

Subjectivism in the Theory of Pictorial Art

1. A new wave of subjectivism in the theory of pictorial art began around forty years ago; and since then it has gathered pace in tandem with changing fashions in the philosophy of mind. The initial impetus was provided by the publication of Ernst Gombrich's 1956 Mellon Lectures, Art and Illusion.¹ In this book, and in many subsequent articles and lectures which elaborate its theme, Gombrich argues that the development of Western art – essentially the art of ancient Greece and the art of Western Europe from Giotto to Cezanne – consists in a series of discoveries about the nature of visual perception, and the means by which the effect of visible objects on our senses can be simulated. 'What may make a painting like a distant view through a window' he writes, 'is not the fact that the two can be as indistinguishable as is a facsimile from the original: it is the similarity between the mental activities both can arouse.' And in another place: 'The goal which the artist seeks with such self-critical persistence is ... a psychological effect.'²

These remarks are concerned with a specific artistic tradition, and with specific pictorial devices, such as foreshortening and shading, which I shall not write about here. But Gombrich's work launched a search for a general theory of depiction based on the same approach. The search intensified in the wake of Nelson Goodman's Languages of Art, which persuaded most of its readers that the resemblance theory of depiction could not be made to work, but did not provide a plausible alternative to it. Today there is broad agreement among philosophers that the nature of pictorial art cannot be explained by analysing the relationship between the marks on the surface of a picture and the kinds of objects that they represent. The consensus is that it can only be explained by defining the psychological effect that these marks produce.³ Today, the two most influential theories of depiction that are guided by this general idea are Richard Wollheim's and Christopher Peacocke's. I shall begin by criticizing these two theories in turn, in sections 2 to 6, and 7 to 10. Then, in the remaining sections, I shall comment in more general terms on the strategy they both pursue.

2. Subjectivism in the theory of pictorial art belongs in the wider family of subjectivisms—about colour, about value, and so on. And it faces similar challenges to these other theories. First, the psychological effect produced by a picture of a certain kind of object must be defined. Secondly, since it is possible to misperceive the content of a picture, a subjectivist theory will also need to define a standard of correctness, that is, it will need to explain what makes the difference between a viewer's correctly perceiving the content of a picture, and her misperceiving it. This standard of correctness will therefore play the role that agreement with the joint verdict of critics endowed with delicacy of imagination, freedom from prejudice, etc. plays in Hume's theory of taste.

Wollheim's theory of depiction is designed to meet both of these challenges. He argues that the psychological effect that a picture must produce is 'an experience with a certain phenomenology'. He calls this experience 'seeing-in', using the hyphen to remind the reader that the phrase is a term of art, which needs defining; and he calls the phenomenology which defines the experience 'twofoldness', for a reason I shall explain shortly. So Wollheim defines the psychological effect produced by a picture in terms of twofoldness. That is how he meets the first challenge. Then, in order to meet the second challenge, he proposes that the standard of correctness, which determines whether the viewer has correctly perceived the content of a picture, 'is set – set for each painting – by the intentions of the artist in so far as they are fulfilled.'⁴ We shall shortly see what kinds of intentions these are supposed to be.

Here, though, to begin with, is the passage in which twofoldness, and thereby seeing-in, is explained:

Seeing-in is a distinct kind of perception, and it is triggered by the presence within the field of vision of a differentiated surface. Not all differentiated surfaces will have this effect, but I doubt that anything significant can be said about what exactly a surface must be like for it to have this effect. When the surface is right, then an experience with a certain phenomenology will occur, and it is this phenomenology that is distinctive about seeing-in. ... The distinctive phenomenological feature I call 'twofoldness', because, when seeing-in occurs, two things happen: I am visually aware of the surface I look at, and I discern something standing out in front of, or (in certain cases) receding behind, something else. So, for instance, I follow the famous advice of Leonardo da Vinci to an aspirant painter and I look at a stained wall, or let my eyes wander over a frosty pane of glass, and at one and the same time I am visually aware of the wall, or of the glass, and I recognize a naked boy, or dancers in mysterious gauze dresses, in front of (in each case) a darker ground. In virtue of this experience I can be said to see the boy in the wall, the dancers in the frosty glass.⁵

Wollheim adds that being visually aware of the surface and discerning something standing out in front of something else are two aspects of a single experience, and not two distinct experiences. But since he does not explain how he believes experiences should be counted I shall not comment on this refinement.⁶

Wollheim does not suggest that the marks on a frosty pane of glass (photographed by Minor White) depict dancers, or that the marks on a stained wall (photographed by Aaron Siskind) depict a boy. We can see these things in these surfaces; but they are not pictures. However, he continues:

Representation can be explained in terms of seeing-in, as the following situation reveals: In a community where seeing-in is firmly established, some member of the community – let us call him (prematurely) an artist – sets about marking a surface with the intention of getting others around him to see some definite thing in it: say, a bison. If the artist's intention is successful to the extent that a bison can be seen in the surface as he has marked it, then the community closes ranks in that someone who does indeed see a bison in it is now held to see the surface correctly, and anyone is held to see it incorrectly if he sees, as he might, something else in it, or nothing at all. Now the marked surface represents a bison.⁷

Thus depiction occurs when the marks on a surface are successfully designed to produce the seeing-in experience in a viewer. It is not enough that the experience should occur. It must, when it occurs, fulfill the intention of the person who produced the marks.

3. One objection to this theory that has been made repeatedly is that Wollheim quietly shirks the task he sets himself, of defining the experience of seeing-in. If we skate across his remarks quickly, we get a sense of what he has in mind: the experience that a picture must be intended to produce involves being visually aware of a surface, and simultaneously 'discerning something standing out in front of ... something else'. But what exactly does the phrase 'discerning something' mean? We are offered, as an example, the case where 'I recognize a naked boy' in the marks on a stained wall. But I do not really recognize or discern a naked boy, because there is no boy there for me to recognize or discern. Neither is my experience indistinguishable from the experience of recognizing or discerning a boy. If it were, it would be an illusion; but that (as Wollheim rightly insists) is not the case. So what kind of experience is this quasi-recognizing of a naked boy supposed to be? It seems to be both like and unlike the experience of really recognizing a naked boy: sufficiently like it to encourage us to borrow the phrase; and sufficiently unlike it to be distinguishable from an illusion. But how should we describe the similarity and the difference? The objection is that Wollheim fails to address these questions. I myself have made this objection in print, and I stand by it.⁸ But there is more to say.

