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Introduction

ROB VAN GERWEN

In the discipline of philosophical aesthetics and that of art history, Richard Wollheim is renowned and appreciated for the intelligence and coherence of his philosophy of art, and for having based his thoughts on a sensitive appraisal of actual works of art. The present volume is meant to (critically) honour him for his achievements. It contains contributions from leaders in both fields. Before summarizing their arguments, I shall present some of Wollheim's main theses concerning the theme of this book.

If we were to assume a landscape painting, expressive of a melancholy weariness, that shows us three trees and a red-roofed farm, then what intuitively acceptable characterization could we produce of the complex conceptual relations between what this painting depicts and what it expresses? We can see the three trees and the red-roofed farm by merely looking at the painting, but in contrast, for us to recognize the scene's weary atmosphere of melancholy, our "mere looking" seems in need of an imaginative supplement of some sort. Should we say that the melancholy is integral to our experience, such that we might best characterize it as *evoked* in us, or is it, rather, a property of the painting? If the former, then we would still have to specify which properties of the painting supposedly cause us to have the feeling; if the latter, however, then an explanation is needed of how a non-sentient thing such as this painting can have a mental state among its properties. Alternatively, if it were no property of the painting, but one of the landscape it depicts, then we would need an account of how the expression of a landscape (assuming we can conceive of such a thing) is to be depicted, and why we should still need the extra imaginative effort to recognize it in or through the painting. Assuming then that we are interested in expression as something based in the work, two questions arise: Is the melancholy a property of the painting in the same way the redness of the farm's roof is, and, second, is it a property of a painting *like* it normally is a property of a person?

In addressing these questions we must first cast doubt on the idea that images are recognized by mere looking. If we assume – as we normally and rightly do – that the redness of a daub of paint is a property of the canvas, this does not tell us whether or not the redness of the roof is also a property

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of the canvas – even though it is depicted by way of the daub. The trees and the farm are not in that same space and time where the daub and its beholder are. There is, therefore, no need for any properties of the painting to be straightforwardly *transparent* to properties of the represented. So we do not recognize what a painting depicts by merely looking at it. Instead, we see the paint as something it isn't (as part of a roof), or better: We see the roof in the painted surface. Indeed, Wollheim does not think that our recognizing a picture is a case of switching between looking at a canvas and looking right through it at what it represents. The objection to the latter view is that it treats perceiving a painting as though it were like perceiving a farm (which it obviously isn't), or as if we see the painting *as* a farm (which we obviously don't). By contrast, we may wonder whether the perceptual capacities whereby we recognize a tree in real life suffice for recognizing one in a painting. Wollheim thinks not. Instead, representational seeing, or, in Wollheim's term, "seeing-in," is a fundamental capacity of perception distinct from plain seeing. Seeing-in should be so distinct from seeing partly because looking at, for instance, a real tree – that is, a tree that one can touch and smell, and circle around – is so vastly different from looking at a painted one. The notion of seeing-in also incorporates Wollheim's conviction that while we see a tree in a painting, we see both the tree and the painting at the same time. Both elements partake in a single act.

After having introduced the seeing-as account of representational seeing in Sections 11 through 14 of his *Art and its Objects*, in a later edition of that book Wollheim added an essay arguing against it. The seeing-as account stems from Wittgenstein's remarks on the ambiguous duck-rabbit picture. It takes the subject of a painting as an aspect of it, and suggests that we see the painting *either* as a surface *or* as its subject. We presumably switch between the two – surface and subject – without being capable of seeing them both in the same act. At least one argument is more in favour of the seeing-as account than of its rival. Aspect perception allows the dawning of an aspect a major role: One can be staring in disbelief at some painting, trying to make sense of what others attribute to it, when finally it dawns upon one. It is not clear how the seeing-in account can accommodate this, as although it allows for dual attention to surface and subject matter, it seems to have little patience with slow recognition. However, Wollheim did spell out quite a few drawbacks to the seeing-as account, and, overall, his notion of seeing-in indeed appears to fit the bill much better than seeing-as does.

