value? (Note, of course, that this is a very *odd* question — could we really answer it for, say, moral value? And here the tendency of some 'sociologists' to deny the reality of moral value should be remembered, in the light of earlier comments.) Given the diversity within what humans find valuable, and among artworks, once the interpersonal nature of this value is recognised, perhaps there is little more that can be said, in the abstract. But perhaps Noël Carroll's *moderate moralism* or Berys Gaut's *ethicism*[35] suggest one way (or two ways) to begin making-out a version of a thesis I get from David Best: to show how life-issues might be implicated in artistic value. At the very least, one might turn to the work such theorists (or to Martha Nussbaum[36]) to suggest that such a value-perspective — if not crazy in

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[34] But, notice, there is something to the work seen in this way — the not-understood 'poem' is still beautiful. And so *might* the girls (as photographed) be. So these are ways of taking the object in question: it can be an object of aesthetic interest (as anything — or almost anything — can).

[35] See Noël Carroll "Moderate Moralism" *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 36 No 3, July 1996 pp. 223-238; "Moderate Moralism versus Moderate Autonomism" *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 38 No 4, October 1998 pp. 419-425; Berys Gaut "The Ethical Criticism of Art" in J. Levinson (ed.) *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 pp. 182-203; "Art and Ethics" in B. Gaut & D. Lopes (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. London: Routledge, 2000 pp. 341-352. - As *moderate moralism* (or "ethicism")is explained, it is the view that: "…for certain [narrative] genres, moral comment, along with formal comment, is natural and appropriate … [since]… moral evaluation may figure in our evaluations of some artworks. … That is, some artworks may [legitimately] be evaluated in terms of the contribution they make to moral education." (Carroll "Moderate Moralism" p. 229). And this is because: "[m]any artworks, such as narrative artworks, address the moral understanding. When that address is defective, … the work is morally defective. And … that moral defect may count as a moral blemish." (Carroll "Moderate Moralism" p. 234). In a similar vein, and summarising: "Ethicism is the thesis that the ethical assessment of attitudes manifested by works of art is a legitimate aspect of the aesthetic evaluation of those works, such that, if a work manifests ethically reprehensible attitudes, it is to that extent aesthetically defective…" (Gaut "The Ethical Criticism of Art" p. 182).
(These are limited partly in being theses about only some artworks, at best — and, here, we begin from literary works.) The connection for ethicism is/should be to *artworks*: for it is here that the comparison with action (and its corresponding intentionality, in respect of meaning) is strongest. And the ethicist position thereby acquires a cognitivist 'tinge', contrary to some accounts of the ethical. One part of the argument here is that, if something like Gaut's *ethicism* were granted, it could function as a kind of 'half-way house': we would be some way towards the sort of more general value-connection for artworks for which David Best and I have argued for some time.

this moral case — cannot simply be dismissed.

This whole paper is really a research agenda: that we might profitably pursue areas for investigation that it identifies:

1. the need to articulate artistic value in terms of perceptible properties of artworks (once a generous enough account of perception is in place);

2. the need to characterise the powers and capacities of the audience for art, in terms of suitable knowledge and suitable sensitivity;

3. in particular, the need to construe failures of appreciation in terms of failures in these respects; and

4. the modeling of artistic understanding as a species of action, based on learning to see and learning to value.

In contrast, the research agenda suggested by the notion of *address* (at least on one understanding) seems directed only at the audience or spectator ("it addresses me as …"), except when it is directed at the artist ("he/she addresses me …"). And that risks neglecting the artwork in precisely the same way as do what, above, I called "sociological accounts". Renford Bambrough[37] once wrote that: "…[t]he wild goose of definition is never captured but the chase takes the hunter over the rugged and uneven ground whose contours he needs to survey."

One might have said something similar about the notion of *address* — but *I* would not (partly because I doubt it in Bambrough's case). My worry is that, if one begins by raising the question of *address*, and thereby importing its assumptions, one may never shake free of them ... as someone who saw the duck-rabbit design *only* in the context of other duck-pictures would thereby make it more difficult (hence less likely) to come to the 'rabbit-possibility'.

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[36] See Martha Nussbaum *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 (which collects many of her most important essays on these topics): in particular, (a) her commitment to a kind of perceptualism about the moral, rooted in "… the ability to discern, accurately and responsively, the salient features of one's particular situation" (p. 37); and (b) her emphasis on "the priority of the particular" (p. 37).

[37] R. Bambrough "Literature and Philosophy" in R. Bambrough (ed.) *Wisdom: Twelve Essays*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1974 p. 279.