4. If Wollheim's theory of depiction is correct, a viewer who perceives the content of a picture must have an experience of the kind he postulates. That is, the viewer must be visually aware of the picture's surface, and discern something standing out in front of something else. Furthermore, the artist must intend the viewer to have an experience of this kind. I shall discuss the two aspects of the experience Wollheim postulates in turn.

There is an objection to the claim that the viewer must perceive the picture's surface, and that the artist must intend that she should do so, which concerns trompe l'oeil. The objection is that a trompe l'oeil painting is not designed with the intention that the viewer should be visually aware of its surface. In fact it is designed with the opposite intention—i.e. with the intention that the viewer should fail to be visually aware of its surface. Hence, if Wollheim's theory of depiction were correct, a successful trompe l'oeil painting would not be a picture. It would not represent anything at all. And this, the objection concludes, shows that the theory fails.

Wollheim accepts that his theory has this implication—viz. that a trompe l'oeil painting is not a representation. But he does not regard this as a defect in the theory:

There are [he writes] paintings that are non-representational ... because they do not invoke, indeed they repel, attention to the marked surface. Trompe l'oeil paintings, like the exquisite series of cabinets in gouache by Leroy de Barde... are surely in this category. They incite our awareness of depth, but do so in a way designed to baffle our attention to the marks upon the surface.

I think this is the wrong reply to the objection. It is the wrong reply because the objection fails to bite unless a trompe l'oeil painting is designed to produce an illusion, and to sustain it for as long as the viewer sees the painting. But this is really an exaggeration, which distorts the aim and the effect of trompe l'oeil painting. Indeed the enjoyment of skill, or virtuosity – which trompe l'oeil cultivates and caters to – would be frustrated if it were true. That is why, as Ruskin remarks, trompe l'oeil invariably has 'some means of proving at the same time that it is an illusion.'⁹

This is a point that Wollheim seems to acknowledge. For he does not claim that a trompe l'oeil painting is designed to prevent the viewer from being visually aware of the marks on the surface. He claims that it is designed to baffle our attention to the marks on the surface. And these are quite different claims. I may, for example, be aware of the colour of an object, or its shape, without attending to these properties. To attend to the colour or the shape of an object is to make this property the centre or the focus of one's engagement with it.¹⁰ But we are not obliged to give this role to whatever we are aware of. Indeed we often cannot do so. I may, for example, be aware of a dozen people talking simultaneously; but I cannot simultaneously attend to what each of them is saying.

However, if Wollheim is right to make only the weaker claim about trompe l'oeil – i.e. the claim that it is designed to repel attention to the surface, and not the claim that it is designed to prevent awareness of it – it follows that his theory does not imply that trompe l'oeil paintings are non-representational. For the theory does not require the viewer to attend to the marked surface of a picture, or require that the artist intend that she should do so. Hence, the reason Wollheim gives for denying that trompe l'oeil paintings are representational is an unconvincing one, on his own terms. But by the same token this objection to his theory fails.

5. I shall turn now to the second aspect of the experience Wollheim defines, that is, to the viewer's discerning something – e.g. a naked boy or dancers in gauze dresses – standing out in front of something else. Before we examine the claim that a picture must produce an experience of this kind, we need to disambiguate it. The claim as it stands is ambiguous, because Wollheim does not make it clear whether the something else that a depicted object must stand out in front of is the picture's surface, or whether it is part of the depicted scene.¹¹

Suppose first that it is the picture's surface. If this is the correct interpretation, Wollheim's claim is that the viewer must discern a depicted object standing out in front of the picture's surface; and the artist must intend that she should do so. This seems implausible. For example, Picasso's gouache painting The Two Brothers represents a naked boy standing in front of a clay-coloured wall. The viewer is, of course, expected to discern this. But is she also expected to discern a boy standing out in front of the painting's surface? I, for one, am not aware of having an experience of this kind. The boy does not appear to me to be standing in any spatial relation to the painting's surface. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how he could do so, for the painting's surface is not something that the artist has depicted, whereas the boy is. It seems no more plausible to hold that the boy appears to be standing out in front of the painting's surface, than it would be to claim that he appears to be standing inside the frame around the painting, or in front of the wall on which it hangs.

The same applies in the case of a simple ink drawing of a human figure on plain paper. The viewer must of course be able to distinguish the ink marks from the unmarked paper. And this distinction can be experienced spatially, so that the ink marks seem to stand above the paper's surface. But this does not appear to be a key fact in the theory of depiction, for three reasons. First, what is experienced here is a relation between the ink marks and the paper's surface, and not between the human figure represented and the paper's surface. Secondly, although the ink marks can appear to stand above the paper's surface, there is no reason to suppose they must. And thirdly, if the distinction is experienced spatially in the case of an ink drawing, there is no reason why it should not be experienced spatially when we read a printed text, and distinguish the ink marks that form the letters from the paper on which the text is printed.

Suppose instead that we interpret Wollheim's claim as being that a viewer who sees what a picture represents must discern something standing out in front of something else within the depicted scene, such as a boy standing in front of a clay-coloured wall. This claim is also unconvincing. For if it is true then every picture depicts something standing out in front of something else; but there seem to be many pictures which do not. A silhouette is one kind of example. A young child's 'stick-figure' drawing is another. Some artists have deliberately repudiated depth, as Picasso does in several linoleum cuts made in the early sixties. And besides, there is no reason why a painting should not

depict a shadow cast on a perfectly smooth wall, perpendicular to the viewer's line of sight, or a starry sky, in which nothing seems – or at least must seem – to be standing out in front of anything else.

For these reasons, I doubt whether a viewer who perceives what a picture represents must have an experience of the kind that Wollheim postulates. A fortiori, I doubt whether the artist must successfully intend the viewer to have an experience of this kind.

6. Finally, I shall comment on Wollheim's proposal that the standard of correctness, which determines whether the viewer has correctly perceived the content of a picture, 'is set ... for each painting by the intentions of the artist in so far as they are fulfilled'. As we have seen, this proposal is designed to answer a question that a subjectivist theory of depiction is obliged to address, if it acknowledges the possibility that a viewer can misperceive the content of a picture.