For one thing, seeing-as cannot explain how we can see something *happen* in a picture: We cannot see a still thing *as* an event, but only as one or more particulars. Seeing-in does admit of events: We can see in a picture *how* one person is in pursuit of another. Aspect perception theory would conceive of this in something like this manner: We see part of the picture *as* one character

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and another part of the picture *as* the other character, but what part of the picture between these two parts are we to view *as* their being in pursuit? Second, in terms of the classical example of seeing-as, that is, the duck-rabbit picture, the fact that someone sees the picture as a rabbit is revealed by the language he uses to describe the picture: He will use words that are appropriate for describing rabbits, rather than ducks. This suggests that we can actually point at the aspects which these words describe: seeing-as is *localizable*. But localizability is no demand on seeing-in. Therefore, because we are not always capable of localizing everything that we see in a picture, seeing-in is the more adequate concept for understanding our perception of pictures. Third, with seeing-in, the possibility of seeing both the surface and the subject at the same time is not precluded; indeed, it is stressed: Seeing-in expresses the twofoldness of our attention. We don't see a picture *as* the thing it portrays, but we see the portrayed *in* the picture. This twofold nature of representational seeing also explains the difference between seeing Holbein's picture of Henry VIII and seeing Henry VIII in person: One who sees the picture of the king is aware of it as a picture. In itself, this does not yet prove that the seeing-in view should be adopted, because other accounts might be equally well equipped to deal with the distinction. However, Wollheim also provides two stronger arguments.

The first he derives from the psychology of perception: Movements of the beholder do not normally lead to perspectival derangements of what is seen in a picture, whereas in plain, stereoscopic perception they do. The fact that we realize this while looking at a painting implies that we are aware that the painting first of all is a surface. Seeing-in – implying the dual attention to surface and subject – explains this. Second, seeing-in meets our idea that great works of art lead us to appreciate the way in which the artist has handled his material; that is, to appreciate *how* something is depicted, instead of merely *what* is depicted. An account which does not explicate this fact of art appreciation does not do justice to art (AO2 215). Twofoldness is merely *appropriate* to viewing any representation, but it is *required* where – in contrast to what we see in a stained wall – the intentionality of the artist's manipulations give it a rationale (AO2 219). Thus, Wollheim's account links the way we perceive paintings to how they are produced.

The first chapter of Wollheim's *Painting as an Art* contains a keen account of how a painter produces his pictures. It specifies some of the types of considerations that guide him while realizing his intentions, and the mechanisms which can be distinguished in the creative process. The upshot of this account is that a painting realizes the artist's intentions, and these, as realized, sustain a notion of correctness for our attributions. The way the artist steers the beholder's perception therefore not only makes the beholder see something in the picture, but it also forms his ticket to enter the worldview of the

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artist. Again, the fulfilled intentions found our vision of the artist's style. Our interest in individual style fades at the realization of being confronted with something painted by a child or chimpanzee, or with the drawings of schizophrenics – paintings which lack a notion of correctness connected to the intentions of their creators, because they – the creators – necessarily lack a formed style. Our interest in individual style is a necessary condition for our aesthetic interest in paintings.