Wollheim's proposal appears to be mistaken, for two reasons. First, it implies that if an artist produces a marked surface with the intention that a viewer should see a certain kind of object in it, and his intention is fulfilled, then the marked surface depicts that kind of object. But this is demonstrably false. The page of Wollheim's book on which the photograph by Aaron Siskind is reproduced is itself a marked surface produced with the intention that the viewer should see a boy in it; but it does not depict a boy. Again, a painting which depicts a painting of a man is a marked surface produced with the intention that the viewer should see a man in it. But it depicts a painting of a man, and not a man.¹² Finally, Arcimboldo's anthropomorphic paintings of the seasons depict trees, fruits, vegetables and flowers—but not faces. But the paintings are composed in such a way that we cannot help seeing faces in them.

The last two examples can be challenged, for one could claim that it is possible to see a man in the surface of the depicted painting, but not in the surface of the painting that depicts it; or that it is possible to see a face in the arrangements of vegetables or fruits, but not in the surfaces of Arcimboldo's paintings. But as far as I can see, the only ground on which one could argue in favour of this claim is that the first painting does not depict a man and the second does not depict a face. Hence, the challenge is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, seeing-in is supposed to have a broader scope than depiction, so this argument would be a non-sequitur. Secondly, depiction cannot be explained in terms of seeing-in if the response to ostensible counter-examples is to make the limits of depiction fix the limits of seeing-in.

The second reason why Wollheim's proposal about the standard of correctness appears to be mistaken is that it implies that a marked surface cannot depict a kind of object unless the artist has the intention that a viewer should see that kind of object in it. But this also seems to be false. For an artist may intend to depict a larch, or a man in the uniform of a midshipman. But he may depict a spruce, or a man in the uniform of a captain, by mistake. Hence, there may be a difference between

what a picture represents, and what the artist meant it to represent—just as there may be a difference between what an utterance means and what the speaker meant to say.

It does not follow that there is no connection at all between intention and pictorial content, and it is plausible that there is some connection here, as we shall see if we pursue the analogy with linguistic meaning. For acknowledging that what an utterance actually means need not be the same as what the speaker means to say is consistent with the view that an utterance means nothing unless the speaker means or intends something by the words he utters; and it is also consistent with holding that meaningful utterance is impossible except against a background that includes the custom of making utterances with the intention of saying something. Both of these views connect meaning with intention; both may be true, or partly true; and it is obviously possible to defend the corresponding views about pictorial content. So there may well be some connection between intention and pictorial content. But if there is, it is not the connection that Wollheim proposes, and without further argument it is unclear how it is related to a standard of correctness—that is, a way of distinguishing between the case where someone correctly perceives the content of a picture, and the case where she misperceives it.

7. I shall now turn to Peacocke's theory of depiction. Like Wollheim, Peacocke attempts to explain the nature of depiction by defining a kind of experience that a picture of a certain kind of object must be successfully intended to produce. But the kind of experience is quite different, and considerably more difficult to define. My main source will be the article 'Depiction', which was published in 1987. But some of the background is set out in Peacocke's book Sense and Content, and I shall quote material from both texts. I shall include parenthetical page-references, which will enable the reader to see which text is being quoted without consulting the footnotes. References in the 300s are to the article; those between 1 and 20 are to the book.¹³

Peacocke argues that it is possible to explain the nature of depiction – to 'give an account of what is constitutive of depiction' (383) – by defining a distinctive kind of visual experience, which pictures are intended to produce. In order to define this experience, he says, 'we need to distinguish experienced shape in the visual field from experienced physical shape' (385). Peacocke describes the concept of the visual field that he is using as 'partially stipulative', but he does not define it. Instead he introduces it with the following example:

A normal human seeing a large rectangular white envelope sees it from most angles as occupying a rectangular-shaped region of the space around him; but, unless he is seeing it from a standpoint immediately above its center, the paper is presented in an irregularly-shaped region of his visual field, a region no two sides of which are parallel. (385)

Peacocke may seem here to be referring to the shape of the envelope's outline. For it is true that a rectangular envelope seen from most angles will look rectangular in shape. It will look like a regular, rectangular-shaped object. But the shape of its outline – what I have elsewhere called its occlusion shape – will not look as if it is rectangular.¹⁴ So it may seem that the idea expressed in the quotation is that a normal human perceives the rectangular shape of the envelope, and also perceives its irregular occlusion shape. But in fact this is not what Peacocke means. For as he acknowledges, if an envelope appears to a viewer to have a particular occlusion shape, this perception may be true or false: it is true if, and only if, the envelope has the occlusion shape that it seems to have.¹⁵ But an envelope's being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of the visual field is (he explains) '[a property] of the two-dimensional visual field' (13), and not a property of an experience in virtue of which it 'represents the environment ... as being in a certain way' (5).

Peacocke's view is therefore that a visual experience has two kinds of properties. On the one hand, it has a representational content, which 'concerns the world external to the experiencer' (9). On the other hand, it has what he calls 'sensational properties' (8)—properties of the 'two-dimensional visual field' (13). It is as if our visual experiences were themselves like pictures, and the shape of a region in the visual field in which an object is presented was like the shape of the region on a picture's surface that depicts it. The idea expressed in the quotation is that when a normal human sees an envelope at an oblique angle, his experience will represent the envelope as being rectangular. But it will also have a sensational property, a property that does not concern 'the world [or the envelope] external to the experiencer', since the envelope will be presented in an irregularly-shaped region of his visual field. Peacocke does not deny that the experience may also represent the envelope as having an irregular occlusion shape. But this is not what he says, or is ostensibly concerned with, in this passage.

Peacocke explains depiction in terms of experienced shape in the visual field, in the following way. Consider Vermeer's painting, The Love Letter.¹⁶ The painting shows a seated woman, seen through an open doorway, who appears to have just been handed an envelope by the maid standing behind her. When I look at the painting, the part of it that depicts the envelope is (Peacocke suggests) presented in an irregularly-shaped region of my visual field, a region similar in shape to one in which a piece of paper that actually does have an irregular shape could be presented. But it is also a region similar in shape to one in which a rectangular envelope could be presented, if the envelope was not directly ahead of me, but a few degrees to my left, and if its top was tipped forward slightly.

Now suppose that I am aware of the second resemblance. Suppose that the part of the painting that depicts the envelope not merely is, but also seems to me as if it is being presented in a region of my visual field similar in shape to one in which a rectangular envelope – situated a few degrees to my left, and its top tipped forward slightly – could be presented. And suppose further that

this part of the painting does not seem to me to be rectangular, and therefore does not seem similar in shape to a rectangular envelope. The kind of experience we have now described, Peacocke maintains, explains ‘what is constitutive of depiction’. For this is exactly the kind of experience that a picture is intended to produce.

Hence, a depiction of an envelope is (in Peacocke’s view) something of which it is intended, with success, that in its intended viewing conditions it will produce a visual experience with two properties: first, it will be presented in a region of the visual field experienced as similar in shape to that in which an envelope could be presented; but secondly, it will not be experienced as having the same physical shape as an envelope (388). And similarly for every other kind of object.

8. The most striking part of this theory is the claim that the experience a picture is designed to produce is defined in terms of a property of visual experience which does not, or at least does not directly, concern the world external to the experiencer—a property which does not, in that other striking phrase of Peacocke’s, represent the environment as being in a certain way.¹⁷

If this is true, then I can see that my environment contains, say, a piece of paper of a certain size and shape, with various inky marks disposed across its surface; and I can see that these inky marks depict a tulip or a boot. That is, my visual experience can make me aware of both of these two facts. But the ways in which it can make me aware of them are strikingly different. For my awareness of the second fact, unlike my awareness of the first, must be the result of my experiencing the shapes of regions of my visual field in a particular way. This is not like experiencing the shapes, or the occlusion shapes, of physical objects in a certain way, because the shapes of regions of my visual field are not part of the representational content of my experience. Experiencing these shapes – the shapes of regions in the visual field – is similar to experiencing the shapes of after-images caused by physical objects, rather than experiencing the shapes or occlusion shapes of these objects themselves. And the way in which my experience makes me aware of the fact that the inky marks depict a tulip or a boot is therefore similar to the way in which an after-image can make me aware of a property of the object that produced it. For example, if the sun is too bright to look at during an eclipse, I can blink at it for a moment, and consult my after-image to see how far the eclipse has progressed. In Peacocke’s view, my visual experience of the content of a picture is similar to this, but it is overlaid on (or somehow combined with) my perception of the picture’s surface.

If this is a discovery about the experience of seeing what a picture represents, it is a surprising one. Consider an example mentioned by Wittgenstein, in the extensive series of remarks he wrote about seeing aspects. The example is the experience of seeing a tangle of lines, and noticing for the first time that it is a drawing of a face. The immediate reason for Wittgenstein’s interest in this kind of experience is the puzzling fact that the configuration seems both to change in appearance, and to

remain unchanged, when this change of aspect, as he calls it, occurs. We see the very same tangle of lines. None seems to have been altered or erased; and no lines seem to have been added. And yet the appearance of the configuration seems quite different. For I perceive an intelligible shape in it, which I was unable to perceive before. This, at least, is how I am tempted to describe the change in my experience. But if Peacocke's view is correct, the change is not a change in 'the way my experience represents the world to be'; it is a change in the way I experience the shape of a region in my visual field. Hence, if I say that I perceive an intelligible shape in the configuration, I am mistaking one kind of property of my experience for another.

Peacocke therefore belongs in the influential tradition of philosophers whose views about perception involve the claim that we tend to misunderstand our own perceptual experience—in this case the experience of seeing what a picture represents. The word 'misunderstand' needs emphasis. This is not like Hume's view about our experience of colours—the view that the phenomenology of our experience misrepresents the facts, and we naïvely take our experience at face value. It is like Descartes's view—that we are misled by false conceptions of our own experience, and interpret it in the light of false ideas. The error, according to this view, should be blamed on the intellect, and not the senses. Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy* (I,71) contains an interesting attempt to explain how this kind of error could occur; but I shall not address the issue in these general terms. Instead, I shall first criticize the basic idea about shape perception on which Peacocke's theory of depiction relies. I shall then argue that the intentional production of the kind of experience that Peacocke postulates is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for depiction.

9. Let us return to Peacocke's example of an envelope. 'A normal human', he writes, 'seeing a large rectangular white envelope sees it from most angles as occupying a rectangular-shaped region of the space around him; but, unless he is seeing it from a standpoint immediately above its center, the paper is presented in an irregularly-shaped region of his visual field, a region no two sides of which are parallel.' Peacocke acknowledges that in these circumstances, the envelope will seem to have an irregular occlusion shape. The question I want to consider is whether he argues persuasively that in addition to seeming to have an irregular occlusion shape, it has the distinct property of being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of the visual field. I shall argue that he does not; and hence that he fails to establish that this is not the very same property, misconceived.

What makes me suspect that this is the source of the idea of the shape of a region in the visual field is the striking parallel, which I have already noted, between visual perceptions, as Peacocke conceives of them, and pictures themselves. As I have said, the shape of a region in the visual field in which an object is presented sounds very like the shape of the region on a picture's surface that depicts an object; and in general, the distinction between the representational and the sensational

properties of a visual experience sounds very like the distinction between the representational properties of a picture and the non-representational properties – the shapes and colours on the picture’s surface – on which they supervene.

However, as I have argued elsewhere, the occlusion shape of a depicted object and the actual shape of the smallest part of the picture’s surface that depicts it must be identical.¹⁴ For example, if an engraving depicts a man’s head, the shape of the smallest part of the picture that depicts the head (or its nose or chin) must be identical to the occlusion shape of the head (or the nose or chin) in the picture. Similarly, it appears that the shape of the region in the visual field in which an object is presented must be identical to the occlusion shape that the experience represents the object as having. And the occlusion shape that an experience represents an object as having is the occlusion shape that the object seems to have, to the person having the experience: it is the occlusion shape that the person would judge the object to have ‘taking [his] experience at face value’ (12).¹⁸

Hence, it seems that these supposedly distinct properties must coincide. But this makes it difficult to think of a good reason to postulate properties of both kinds, except for a prior commitment to the analogy between experiences and pictures—that prior commitment being the chronic habit J.J. Gibson famously referred to, when he described the visual field as ‘a product of the chronic habit of civilized men of seeing the world as a picture.’¹⁹

10. Peacocke does not specifically discuss the relationship between appearing to have an irregular occlusion shape and being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of the visual field. But he argues in detail that being presented in regions of the visual field with particular shapes and relative sizes cannot be identified with any representational properties of visual experiences, and specifically that ‘the property of being presented in a large region of the visual field cannot be identified with the property of being represented as subtending a large visual angle’ (21). And his argument can quite easily be adapted to this particular case.