In "Pictorial Style: Two Views," Wollheim, following Wölfflin, distinguishes two types of style: general and individual. Under the former, Wollheim places the styles of schools, periods, eras: conventions, rather, which can be taught and learned. Individual style, on the contrary, an artist must find through his own creativity: It must be achieved. An artist does not *acquire* his individual style, but *forms* it. From this, individual style derives its psychological reality, the fact that it is internalized in the artist's personality. *Individual style* is, therefore, to be distinguished from possibly contingent elements of *signature*, which merely betray the hand of the artist, such as the types of paint he utilizes or the way he, accidentally, depicts the nails on a hand's fingers or, indeed, his signature. That individual style has psychological reality means that it is something that no artist starts out with, and that can be lost. Thus, some of an artist's works may be pre-stylistic, while others are post-stylistic, whereas perhaps only a few are in his style. According to Wollheim, individual style cannot be grasped by merely attending to properties of paintings: One has also to refer to the artist's psychology. General styles, on the contrary, can be thus assessed, because they answer first of all to art historical problems of classification. They are describable in terms of regularities between paintings, and conventions, and presuppose a *taxonomic* view of style. To identify and describe individual styles, however, a *generative* conception of style is needed, one which meets the psychological nature of art and accounts for the process of its creative emergence. On this view, art historians should reckon with non-linear relations between paintings, as it is psychological considerations that make a trait stylistic, not lawfulness or mere regularity (PS 182ff.).

Some connection with artistic expression imposes itself on us here, with an expression, that is, which is achieved through the manipulation of external material. In "Correspondence, Projective Properties, and Expression in the Arts," Wollheim argues that our reasons for taking a landscape to correspond to a specific state of mind involves a *projection* on our behalf. Expressive properties are projective properties, and, as with secondary qualities – such as colours – our experiences are caused by and about them. Yet, projective properties differ from secondary qualities in being affective rather than merely perceptual, and related to objects that may be absent to the senses. Also, when seeing a frightening thing, we are not merely aware of the thing

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itself but also of past experiences of fear, with which we built our sense of the thing's fearfulness. Projective properties thus bring to mind the causal history of an emotional awareness. This general psychological phenomenon seems, however, to endanger the idea of a correspondence of our appreciation of an art work's expressive properties with the intentions of the artist, because projection in extreme cases need not have anything to do with the properties of the object under consideration. Obviously, such extreme projections as these should be excluded from any adequate account of expression, but how?

Wollheim tackles this problem by elaborating on the psychology of projection. At first, he says, people project their own feelings, in order to control them, onto another person. Such projections may be arbitrary – for instance, when people project their anger onto other persons by claiming that they are out to hurt them. More adolescent projections, however, presuppose an affinity between the object and the feeling. By introducing this notion of affinity into the account of artistic expression, Wollheim thinks we can retain the idea of correspondence. We should only project on account of a property which however weakly inheres the work.

The objection may be raised now that this conception of artistic expression is not descriptive but evaluative in nature. The postulated affinity between object and feeling resides somewhere in between two extremes: Some work may hardly show an affinity at all, while with other works it may be far too evident. In neither case do we think that the work is expressive. Instead, the requested affinity must hold some middle ground between the two extremes; and whether or not it does so becomes a matter of critical evaluation. Expression – much like individual style, I submit – may, in the end, be an evaluative notion, rather than, or as well as, a descriptive one. This tension in the theory is intentional. Wollheim refuses to view our descriptive account of art as independent from art's very value, and he tries just as hard not to reduce the former to the latter. In all, Wollheim explains the relations between pictorial and expressive aspects of paintings by referring to the psychologies of art creation and art appreciation. But these psychologies he keeps firmly fixed on to the work itself. Nowhere does he depart from the properties of the work; he merely sees these as inducing psychological questions next to art historical ones.

One other, connected, contribution of Wollheim's will be assessed in this volume: that of the internal spectator – present in certain pictures, but not in others – which Wollheim sees as assisting us in viewing what the picture depicts. The internal spectator is a spectator with his own psychological repertoire who is somehow included in certain pictures without being depicted. In such pictures, it is as though the depicted scene is viewed by someone who resides within it. The external spectator centrally imagines seeing the scene from the point of view of the internal spectator – as if able