First, he denies (17f.) that sentences which are explicitly about size in the visual field can be translated (i.e. paraphrased) by sentences which are explicitly about the visual angles that objects subtend; and if he is right to deny this, then sentences which are explicitly about the shapes of regions in the visual field in which things are presented obviously cannot be paraphrased by sentences which are explicitly about the occlusion shapes that things appear to have. For an object’s occlusion shape is the shape of the solid angle it subtends to the spectator’s eye.

This argument presupposes that a clear sense can be attached to the idea that an object is presented in an irregularly-shaped region in the visual field without equating this with the idea that it appears to have an irregular occlusion shape. For in order to decide whether one kind of sentence can be translated by another, the meaning of both kinds of sentence must be clear. But as we have seen,

Peacocke does not define the ‘partially stipulative’ notion of shape in the visual field, and the example he uses to introduce it is a case where an envelope appears to have an irregular occlusion shape. So we may still feel entitled to wonder whether sentences which purport to be about shape in the visual field can remain intelligible at all, if they are cut adrift from the well-defined concept of occlusion shape. If I am right, they cannot.

Peacocke’s first argument also presupposes that if two predicates express the same property, a sentence in which one occurs can be paraphrased by a sentence in which the other occurs in its place. For otherwise, the claim that ‘The envelope seems to Paul to have an irregular occlusion shape’ is not a correct paraphrase of ‘The envelope is being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of Paul’s visual field’ will not support the claim that appearing to have an irregular occlusion shape and being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of the visual field are, as Peacocke claims they are, distinct properties. But this presupposition is demonstrably false. For example, the colour of my bicycle is crimson. Hence, the predicates ‘x is the colour of my bicycle’ and ‘x is crimson’ express the same property. They would not do so if the colour of my bicycle were turquoise. But as things actually are, they do. However, the sentence ‘Blood is crimson’ does not have the same meaning as the sentence ‘Blood is the colour of my bicycle’, and it is obvious that neither sentence is a correct translation of the other.²⁰

Peacocke’s second argument is similar. An object’s occlusion shape, he argues, can be defined in terms of what would be the case, if circumstances differed from the way they actually are. For instance, the occlusion shape of the branch outside my window, relative to my line of sight, is the shape of the smallest opaque patch on the window that would occlude the branch, if such a patch existed. Whereas the shape of the region in my visual field in which the tree is presented is, he insists, a matter of what is the case—it concerns the actual circumstances, and not counterfactual ones. And there is, he says, ‘an objection of principle to a counterfactual analysis of an intrinsic property of experience’. (18) Hence, a predicate such as ‘x seems to y to have an irregular occlusion shape’ cannot express the same property as the one expressed by a predicate such as ‘x is being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of y’s visual field’.

The point I initially made about the first argument applies here too. There is little to be gained from insisting that an unfamiliar idea must not be confused with a familiar one, if the result of divorcing them from each other in this way is to rob the unfamiliar idea of any clear sense at all. But apart from this, the argument is unconvincing for two reasons. First, an object’s occlusion shape need not be defined in counterfactual terms, since it is the shape of a cross-section of the solid angle that the object subtends to the spectator’s eye. And secondly, the general principle on which the argument depends is false. For example, ‘x is the colour that bananas would be if bananas were the colour that a ripe tomato actually is’ expresses the same property as ‘x is the colour that a ripe tomato actually is’.

But the first concerns what would be the case, if bananas differed in a certain way from how they actually are; whereas the second only concerns what actually is the case—there is nothing hypothetical about it.

Finally, Peacocke claims that ‘it is a conceptual truth that no one can have an experience with a given representational content unless he possesses the concepts from which that content is built up.’ (19) For example, one object cannot seem to subtend a larger visual angle than another to ‘an unsophisticated perceiver who does not have the concept of subtended angle.’ (20) Similarly, an object cannot appear to have a circular occlusion shape to an unsophisticated perceiver who does not have the concept of occlusion shape. But he insists that objects are presented in distinctively shaped regions of the visual fields even of unsophisticated perceivers. Hence, the shape of the region of the visual field in which an object is presented and the occlusion shape that it seems to have cannot be the same property.

The reply to this argument is that an object can appear to have a circular occlusion shape to an unsophisticated perceiver. For example, it may be obvious that an animal has perceived the occlusion shape of an object, because of a trained response, regardless of whether this response is held to be a sufficient ground for attributing the concept of occlusion shape to that animal. Exactly the same is true of colour. It may be obvious that an animal has perceived the colour of an object, because of a trained response, regardless of whether or not the response is held to be a sufficient ground for attributing the concept of that colour to it. Hence, if there is a way of understanding the metaphorical notion that content is built up from concepts according to which it implies that an object cannot seem to be red, or to have a circular occlusion shape, to a perceiver who does not have these concepts, then the notion, thus understood, is false.²¹

11. For these reasons, I suggest that Peacocke fails to show that there is an irregular shape of which we are normally aware when a rectangular envelope is seen obliquely, which is anything other than the familiar property of occlusion shape. An object’s being presented in an irregularly-shaped region of the visual field is simply that object’s seeming to have an irregular occlusion shape, which Peacocke has mistaken for a property of an experience that does not ‘concern the world external to the experiencer’.

Peacocke’s theory can therefore be presented in a more tractable form. For the claim that a depiction of an envelope is presented in a region of the visual field which is experienced as similar in shape to that in which an envelope could be presented no longer needs to be interpreted as introducing a property of a visual experience which does not ‘concern the world external to the experiencer’. It can be treated as equivalent to the claim that a depiction of an envelope is experienced as similar in occlusion shape to an envelope.²² Hence, the theory can be stated as follows: a depiction of a certain

kind of object is something of which it is intended, with success, that in its intended viewing conditions it will produce a visual experience with two properties: first, the depiction will be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to the kind of object it depicts; but secondly, it will not be experienced as having the same physical shape as that kind of object. I shall comment on the theory in this form. But references to the occlusion shape that an object seems to have can easily be replaced by references to the shape of the region in the visual field in which it is presented, and its cogency will not be affected.