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to move within the represented space. In Chapter 3 of *The Thread of Life*, Wollheim reserves the term 'imagination' for a specific mental act of fantasizing what it would be like to be in some situation, either centrally – that is, imagining oneself as the subject who perceives the event – or acentrally. The external spectator is not asked to somehow finish the painting, since he does not form part of it. Nor is this effect a matter of illusion. Illusion paintings present parts of their subject as though they were in the external spectator's space, an effect which is supposed to thrive on our belief that such a strange spatial inclusion could be the case. Internal spectators are a marginal phenomenon, but they are interesting for what they teach us about the transition between the space of the beholder and that of the represented scene. Wollheim gives us examples of works by Caspar David Friedrich and Edouard Manet, where the beholder's *imagination* is allowed to play a role it is denied in seeing-in and projective perception. Representation and expression are perceived, instead of imagined, but seeing the depicted world through the eyes of an internal spectator involves the beholder in an act of imagining. The discussion of this rare enough phenomenon of the internal spectator once more illustrates Wollheim's perceptive understanding of the many effects of paintings.

To sum up, the following are among the most important concepts that Richard Wollheim has contributed to our aesthetic understanding of the evaluative and descriptive appreciation of the art of painting. *Seeing-in* is a *twofold, perceptual* attention both to the surface which (hopefully) is painted in an *individual style*, and to a subject that can be seen in it. Recognizing a work's expression involves a *projection* of mental properties with a personal history on our behalf depending on an *affinity* between that personal history and the very same *individual style* the subject is painted with. In general, what we need, according to Wollheim, is an art-critical approach of art, a "Criticism as Retrieval" which answers to the many notions of correctness I have just alluded to. With Wollheim, this is no mere academicism. Whoever studies Wollheim's texts will soon find out that critical conclusions reached too hastily can seriously damage one's insights. One who takes this theory to heart finds himself or herself forced to look afresh at paintings, and this time more critically and with a better eye for art's psychological origins. It is therefore no coincidence that among the authors in the present volume we find philosophers as well as art historians.

For all the contributions in the present book, it will be helpful to sketch the main arguments, without (of course) offering any judgement on their soundness. Wollheim's views of pictorial representation form the core subject of six chapters, and we begin with Wollheim's own recently elaborated defense of them. In Chapter 1, Wollheim discusses three demands on theories of pictorial representation. He argues, first, that if a picture depicts, then a

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suitable experience can establish what is depicted in it. Second, a suitable spectator will have such suitable experiences. Third, the spectator must have the suitable capacities or be able to acquire them, and these capacities concern the visual experience of the depicted. With these demands in hand, Wollheim addresses (and dispatches) the subtle theories of depiction of Christopher Peacocke and Malcolm Budd, who understand depiction and our recognition of pictures in terms of the experienced resemblance between the structures or, respectively, shapes, of visual fields of a picture and its real-life subject. Wollheim's main argument against this view is that there need not be a separate experience of the two visual fields resembling one another, just as there needn't be an experience of the real-life subject, for a picture to be recognized as picturing what it depicts. Thus, the demands this theory of experienced resemblance puts on our perception of pictures do not meet Wollheim's first, minimal requirement that there be a suitable experience.

The next chapter is by Jerrold Levinson, one of the two contributors who had ready access to Wollheim's present text (the other being Susan Feagin). Levinson finds himself in much agreement with Wollheim's present views, but poses several questions concerning Wollheim's account of seeing-in. He doubts whether the experience of seeing-in has a uniform nature in all the relevant cases. For instance, Levinson argues, imagination is implied in a different way in the experience of seeing columns in a painting, in contrast to seeing "[. . .] them as having been thrown down some hundreds of years ago by barbarians" (Wollheim, this volume, 24). Andrew Harrison, in Chapter 3, urges that the twofoldness of representational perception does not fit well with the strict division Wollheim proposes between pictorial and descriptive representation, because as is the case with linguistic understanding, we start our understanding of pictures from principles (a "pictorial syntax") which guide the production of a picture from the basic elements an artist starts out with. These basic elements are in themselves non-pictorial combinations of colours and forms, what Harrison calls the "pictorial mesh." If this is correct, as Harrison thinks, the strict division should be abandoned, not the twofoldness. In Chapter 4, Monique Roelofs disputes Wollheim's idea that seeing-in should be treated as a primitive type of perception. She thinks seeing-in can and should be further analysed. Roelofs proposes to view seeing-in as a process of advancing and testing hypotheses concerning what we see before us. Among other things, she sees an answer in this to the question of the role of background knowledge in our appreciation of works of art. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the question of art's beginning and continuation. Anthony Savile argues here that the development of art over time can best be understood as motivated by the idea of wanting to pass on taste and artistic values. This theory, Savile thinks, is compatible with Wollheim's ideas on individual style and its psychological reality. But what about Wollheim's thesis that art works

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need not be motivated by the wish to communicate? For Savile, Wollheim cannot make sense of the idea of communication, because he takes the artist as producing his work for unknown, hypothetical spectators. Against this position, Savile urges that any artist's aimed for spectator isn't as unspecified as Wollheim has it.

Because Wollheim thinks of seeing-in as a perceptual capacity, he doesn't see a role in it for imagination. (Only when there is an internal spectator in some painting is the imagination activated to assist in the perceptual process). But one can see that the following is neutral as to this issue: seeing-in ". . . allows us to have perceptual experiences of things that are not present to the senses" (AO2 217). Obviously, only those things that are represented in the picture present themselves to our perception, and of these it remains to be seen whether or not they present themselves to the imagination or – more strictly – to the senses. Therefore, in the present volume, four authors – Levinson, Crowther, Podro, and van Gerwen – disagree that Wollheim's characterization of seeing-in rules out imagination. Apart from Levinson, these authors do not necessarily take imagination restrictedly as fantasy. In the sixth chapter on representation, Paul Crowther investigates the role of imagination in our twofold attending to pictures. He views the imagination as a basic function in cognition in the transcendental sense which Kant ascribed to it: not as the actual thinking up of fantasies, but as the often unconscious mental power that is presupposed for experience, which puts before the mind image-like representants of things that are absent to the senses. In Wollheim's view, this may be incorporated in visual perception, but Crowther thinks it is rewarding to shuffle the distinctions in the way he does this, because this very transcendental type of imagination, he thinks, is what is being objectified in paintings.

Wollheim's characterization of perception is challenged from other angles, too. Thus, Malcolm Budd (Chapter 7) sees a problem with Wollheim's account of *expression* as a kind of perception that corresponds to a feeling one doesn't have. We see something in the picture, then become aware of an affinity with some emotion, only then to reperceive the subject which is then coloured by the emotion. Or do we first see the affinity, only to find that there is no way to see the subject without the emotion with which it has an affinity? What determines what? And, Budd asks, how does Wollheim account for the correspondence between the thing perceived and the feeling not being had? Concerning expression's relation with representation, Michael Podro (Chapter 8) distinguishes three aspects in pictures that cannot be conceived of as independent: the power of depicting a subject, the singularly specific and complex coherence of a painting, and our experience of seeing the way the painting is painted as loaded with expressiveness. Expressiveness derives from the way something is rendered. Starting, like Wollheim, from a psycho-

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analytic theory, Podro treats these three aspects in relation to how a child places a transitional object between himself and his mother. The child projects onto such a transitional object both his mother's and his own emotions, so as to repair the separation he is experiencing. Podro perceives certain analogies with expression, which introduce new subtleties into Wollheim's account.