Once the theory has been reformulated in this way, counterexamples are not hard to find. To begin with, let us assume that part of a picture is successfully designed to be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to a certain kind of object, while not being experienced as having the same physical shape as that kind of object. It does not follow that this part of the picture depicts that kind of object, because a picture may represent one kind of object with the intention that the viewer should perceive its resemblance in occlusion shape to another. Arcimboldo's anthropomorphic paintings of the seasons provide one kind of example. Degas' Dancers at the Bar provides another. In this painting, a watering-can, presumably used to sprinkle sand on the floor, wittily echoes the shape of a dancer with one leg raised high so that the foot rests firmly on the bar, and one arm extended with the hand resting on the raised leg. If it is true that the part of the painting which depicts the watering-can was successfully designed to be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to a watering-can, then it is also true that it was successfully designed to be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to a dancer with one leg raised, etc. Further examples are provided by paintings which depict carvings or images, such as Poussin's Adoration of the Golden Calf. If it is true that the part of the painting which depicts the calf was successfully designed to be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to a golden image of a calf, then it is also true that it was successfully designed to be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to a living calf. But it does not depict a living calf.

Hence, the intentional production of an experience of the kind in question is not a sufficient condition for the depiction of a kind of object. But it is not a necessary condition either, for two reasons. First, if it were a necessary condition, a picture could not represent a kind of object, unless the artist intended it to do so. But this is false. For as we have seen, an artist may intend to depict one kind of object (e.g. a larch, or a man in the uniform of a midshipman) but depict another (e.g. a spruce, or a man in the uniform of a captain), by mistake. Secondly, Peacocke's view implies that a depiction of a kind of object cannot be experienced as having the same physical shape as that kind of object. But this is also false. For part of the surface of a picture which depicts (say) a sheet of paper or a painting may be experienced as having the same physical shape as that kind of object, if the paper or painting in the picture is shown perpendicular to the viewer's line of sight. And Peacocke cannot discard the requirement that a depiction cannot be experienced as having the same physical shape as

the kind of object it depicts. For if a picture of a dollar bill is designed to be experienced as similar in occlusion shape to a dollar bill, then so is a forged bill. But a forged dollar bill is not a picture of one.

12. If the most influential versions of subjectivism about depiction are unsuccessful, we should ask ourselves why this kind of theory is appealing, whether the reasons are good ones, and whether attempts to refine it could succeed. In the remainder of this article, I shall address these questions, not in the hope of settling them definitively, but in the hope of encouraging scepticism and broadening the debate.

It is tempting to think that one reason for the appeal of subjectivism about depiction is that it is easy to confuse two claims. The first is that a picture is a marked or differentiated surface which has been designed to produce a certain kind of psychological effect. The second is that a marked surface is a picture – or that an attempt to make a picture was successful – because it produces a certain kind of psychological effect. The second claim is the core doctrine of psychologism. But philosophers who defend psychologism often proceed from the first. ‘The artist paints’, writes Wollheim, ‘in order to produce a certain experience in the mind of the spectator.’²³ ‘Nothing is a depiction ...’, writes Peacocke, ‘unless it is intended to have certain effects on viewers.’²⁴

I do not want to quarrel with these remarks. We can, if we wish, conceive of pictures, or speak as if we conceived of them, as differentiated surfaces which produce perceptions. Indeed, we can conceive of any artefact which is designed to have a certain kind of look or smell or taste, or to make a certain kind of sound, as being designed to produce experiences. We can think of a bottle of beer or a lump of cheese in this way, or a saxophone or a diamond brooch. But we cannot infer that something is a picture – or a picture of a tulip, or a boot – because it produces ‘a certain experience in the mind of the spectator’, any more than we can make the corresponding inferences in the other cases.

Hence, if subjectivism about pictorial content were motivated by the first claim I mentioned, this would indicate a rather crude error in reasoning—one which surely cannot be widespread. What I should like to do now is to pursue the analogy between subjectivism about pictorial content and subjectivism about beauty. This will reveal another possible motive, but it will also enable us to define a limit on the kinds of properties of which subjectivist theories in general can be true. I shall not attempt to decide whether the representational properties of pictures fall inside or outside these limits.

13. It is well known that a plausible objectivism about beauty must identify the properties that beauty supervenes on; and that these properties must be independent of our tastes and sensibilities, and sufficiently abstract to be present wherever beauty is. It is also well known that the mathematical

theory of beauty – the theory that beauty consists in the proportionality of an object’s parts – is the only plausible solution to this problem philosophers have devised. Subjectivism about beauty won adherents in the eighteenth century because the mathematical theory came to appear more like the expression of a taste for symmetry than a convincing aesthetic theory, and because it made the relationship between beauty and pleasure seem fortuitous.²⁵ For if the beauty of an object consists in the proportionality of its parts, it is a happy accident that pleasure provides us with a reliable guide to something that only measurement and calculation can decide with certainty. But this cannot be right. For the decisive test of beauty is the pleasurable experience that it produces in our minds: ‘I must feel the pleasure directly ...’ Kant says, ‘and I cannot be talked into it by any grounds of proof.’

The resemblance theory is analogous to the mathematical theory of beauty. Like the mathematical theory, it came to look like a stylistic bias—a bias in favour of what Roger Fry called ‘the descriptive imitation of natural forms’.²⁶ So it not surprising to find an argument in favour of subjectivism in the theory of depiction that resembles Kant’s argument against the mathematical theory. The argument, in its simplest form, is that the occurrence of a specific kind of visual experience, in a skilled and informed viewer, is the only way of determining what a picture represents. This is the only way in which pictorial content is conveyed. And the best, perhaps the only, explanation of this fact is that what a picture represents depends on the visual experience it produces. Hence, if it represents a tulip, this is because it produces (or was successfully designed to produce) one kind of visual experience; if it represents a boot, this is because it produces (ditto) another kind of visual experience; and so on. In each case, the fact that the picture has a certain content is explained by the visual experience produced.²⁷

As it stands, this argument is unconvincing. For experience, in the broadest sense, is the only way in which we can determine that something is beautiful, red, flexible, depicts an apple, or is made of glass. Hence, the argument must turn in some way or another on the specific kind of experience involved. It must, that is, if it is meant to point to a difference between some of these properties and others—if, for example, it is not meant to prove that lead is flexible because of the feeling of moderate and continuous resistance that we experience when we try to bend it. Thus, one common view is that an argument of this form works – i.e. it proves that a property is subjective – if the experience is confined to a single sense, as it is in the cases of colour and pictorial content. For example, Peacocke claims that ‘it is a virtue of [subjectivism about the property of being red] that it is not left as a mysterious, inexplicable necessary truth that one cannot experience objects as red in modalities other than the visual.’²⁸

Again, this remark is unconvincing, for two reasons. In the first place, the claim that being red is a subjective property is supported with a reason that would not support the same claim about being sour, since one can experience milk as sour by smelling or by tasting it. But it seems

implausible that redness is subjective and sourness is not; or that they are both subjective, but for different reasons. Secondly, it is true that we cannot feel, hear, smell or taste colours. But if it appears to be a necessary truth – and not one that is contingent on biology – that non-visual experiences of colour cannot occur, this must be because we have implicitly settled on a way of distinguishing between visual and non-visual experiences, which implies this. Traditionally, philosophers have thought that senses are identified and distinguished from each other in terms of the properties which they enable us to perceive, the circumstances and the way in which they can be exercised, or a combination of these factors. But if this traditional view is right, then it is not in the least mysterious that one cannot experience objects as red in modalities other than the visual. For part of what makes an experience count as visual is that it is (or seems to be) an experience of the kind that enables us to be aware of colours.