In Chapter 9, Carolyn Wilde argues, via the case of forgery, that style forms the very basis of artistic value. She quotes Wollheim saying that "application of the concept of style to a work of art is a precondition of its aesthetic interest," and argues that individual style is the product of the artist's attention to a subject, which as such steers the beholder's attention to the right spots. A forger will use a style as a kind of matrix for his painting, whereas the painter applying his own style will use it as a way of perceiving the world in order to supplant that way of perceiving onto the picture plane. The authenticity of a picture and its expression is a function of the picture's individual style. Therefore, individual style is as important to understanding expression as it is to our understanding of depiction. Rob van Gerwen's (Chapter 10) approach to representational perception starts from the acknowledgement that a picture addresses only the perceptual modality of vision (while recognizing that vision is embodied). Seeing a horse in a picture implies an anticipation on the capability of recognizing such an animal's depicted visual characteristics if ever one were to be within the depicted reality. (The anticipation removes all talk of experienced resemblance from the analysis of depiction.) Thus, the perception of representation is characterized generally as an anticipation of some unimodal recognition. This general notion enables van Gerwen to understand the analogy of artistic expression to depiction, taking the difference between the two as that between the beholder's respective modalities of mind that are addressed. Pictorial representation is of the visual, whereas expression represents the experiential, and the latter's relevant perceptual modality is imagination. Therefore, according to van Gerwen, both depiction and expression function, similarly, as types of representation albeit with distinct types of subject matter. In Chapter 11, Graham McFee questions the combination of the projective nature of expressive properties with the realist undertone of Wollheim's approach. If expressive properties depend on the contribution of the beholder, how can they objectively be there in the work? Wollheim thinks that the perception of expression does not merely depend on the presence of an extra stock of knowledge, but rather on the ability to mobilize that extra cognitive stock in one's experience, to have it play a role in one's perception of the work. But if perceiving artistic expression becomes such an esoteric ability, then how can people still be educated aesthetically? Can people be taught to appreciate art? McFee offers a solution to Wollheim's difficulty by seeing what follows from the (obvious) "yes" answer.

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In Part Three, the contributions which address the internal spectator are collected. Art historian Svetlana Alpers (Chapter 12) takes a close look at that other significant spectator, the artist, by analysing Rembrandt's painting *Bathsheba* – in particular, the artist's position towards his own canvas. She disagrees with Wollheim that the crucial position for the artist with regard to his own work is an upright stance frontally opposed to it, which would as such be a stance available to every spectator. She shows that the spectator of *Bathsheba* cannot quite take up the same position Rembrandt held towards his painting. Two other contributors – van Eck and van de Vall – propose to expand Wollheim's analysis of the internal spectator in the direction of the external spectator. Caroline van Eck (Chapter 15) argues that Wollheim is too dismissive with regard to illusion, and that the use of linear perspective can be understood as a rhetorical device that fulfils the very conditions that, according to Wollheim, point to the presence of an internal spectator. Consequentially, van Eck thinks that the phenomenon of the internal spectator is more widespread than Wollheim thinks it is. Renée van de Vall (Chapter 13) investigates the distinction between the external and the internal spectator by developing the notion of staging. Installations stage their spectators, luring them into the work so as to dissolve the very separation between work and spectator and (so to speak) make the external spectator an internal one. She then applies her insights to a painting by Barnett Newman, showing how it lures one inside while itself entering the beholder's space. Like van Eck and van de Vall, Susan Feagin (Chapter 14) addresses the way a painting addresses its beholder. However, unlike them, she does not loosen up Wollheim's sharp conviction of *trompe l'oeil*, but, instead, defends it. She explains the difference between presentation and representation by analysing the four characteristic differences between *trompe l'oeil* and representation, and argues that although the former is not an instance of the latter, it does lead us to applaud the technical powers of an artist if only he uses them to empower his representation. Robert Hopkins (Chapter 16) questions whether Wollheim really needs an internal spectator with his own psychological repertoire on top of the already very rich phenomena of seeing-in and projection. This criticism becomes all the more pressing in the light of the problem of whether or not external spectators are capable of retrieving the internal spectator's psychology. In Chapter 17, Michael Baxandall considers it the task of the art critic to show the external spectator where to aim his projections. He – the critic – must in this process maintain a certain openness. He must point out the visual connections, but not the psychological ones, which he must leave for the beholder to fill in. The last word on each of these topics is left, as expected, for Richard Wollheim. In Chapter 18, he has defences on offer, as well as further questions. The debate is not over yet, far from it.

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