14. Now, finally, instead of considering when this kind of argument in favour of subjectivism succeeds, I want to suggest that there are cases where we can be sure it fails. In order to move away from the familiar terrain of sense perception, where received ideas are deeply entrenched, I shall consider dreams.

We have all had the experience of remembering a dream as we awake. Suppose that an experience of this kind is the only way of determining the content of a dream. This is a simplification, but no more so than the claim that the occurrence of a specific kind of visual experience is the only way of determining the content of a picture. If we suppose this, we are supposing that someone's remembering their dream – e.g. my remembering that I dreamt about eating strawberries last night – is the only way of determining that it occurred. Now, is the best, or the only, explanation of this fact – the fact that my remembering the dream is the only way of determining that I dreamt about eating strawberries – that the content of my dream depends on the memory it produces? In other words, should we infer that my dream was about eating strawberries because that is what I remembered dreaming about as I awoke?

I think it is clear that we should not infer this—it is clear, that is, if we want to continue to conceive of the experience as remembering something. We can (whether deliberately or not) loosen our grip on this conception of it, and begin to conceive of the waking experience, not as a memory, but merely as a sequence of thoughts or mental images caused by a dream. And we can simultaneously begin to conceive of the dream itself as an intrinsically blank episode, whose content does depend on the waking thoughts and images it produces. Describing what a dream was about will then be a way of describing it in terms of its effects. Hence, a dream will be about eating strawberries because that is what the thoughts and images were about—the thoughts and images it caused me to experience as I woke up. But if we conceive of the waking experience that the dream produces as a

memory, we cannot also hold that the content of the dream depends on the content of this experience.

Hence, if the occurrence of a specific kind of memory experience is the only way of determining that a dream had a certain content, it does not follow that the content of a dream depends on the content of the memory experience it produces. And this result confirms that the corresponding argument about pictures is unconvincing. But we can go further. For we have not merely found that an argument is invalid. We have found that we cannot consistently hold both that the waking experience that the dream produces is a memory, and that the content of the dream depends on the content of this experience. And this result does not seem to be attributable to any properties of dreams and memories of dreams that pictures and perceptions of pictures do not share. It seems to be attributable to the mere fact that remembering a dream is a cognitive experience—a case of being aware of something distinct from our knowledge or awareness of it, that is, distinct from the waking experience itself. This seems to be the right explanation, because we found that we only need to relinquish our conception of the waking experience as cognitive in order to strip the dream of any intrinsic content, and allow its content to be projected back on it, from the experience that it causes us to have when we awake.

But now, if this is right, we are not merely entitled to reject an argument in favour of subjectivism about the content of a picture. We have a reason to believe that it is false. For it seems that we cannot consistently maintain both that an experience is a perception or cognition of a property, and that its content fixes the property that it is of. Hence, we cannot consistently maintain that an experience is a perception of a picture's content, and that the content of the perception fixes what the picture represents, any more than we can maintain the corresponding view about dreams. Cognition owes a deference to the world, and cannot fashion it in her own image. That is why the cases where an object's having a certain property uncontroversially depends on the psychological effect that it produces are cases where the experiences produced are uncontroversially not cognitive. For example, a substance is an analgesic because it produces the relief of pain; a substance is an hallucinogen because it makes us hallucinate; and so on.

If we hold that the occurrence of a certain kind of visual experience is the only way of determining that a picture represents a certain kind of object, it is easy to imagine that being a picture, or being a picture of a certain kind of object, is analogous to being an analgesic. In other words, it is easy to infer that a picture represents a certain kind of object because it produces (or was successfully designed to produce) this kind of experience. But the inference is unwarranted; and the conclusion is inconsistent with the view that the pictorial content of a picture is a visible property that we encounter face to face. It may be true that a picture represents a certain kind of object only if it can, in the right circumstances, produce a certain kind of experience in a certain kind of viewer—viz. the experience of perceiving what it represents. And if this is true, the representational properties of pictures are

logically tied to the psychological effects they are capable of producing, as colours are widely supposed to be. But the 'because' will not be available, unless we surrender the idea that these effects are perceptions of a picture's content.

So we are free to conceive of a picture as a differentiated surface which has been designed to produce a certain kind of visual experience, if we wish, although the attempt to provide a non-circular definition of this experience may prove as futile as the attempt to provide a non-circular definition of the experience produced by objects that are red. And we are free to accept that the occurrence of this kind of experience is the only way of determining the kind of object that a picture represents. But we cannot infer that a marked surface is a picture, or a picture of a certain kind of object, because it produces this kind of experience. This is the core doctrine of subjectivism in the theory of depiction. But if its pictorial content is a visible property of a design, then it is false.

15. The argument in the last section will probably ring bells. The opinion supported there is, after all, the familiar one that subjectivism and cognitivism about a property are inconsistent. But the purpose of this article is not to convince unsympathetic readers of this opinion, even in the special case of pictorial art. I hope, rather, to have shown three things. First, that we shall make slow progress in this subject unless we are constantly alert to the parallels between arguments in the theory of depiction and arguments about other topics in philosophy, where similar problems have received extensive treatment; secondly, that the most influential versions of subjectivism in the theory of depiction are demonstrably false; and finally, that this might have been more obvious, had the first point been more widely understood. If this is correct, the theory of depiction might be greatly advanced if, for example, it were studied in conjunction with the theory of taste. I therefore accept a conventional view for an unconventional reason: aesthetics may be the place to begin, if we want to understand the nature of pictorial art.²⁹

John Hyman

The Queen's College, Oxford.

john.hyman@queens.ox.ac.uk

¹ The lectures were delivered under the title 'The visible world and the language of art'.

² E.H. Gombrich 'Illusion in Art', in E.H. Gombrich and R.L. Gregory, eds., Illusion in Nature and Art (London: Duckworth, 1973), p.240; 'Experiment and Experience in the Arts', in The Image and the Eye (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982), p.228.

³ The following recent works of analytical philosophy are among those which attempt to explain the nature of pictorial art in terms of a psychological effect: R. Wollheim, Art and its Objects, second edition (Cambridge: CUP, 1980); N. Wolterstorff, Worlds and Works of Art (Oxford: OUP, 1980); R.

Scruton, Art and Imagination (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982); F. Schier, Deeper into Pictures (Cambridge: CUP, 1986); C. Peacocke, 'Depiction', The Philosophical Review 96 (1987); R. Wollheim, Painting as an Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988); M. Budd, 'On Looking at a Picture', in Psychoanalysis, Mind and Art, ed. J. Hopkins and A. Savile (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992); R. Hopkins, Picture, Image and Experience (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

⁴ Painting as an Art, p.48.

⁵ Painting as an Art, p.46. Cf. Gombrich, Art and Illusion, pp.89ff.

⁶ I agree that it is possible to be simultaneously aware of the surface of a picture and its content—i.e. of its non-representation and its representational properties. It is a different (and more difficult) question whether it is possible to attend to both kinds of properties simultaneously. However, these matters can be discussed (and perhaps decided) without debating how experiences should be individuated, and whether I am having one experience or two, if (for example) two joints in one finger throb simultaneously.

⁷ Painting as an Art, p.48.

⁸ See J. Hyman, 'Pictorial art and visual experience' British Journal of Aesthetics, January 2000. pp.1-25; cf. M. Budd, 'On Looking at a Picture', espec. p.273; R. Hopkins, Picture, Image and Experience, pp.19f.

⁹ John Ruskin, Modern Painters I, in The Complete Works of John Ruskin, ed. E.T. Cook & A. Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903), vol.3, p.100.

¹⁰ See A.R. White, Attention (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), ch.2, espec. p.7.

¹¹ The examples of the naked boy and the dancers suggest the first reading. But Wollheim appears to suggest that Pure Wool logo is relatively pictorial, whereas the pictograms on public lavatories are relatively unpictorial, which supports the second reading. It is possible that he did not distinguish between them clearly.

¹² There is an interesting discussion of pictures that depict pictures in D. Lopes, Understanding Pictures (Oxford: OUP, 1996), ch.11. This book is also notable for bucking the trend in favour of subjectivism: Lopes argues that 'rather than explaining depiction, pictorial experience needs to be explained by it.' (p.175)

¹³ The full bibliographical references are as follows: C. Peacocke, 'Depiction', The Philosophical Review 96 (1987); C. Peacocke, Sense and Content (Oxford: OUP, 1983). Peacocke's arguments are very complex in places, and I have allowed myself more freedom in paraphrase than I would normally, in order to present them as simply as I can.

¹⁴ I have written about occlusion shape, and its significance in the theory of depiction elsewhere, e.g. in J. Hyman, 'Words and Pictures', in Thought and Language, ed. J. Preston, (Cambridge, CUP, 1997), pp.69f. The occlusion shape of an object is what some philosophers have called its 'apparent shape'—in other words, its outline or silhouette. For example, a circular plate viewed obliquely has an elliptical occlusion shape. It will occlude or be occluded by an elliptical patch on a plane perpendicular to a viewer's line of sight. An object's occlusion shape is therefore a function of its shape and its orientation relative to a viewer's line of sight.

¹⁵ Peacocke does not use the term 'occlusion shape': he writes instead about the visual angles

subtended by an object. Sense and Content, pp.19f.

¹⁶ Peacocke does not refer to this painting in particular, but I have allowed myself to write as if he does.

¹⁷ There is an interesting discussion of this idea in Hopkins, Picture Image and Experience, pp.88ff.

¹⁸ Peacocke argues that the relationship between the angles subtended by two objects may differ from the relationship between the regions of the visual field in which they are presented, because ‘light rays might bend locally ... [or] the experiencer might have astigmatism’. (Sense and Content, p.18.) The second of these possibilities confirms (what it is any case obvious) that there can be a difference between the relative occlusion size of two objects, relative to an observer’s line of sight, and the relative occlusion size they seem to have to that observer. But neither possibility suggests (or seems to have been meant to suggest) that the relative size of the regions in the visual field in which two objects are presented can differ from the relative occlusion size they seem to have.

¹⁹ J.J. Gibson, ‘The Visual Field and the Visual World’, Psychological Review 59 (1952), pp.149f.

²⁰ Two indicative sentences that have the same meaning must be what Frege calls ‘equipollent’: i.e. nobody who understands them both can accept that what one of them says is true, and deny this of the other one. This is a necessary condition of sameness of meaning, not a sufficient condition.

²¹ Peacocke concedes this objection in C. Peacocke, ‘Analogue Content’, Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume, LX (1986), pp.1-17.

²² This is in fact precisely the claim that Robert Hopkins makes central to his defence of subjectivism. See R. Hopkins, Picture Image and Experience, chs.3 & 4, espec. p.77.

²³ Painting as an Art, p.44.

²⁴ ‘Depiction’, p.390. The authors of the Call for Papers for this collection say something similar themselves: ‘Works of art are cognitive devices aimed at the production of rich cognitive effects.’

²⁵ An early sign of the rebellion is Bacon’s remark: ‘There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.’

²⁶ Vision and Design, p.239.

²⁷ The following remark by Wollheim may be intended to convey this argument:
it goes without saying that, if an artist aims to give pleasure, he paints so as to produce a certain experience. He paints so as to produce a pleasurable experience. But my claim is that, equally, when he aims to produce content or meaning ... he also paints so as to produce a certain experience. He does so because this is how pictorial meaning is conveyed, and this is so because of what pictorial meaning is. (Painting as an Art, p.44.)

²⁸ Sense and Content, pp.30 & 35. Hopkins expresses a similar thought about depiction, albeit in a more tentative manner. See Picture, Image and Experience, pp.14f.

²⁹ This article was written during the tenure of a Getty Scholarship, at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. I should like to express my gratitude to the GRI, and its director Thomas Crow. I should also like to thank Hanjo Glock, Peter Hacker and Charles Harrison, for valuable criticism and advice.